

Recognition of the Social Theatre Operator as a professional to tackle the Risk of Social Exclusion

Research Report

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REPORT OVERVIEW

Introduction

This paper provides an overview of responses from desk research, two questionnaires and round table discussions relating to a project which examined the role of the Social Theatre Operator as a professional to tackle the risk of social exclusion. Questionnaires were divided between individuals (social theatre operators/facilitators) and organisational responses and the following summary of responses has been divided into two sections to take this into account.

For the purposes of analysis this report has used a twofold analysis technique. One is based around a summary of the quantitative data provided while there is also some analysis of the more qualitative narratives and points used, particularly towards the end of the questionnaires. For the purposes of providing conceptual frameworks to these points the concept of thematic content analysis was used. Thematic content analysis is a useful tool in this regard as it is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data. 'The researcher groups and distils from the texts a list of common themes in order to give expression to the communality of voices across participants' (Anderson 2007: 1). Thematic connotes the analysis of storylike verbal material (Smith et al 1992: 4) and 'typically involves identifying themes within a dataset and comparing those themes to the study purpose and existing literature' (Penney et al 2011: 3). It thus provides a basis upon which to examine the predominant themes or areas of importance in participant's responses.

In addition to two questionnaires referred to above, the report contains a summary overview of desk research and round table discussions prepared by seven partner organisations.

Process for Collection of Research Data

A process of research was conducted as part of the project, Recognition of the Social Theatre Operator (STO) as a professional to tackle the risk of social exclusion which is funded by the Erasmus+ program of the European Union. The research comprises two questionnaires and one list of desk research completed by a range of organisations and individuals and collated by Smashing Times.

The first questionnaire was for organisations who employ Social Theatre Operators / Artist Facilitators and was to be completed by a minimum of 25 organisations (per partner) who employ a Social Theatre Operator / Artist Facilitator working in social and community contexts with a focus on work with adult learners experiencing disadvantage. The organizations

may be an arts organization, an NGO or non-profit organization supporting a wide range of learners, a community organization, or any other relevant organization. The second questionnaire was to be completed by a minimum of 25 Social Theatre Operators / Artist Facilitators (per partner) working in social and community contexts with adults.

The research will inform the (a) the development of a professional profile for the role of a Social Theatre Operator / Artist Facilitator working in social and community contexts (b) the development of a training course for the Social Theatre Operator / Artist Facilitator working in Social and Community Contexts and (c) the identification of methodological guidelines for validation, accreditation and certification at national levels.

In addition, a series of round table discussion were also held by all partners. The seven partners in this project are:

- Oltre le Parole, Teatro Civile, Italy (lead);
- Comunità San Patrignano Società Cooperativa Sociale, Italy;
- Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality, Ireland;
- Bielskie Stowarzyszenie Artystyczne Teatr Grodzki, Poland;
- PELE, Associação Social e Cultural, Portugal;
- Magenta Consultoria Projects SL, Spain;
- ProSoc – Drustvo Za Implementacijo Projektov in Razvoj Socialnega Podjetništva, Slovenia.

The six countries are Italy, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Slovenia.

The following data collection forms were returned:

Research Methodologies	Totals
Desk Research	Completed by all partners
Questionnaire One for Professionals/Facilitators	Completed by all partners: 159 questionnaires in total
Questionnaire Two for organisations	Completed by all partners: 151 questionnaires in total
Round Table Discussions	Completed by all partners

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The research in this document is focused on: Intellectual Output One: Definition of a professional profile for the STO. The aim is to:

- Outline at European and national levels, the state-of-the-art circumstances concerning the employability and professional conditions of a Social Theatre Operator;
- Define the standard requirements for the professional profile of a Social Theatre Operator.

The output will build a professional profile of a Social Theatre Operator by providing answers to the following questions:

- Who/What is a Social Theatre Operator?
- What kind of services does a Social Theatre Operator deliver?
- What are the specific features and requirements of a Social Theatre Operator in terms of knowledge, skills and qualities?

The new professional profile will be defined in full accordance with the principles of the European Qualification Framework, in terms of the competences - knowledge, skills and qualities - necessary to carry out specific tasks and activities. In addition, the profile will be defined by taking advantage of the European multilingual classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations, as a reference tool to guide the whole process so that the final output can be exploited at European level.

