

Questionnaire for theatre expert

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Claudio Ingoglia |
| Occupation | European project manager |
| Country of residence | Bulgaria |

Please answer the following questions giving specific examples where possible:

# Experience and Expertise

Outline your experience and expertise in the area of theatre

I started a theater course many years ago, in Palermo, pledging myself to the art of acting. I was reluctant at the beginning but, once started, I could not stop. I took part in several performances on the stage (such as *Uncle Vanya* and the *Three Sisters* by Checkov; *Sleuth* by Pinter, ...) or on the street for special events for children. I also participated in a European workshop based in Palermo (named Atelier dei 200) with big stars of the french drama by UTE (Union des Théâtres de l’Europe - http://www.union-theatreseurope.eu/UNIQ142988164612690/en/ute) and in several short-films projects in Valencia, Spain. During the last years I discovered the magic of improvisation through the L.A.R.P. (Live Action Role Play) events, learning of being always in your character with no script and no matter what it happens.

What has been the impact of theatre on your own life?

Theater (that has to be differentiated from “being actor”) has simply changed me. I remember me when I was adolescent, before even considering going to a drama course, as a common silent individual that prefers to let things and events go without taking part of them, without a deep interaction with those who were around, feeling secure in my shell. I used to be uncomfortable around people, I used to talk to them because I had to interact in my environment. And then, when my mother convinced me to attend some drama classes, even though I was pretty reluctant at the beginning, everything changed. Somehow, through the activities, I learned to understand who I was, what I was capable of, I learned how to recognize myself in a group and how to take part in it as a protagonist. I believe there is no academic justification of the reasons, but I understood my value, learning how to be dynamic in life, how to be “liquid” in every context and, most important, how to put the focus of my interests in myself. All these things helped me in building a stable personality that I am not afraid to show.

What impact do you think theatre can have on our lives and what you consider to be its instrumental value (i.e. the way theatre can be used in particular settings rather than theatre as art or entertainment)?

Making an important difference between “theater for the performance” and “theater for the self” (we can surely generalize the same concepts for all the arts), I believe there are no limits for the teachings we would have if we decide to immerse our person in a theater course. It is a difficult concept to explain but theater has the power to infuse self-reliance since it is based first in knowing yourself. First activities concentrate in the importance of YOUR SELF, in building group trust, in meeting the other and be confident in your interaction; only then, when you have already strengthen your personality, you learn to interpret new characters, being conscious that those characters do not exist without you. You make them live, with your own personality (it is called the “I” in the character), and you learn that your capacities are greater than you thought.

When you have this confidence, you can start understand the barriers you have built during experience and be able to smash them down being sure of your actions.

Human beings have the need to feel confident. Theater is not the absolute answer but it helps you in finding that answer in you.

What strategies do you use and how do you work with hard to reach groups or people who are not usually engaged with theatre or who might be reluctant to take part?

Human beings are difficultly “open to open themselves”; I was indeed one of those people who refused to try a drama course, thinking of it as a stupid waste of time I could have spent playing or hanging out with friends. I was also reluctant during the first activities, considering them pointless for the purpose of the actor. Suddenly, I realized that those activities gave me the possibility to play “with myself” and around new friends.

Surely, strategies to reach and get people involved need to be adapted considering the target group, the participants, the purposes and the conditions of the work. Patience, though, is an essential element in all cases. When dealing with new participants, I usually start working with them in the group-creation and the stable friendship: they would never take actively (and happily) part in the activities if they do not first feel at ease with the others. Then, I usually repeat to myself what a terrible student I was at the beginning and how my director helped me until considering him as a best friend.

# Theatre and Working with visually impaired people

Describe any experience you have had of working with visually impaired people either with theatre or in some other capacity.

I had no real experience in WORKING with visually impaired people but I have had experience in converse and sometimes hanging out with them. Since the beginning of the project I have decided to put myself into this matter and now, since life have brought me to Valencia first and now Santiiago de Compostela (Spain), I got to know v.i. people from the ONCE (*Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles* - National Organization of Spanish Blind People) which fosters the cooperation and the social inclusion of people with disabilities and whose employees I always encounter while walking in the city.

How was working with visually impaired people (if there was such work) different to the way you would normally work?

I have no experience to answer this question but I believe that visually Impaired people are people just like those who can see. Talking to them, establishing a friendship and having fun with them is pretty much the same as with other people. In case of walking or going somewhere I see only one difference: a small help (by those who see, by their friends), and help has never been a problem.

What impact has working with visually impaired young people (if there was such work) had on your own practice?

Considering it was no work, dealing with them gives me a happiness that might be tiring but is indeed pure. It makes me feel conscious that I am alive and that every human being has the right of feeling alive.

What do you think is the value for visually impaired young people of working through theatre?

I learned that theater is the place where you can play with yourself, where you can see new perspectives, where you can discover new aspects of your being that will inevitably help you in being present in every situation. This is an experience that we all should do but that v.i. people need to do.

# VISION

What do you think we should consider regarding the use of theatre in the VISION project?

Essential are the difference of place, environment, culture, age, gender and so on. Every kid is a unique case. Exercises, therefore, may change a lot from one kid to another one. We should try to get to know them as much as possible; we need to be sensitive, listen to their needs and let them be themselves.

What do you think could be the impact of this work?

A dialectical learning of human perceptions.

**Please attach a current CV with this questionnaire!**

Thanking you for your time and consideration:

The V.I.S.I.ON team

*“This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.”*