The profile will contain an outline of the task range for a professional Social Theatre Operator and will describe in detail the skills, competences and other characteristics that research activities will prove as necessary or desirable for a STO at European level. Country specific characteristics will also be taken into account. For competences acquirable through targeted training, a connection will be established to the expected learning outcomes.

In particular, the output will provide a description of:

- Professional conditions and employability of the STO
- Task range of an STO
- Possible target groups to be addressed
- Educational background
- Required competences and skills
- Main fields of knowledge
- Deontology and ethical approach
- Communication skills
- Practical experience

This fundamental output will be an essential tool leading to the recognition of the professional STO and the basis for the development of the following Intellectual Outputs for this project:

- IO2 Training Course for STO;
- IO3 Methodological guidelines for validation and certification.

FACILITATOR RESPONSES

In terms of individual facilitator Responses, a total 159 were received. A number of respondents did not answer every question on the form thus meaning that not all responses to questions will add up to 159.

Respondents were asked a range of questions relating to the importance of formal and professional qualifications and their role within the social theatre sector. In terms of professional qualifications, a very small number of individual participants felt that in their role as a Social Theatre Operator / Artist Facilitator, it wasn't of benefit to have a professional qualification with only 7 feeling it was of no benefit. Approximately 50% of respondents did not have a formal qualification or training as an STO.

Moving on from qualifications to those questions based around experience and understanding, when asked: Do you believe a Social Theatre Operator should have an understanding and experience of the artistic processes of theatre? only 6 respondents felt that this was not necessary. There was a clear view amongst respondents that an appreciation and understanding of the artistic process of theatre were of importance for an effective STO.

Respondents were also asked series of questions relating to why do they work as a STO? Respondents were asked to list in order of importance from 1 to 10 with 1 being the most important and 10 the least important to the following series of questions (numbers in brackets indicate those who put down 1 most important. Some have marked down 1 more than once hence numbers):

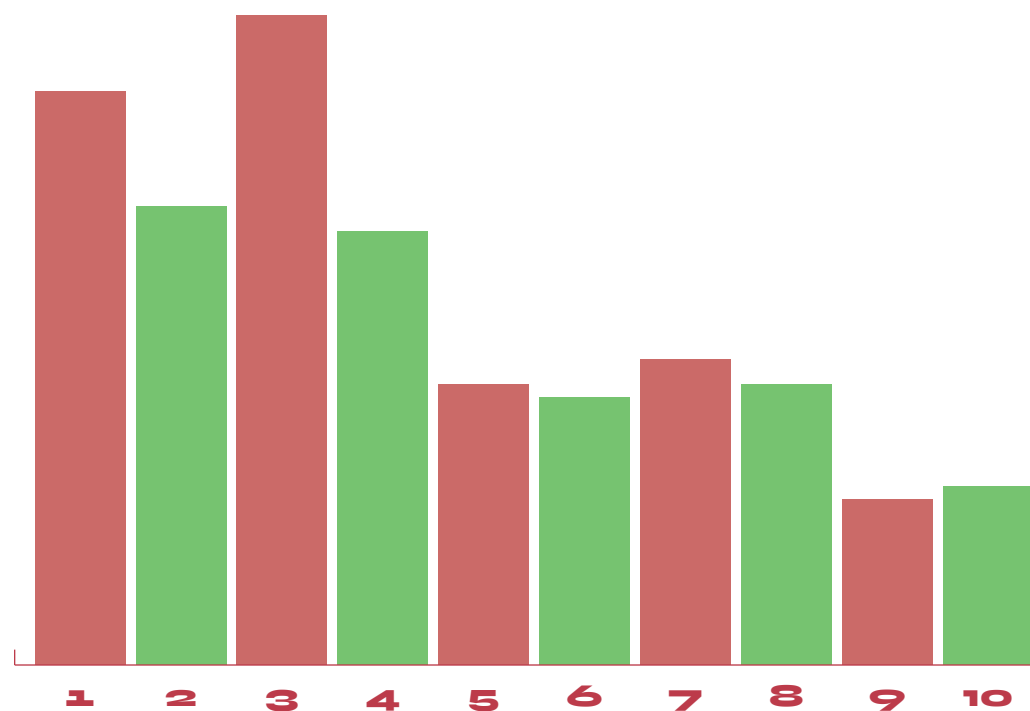
- 1.** I enjoy working with people (45)
- 2.** I find being involved with the theatrical/aesthetic development of groups very satisfying. (36)
- 3.** I believe that working as a STO empowers people to participate more fully in society. (51)
- 4.** I like the sense of community in this type of work. (34)
- 5.** I work more creatively when I work as an STO. (22)
- 6.** Working as a STO helps me build my chosen career. (21)
- 7.** I enjoy co-working with other STO's (24)

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- 8.** I build a network of contacts which help me improve my work/career opportunities as a STO] (22)
- 9.** Its work, I need the money. (13)
- 10.** Other (14)

The majority of responses which had 1 (most important) related areas of mutual benefit such as working with others, empowering people to participate and the sense of community such projects bring. Those responses which related to individual benefit such as income were much less important, reflecting the community outlook embedded in the sector. It also potentially indicates the lack of resources which are currently devoted to STO's.

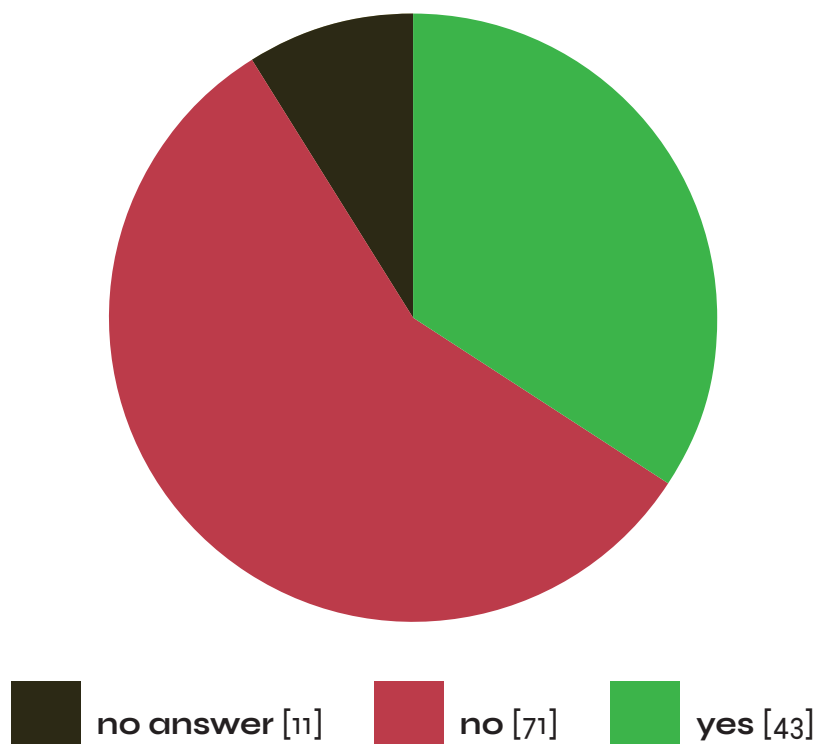
Why do you work as a STO?



Of the respondents only 13 stated there were permanent in their roles highlighting the uncertainty which can exist in the sector. At a time when due to global events there is a lack of clarity on jobs, income, roles etc this can add an extra burden to the pressure facing STO's in this sector. This was also reflected when asked whether STO's were engaging in their work on a full-time or part-time basis with the vast majority undertaking their work on a part-time basis. The lack of certainty in the sector was further emphasised when only 15 respondents stated that they worked daily as an STO. Furthermore, when asked if STO's were paid in their role only 38% responded saying there were in a paid employed role, reinforcing the good will, dedication and commitment of STO's. It is therefore perhaps not

surprising that well over 50% of facilitator respondents said they were not satisfied when asked if they were satisfied with the rate of pay that they get as an STO? 43 replied yes while 11 made no response.

Are you satisfied with the rate of pay that you get as an STO?



Other responses included those who work with members of the travelling community while another respondent commented on how they have worked with a group of disabled people for many years in a social cooperative of people and a very large group that over the years has become a small artistic-theatrical community.

Some operators in Italy stated that they are active members or founders of integrated theater groups. '10 participants, integrated between disabled and operators. Activity for motor skills and cognitive training. Co-build a final exhibition that includes everyone by enhancing every single one'. One participant highlighted the work they do with school children aged from 11 to 14; some who have learning disabilities, difficulty of concentration and participation in the group while another participant highlighted the work they do with the elderly.

In a reflection of the broad social issues addressed by social theatre one respondent from Poland referred to the work they do with inhabitants of peripheral rural areas with difficulties in personal and professional development.

One respondent from Slovenia gave an overview of the wide breadth of people they work with:

‘Theatre group assembled by our NGO, comprising of several people with sensorial and physical disabilities, but also including non-disabled people. They are involved as actors and through helping with other chores necessary to produce a theatre play, Individual people get involved in the play production on the project basis, as they are available or ready to cooperate; not everybody is included in every production’.

One respondent based in Poland highlighted the work they do with prisoners both women and men while another respondent based in Italy highlighted the work they do with approximately ten adults between 20 and 70 years of age, with various physical or cognitive disabilities. In addition, most of these users have attended the "day center" for several years and are familiar with group art work.

In addition to the above responses, participants were asked to provide details on how often they got the opportunity to work with groups. Only 22 got the opportunity to work with groups 2-4 times a week while a further 3 respondents worked daily with their groups.

In terms of charging a fee for groups to attend workshops only 25 responded that groups had to pay a fee while 24 respondents commented that they don't follow regulations and procedures in your work as an STO. In terms of measuring impact 78 stated they engage in post workshop reflection and discussion.

Moving beyond the practicalities of being an STO and into the values from such a position, respondents commented on the respect, fun, teamwork, openness and participation, equality and inclusiveness, imagination and creativity, sharing knowledge and skills with other STOs and hard work and discipline were all mentioned. In terms of the qualities required for such positions respondents mentioned a range of areas including theatre and performance technique, artistic background (knowledge and practice), group management, peer group methods, somatic awareness, social science methods, evaluation tools (evaluate social work program's impact) and project planning.

Participants were asked how they would define an STO before adding any additional information to their overall questionnaire responses. For these final sections thematic content analysis was used to determine themes which predominated in the responses. Responses to define an STO included:

- A facilitator of ideas, empathy and play
- A theatre facilitator uses the process of theatre in a workshop format to engage a group creatively on issues they wish to express through a theatre workshop process. The facilitator works closely with the groups to identify their needs and supports them to take risks and be creative within the workshop process. The process is learner centred and the facilitator works with the group at the level they bring to the work.
- STO- social cultural work covers work with vulnerable population groups. In doing so, we use theatre, dance, audio-visual and other creative techniques with aim to empower target groups on different levels. It can also have therapeutic effects, which are not necessary and are not measured.
- To facilitate a group of people to work together, learn from and create something new using creative processes.
- A person who uses theatre techniques as an art-therapy tool of work with people with disadvantages and learning difficulties.
- STO is a creative person, full of empathy, leading the group process and being neutral to the group opinion and decision. Leading the group means to engage all participants and achieve valuable results in the specified time.
- The social theatre operator tries to create shared expressive languages and to bring wellness spaces through the theatre
- assist the person in the search and discovery of new things about himself and his world
- STO: he is the one who plays theatre for a social/educational purpose: he tries to grow the individual and the group and their relationship with outside world (school, family, work, friends)
- A social theatre instructor/artistic facilitator is a person who is involved in social change processes, working with groups and communities in difficult mental, social and professional situations. In his/her work for those groups and communities uses the methodology of engaged theatre and socio-cultural animation and subjective, appreciative and inclusive approach.
- A person whom can go into work with a group of people, take the creativity the group already possess, show it to them and show them how to use it, helping both the group as one and as individuals to grow socially, artistically, personally, and educationally in a safe controlled environment.
- Each STO is a person who supports communities, society. With the help of artistic creation and social awareness, it helps individuals and groups function better. Both in personal development and in adapting to social regulations.

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- STO is a person that enables and empowers people from vulnerable/marginalized groups to take an active part in a theatrical expression, thus improving their individual and social wellbeing.
- A person, who with the help of theatre and drama techniques strives for positive social change
- I think it is mainly a person who knows on a professional way how to use social theatre as a method in different contexts and how to produce a result, in which the process to get to it, is the real focus of the whole working process. It is a creative way on how to work on your body, your language and your tools of expressions. Somehow a safe space is created in which participants can try out themselves in order to gain new views on themselves and the relationships towards others.

When asked for any further responses not already covered in the questions, responses included:

- My job as a facilitator is to always encourage my group to ask questions, think outside the box and participate together to create something new, from a full-scale production to a simple, 1 min improv. I am only there to guide and care for, but the work is made by the participants.
- STO is a way of being
- I believe that social theatre is the future of theatre and art in general
- Qualified theoretical and practical skills are needed, especially in the practical field
- Someone who works on the Conjunction to well-being
- Well-being, integration and personal growth operator
- The importance of carrying out research and theorising the experiences gained in Italy and in Europe
- doing this type of activity, both part time and full time, enriches the one who performs it, because it becomes a witness of the life of others and of the shades that the same life gives every day
- Sharing, empathy, planning, inclusion, acceptance of needs, meeting with others are for me some of the fundamental characteristics of STO
- skills on cognitive sciences, studies in neuroscience, social psychology, ability to develop intervention plans on disability to be able to accommodate any problem.
- Skills of creative and dramaturgical writing, of rhythmic - music - prosody, knowledge of the game of "lights", art and image - aesthetics - play of colours, elements of figurative and construction techniques through recycled material and more

An analysis of the themes deriving from the comments showed that an effective STO is one who can deliver positive social change, develop improvements on both individual and collective levels and improve people's sense of self-worth and confidence especially amongst those social disadvantaged. As a result, themes such as empathy, self-development, improving quality of life, creating positive social change, encouraging working together, health and wellbeing, providing opportunities for those marginalized, creating positive thinking were all commonplace in responses.

In addition, the final section on any other comments focussed on positive themes around areas relating to emotion (in a positive sense) well-being, encouraging integration and improving personal growth and sense of self.

The statements by STOs summarized above are of great importance since they represent the voice of a large group of theatre/art practitioners across Europe who perceive their professional role similarly, despite all the national regulations and determinants. It is worth emphasizing that STOs themselves stress the social impact of their work in first place, focusing on the specific needs and constraints of people they work with. Both, the variety of target groups addressed by STOs in partner countries which demonstrates the broad reach of activities in this cultural sector, and their sense of social mission common to all justify the importance of formal recognition of this professional figure. Even though it does not belong to the scope of formal education, it still appears as a consistent set of skills, qualifications and abilities. However, the main challenge, according to the RESTORE project aims, is to formulate common guidelines that allow to identify professionalism and specify its most important and unique features.

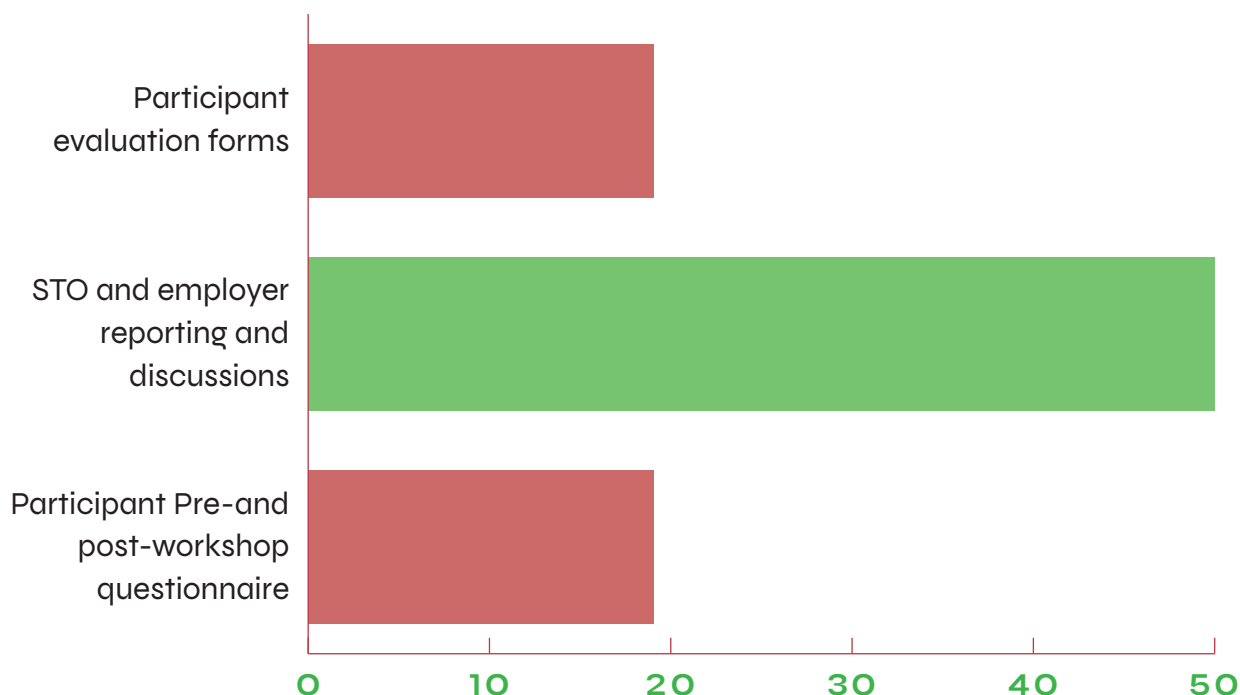
ORGANISATION RESPONSES

A total of 151 organisational responses were received.

Participants were asked if they worked in collaboration with STOs/Artist Facilitators with a total 75% indicating that they worked in collaboration with others. When asked how do you measure the work of STO/Artist Facilitator? Responses were as follows (some use more than one method or none at all).

- 16 participant evaluation forms
- 42 STO and Employer reporting and discussions
- 16 Participant Pre-and post-workshop questionnaires

Measuring Formats



Participants were asked a number of questions regarding qualifications, background etc. One of those questions asked how much do you think it is important to have an artistic experience/background?(mark as 1 to 5 with 1 being most important and 5 being least important).

In a reflection to the uncertain nature of the sector number of hours worked on average per week varied significantly. Of those who responded to the question three stated they worked 40 hours per week while a further six stated they work either 1 or 2 hours per week. Such differences were reflected in annual rates of pay which ranged from 1500 euro to 26000 euro. Some respondents in Poland stated a PLN figure such as 60-70000 PLN (current exchange rate of PLN at time of writing is 0.22 euro). Rates of pay in this context however do not take into account issues such as cost of living in specific regions/countries etc but nonetheless do provide an indication of the pay rates across the sector.

In terms of groups which the respondents worked with groups ranged from those suffering from drug and alcohol abuse to the elderly, prisoners and those with physical disabilities. For example, 25 responded they worked with people with physical disabilities, while 28 worked with people with mental health concerns. While many of the organisations worked across a number of groups in various sectors, perhaps indicating that many can overlap sectors etc there were also examples of organisations working with specific groups, for example two organisations responded that they worked with high school pupils while one organisation referred to working with those suffering from autism.

In terms of documenting the work of the STO there were a variety of methods deployed by organisations such as reporting an evaluation, media, photo documentation. For example, 52 referred to reporting and evaluation in their response to this question.

Participants were also asked: what, in your opinion, are the main requirements and supports to support and sustain the work of the STO into the future? (Number in order of preference 1-6) [Economic sustainability]

Respondents were given a number of options shown below. The number beside each option indicates those who ticked 1 as the most important:

- Professional recognition 26
- Training opportunities 19
- Mentoring 8
- Networking 15
- Economic sustainability 19

Towards the end of the questionnaire participants were asked to provide some more qualitative based information, for example on how they would define an STO. Responses included:

- STO is someone who has an artistic vision of the work to be done with the group but in the same time is able to adjust it to the needs and constraints of the disadvantaged workshop participants.
- TO must be sensitive and open. He/she must also have practical skills and knowledge of how to work with a group. The only way to find out if a specific person we want to employ is suitable for working with disabled people is to put him/her into work with our charges and see what happens.
- The most important and essential feature of the STO as a professional is the ability to create good relation with socially vulnerable people. It is someone who can manage the group and finds appropriate working methods for everyone, despite participants different needs and constraints.
- Someone who has good understanding of art and practical skills of working with a group.
- The social theater operator tries to create shared expressive languages and to bring wellness spaces through the theatre
- A person with passion and charisma who helps others discover or take out their talent, uses art to inspire (despite its own goals) and leads a group towards a well-being of entire local community.
- An STO must have knowledge, skills and competencies to work with people who might need a lot of attention and understanding of their limitations. It should be also someone with the soul of an artist.

- Leader leading a group, offering classes at a high artistic level with sensitivity to meet the needs of participants.

Using thematic content analysis themes such as qualities of the STO, passion, skills, competency, sensitivity, knowledge were all prevalent as well as more specific skill sets related to the sector such as artistic understanding and knowledge.

Finally, groups were asked if they had any other thoughts. Responses included:

- the underestimated importance of artistic activity in the environment of people with disabilities, theatre, music, art based on systematic artistic education (not just drama)
- today, following the experience made by my organization, this profession is the only fruit of the good intent and the good will of individual people and / or associations and does not have an adequate recognition to recognize it a recognition, a true profession and recognition all round.

Greater recognition, a true profession and the dedication of those involved were the strongest themes to come out from other comments made by participants.

It is worth emphasizing, that those who employ STOs and decide about the conditions of their work value the most professional recognition of their employees as a major success factor in supporting and strengthening socially engaged artistic activities. This confirms the validity of the assumptions of RESTORE project. Moreover, according to the valuable opinion of the organizations which employ STOs, it is very important to provide them with relevant training opportunities.

DESK RESEARCH

Recognition

In countries such as Italy, Ireland and Slovenia there is no formal recognition for a theatre facilitator working in social and community contexts despite the fact that theatre facilitators and independent theatre organisations can be found working in a range of contexts, producing good quality work.

The Polish Index of professions does not include a term for 'social theatre instructor' or a term for 'theatre instructor' who is a professional who runs theatre workshops with various groups in terms of age and context. While

the term social theatre operator is currently not included in the Polish index of recognised employment roles, actual inclusion could cause difficulties if for example the person has the required experience but not the required qualifications. In the Polish index of professions and specialties (2018) three similar professions have been identified, the first is Instructor of the amateur artistic movement, the second is an art teacher in out-of-school settings and the third is a cultural animation teacher. All three role definitions include areas of work relevant to a social theatre operator/theatre facilitator but do not cover the social theatre operator exclusively. This is similar to Spain in that there is no precise definition and the majority of the people working in theatre facilitation in social and community contexts are either 'theatre companies or self-employed people'.

In Portugal, the research conducted as part of the process for the project indicated that in Portugal they are more connected to South American "community theatre" movements, rather than to the so-called "social theatre", that is commonly used in Spain and in Italy.

Professional Profile

A range of titles have been put forward in relation to a social theatre operator/theatre facilitator role and these included theatre Facilitator, arts or artist facilitator, drama Facilitator, theatre Operator or Conductor of Social (and Community) Theatre or Social Theatre Operator or Theatre Instructor and community artist facilitator of Community and Cross-Arts Creation instructor of Socially Engaged theatre, or theatre animator of non-formal expressive learning in communities.

In terms of job content, tasks and services, a theatre facilitator is someone who carries out a range of tasks and these are listed under the professional profile. In terms of contexts and groups, a facilitator may work in schools, in youth and community groups and centres, cultural centres, in workshop spaces, on the stage, in a theatre, in the street, park or square or in community centres, in urban and rural areas, in a prison, in peace building, and in a range of social and cultural contexts. In terms of groups, a facilitator works with both professional artists and non-professional community members from a range of groups including youth, adults, elderly people, people with physical disabilities, people with learning disabilities, people experiencing mental health concerns, people with addictions, groups at risk of social exclusion, people in occupational therapy workshops, women, young people and children, prisoners and ethnic minority communities.

Training and Education

There is general recognition for the need for formal training and qualifications as well as work experience working with target groups. For example, the Spanish partner acknowledges the need to be 'well-prepared' in terms of having a degree, a diploma or certificate, and experience working with the target groups'. However, Poland and Italy highlights the need to also acknowledge the expertise of a theatre facilitator gained through direct experience and with no academic qualifications.

Currently no one course is solely dedicated to theatre facilitation in social and community contexts in some countries like Slovenia. A sample list of current training opportunities and courses available for social theatre operators has been prepared – see appendix two. In relation to current training available for social theatre operators / theatre facilitators, no specific qualification exists in Italy at either diploma or degree level to qualify a person as a social theatre operator / theatre facilitator (as the profession is not recognized) but only postgraduate masters. Instead, a range of courses and qualifications exist particularly at regional levels, and carried out by private non-institutional entities. A number of these courses are one-off and not repeated. A number of courses in various regions can also be found that provide training in how to become a 'social animator' and the curriculum covers subjects such as sociology, pedagogy, psychology, first aid and anatomy, social law, ethics, privacy protection, verbal and non-verbal communications and creative skills in relation to theatre, dance, clown therapy, plastic-figurative materials, etc. In Italy the Roma Tre University, has been setting up a Masters in Pedagogy of Expression for several years.

In a number of countries including Italy and Ireland, you will find specific curricula in the following areas that are related to social and community contexts – courses in Theatre of the Oppressed including forum theatre, psychodrama, arts therapy including drama and music, socio-drama, playback theatre. A range of training courses exist in Portugal to support skills-development for theatre facilitators including Bachelor and Masters degrees, post-graduate courses, high-school diplomas and occasional workshops.

In Ireland a one-year Diploma in Drama Facilitation Skills was first set up by Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality in 2005. This was the first and remains the only accredited programme that was set up at university level to provide an official qualification in drama facilitation practice. This course is only run dependant on project funding and Smashing Times are currently working to have this course

mainstreamed and funded by a university institution. A part-time training programme that is aimed specifically at youth theatre facilitator is run by Youth Theatre Ireland and is called Laying the Foundation: Drama Facilitation Training Part-Time. This curriculum will earn participants up to 30 QQI credits at Level 6 of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. A range of other courses exist at university level that provide training in facilitation but the modules in theatre facilitation are part of a wider university programme usually in theatre or drama studies or in general arts facilitation practice. A range of courses that are both accredited and non-accredited exist in creative arts practice related to theatre, film, visual arts etc.

In Italy, the association "Oltre le Parole" of Rome obtained in 2007 the patronage for the establishment of a National School for STO, but it was not followed up because the entity was aggregated after a short time by the Ministry of Culture, which did not continue the process.

In Poland, there are different educational offers, which address the needs of theatre instructors and pedagogues in Poland. Some of them cover also the specialization of STO. The providers of such training programs include, among the others: colleges and universities, theatres, methodological advisory centres, NGOs and cultural centres. They offer both full-time courses and one-time thematic workshops. The training programs consist of both theoretical modules and hands-on exercises and activities. Spain has a wide range of institution that offers education in the field of theatre. Some of the most well-known –not only in Spain but also around the world– are the University of Nebrija, the International University of La Rioja, and the University of Seville.

In Slovenia, there are three universities that implement programs where a person can follow parts of a programme related to training for a Social Theatre Operator. The only formal specialized arts-focused program to assist is the University of Ljubljana – Faculty of Pedagogy Arts Therapies. Non-formal education in this area is occasionally offered by various NGOs, which are usually dependent on external funding. It is not constant and prevents the implementation of programs even after the end of funding. Workshop and seminar contractors usually issue a certificate that can be evaluated by scoring from the relevant chamber.

In Portugal there are a number of bachelor and master's degrees, post-graduate courses, high-school diplomas and occasional workshops. The majority of these training courses are currently running normally, although some of them only proceed when they get a minimum number of applicants. There are also a number of courses on Social/Community

Theatre, which has boosted students' interest in this specific area and affirming it as a possibility for a professional framework.

Many social theatre operators may work in schools however there is no standard in relation to job specifications. In Italy for example in relation to schools 'the figure of the social Theatre operator is 'not explicitly requested' and the teaching of theatre in schools can be delegated to the Italian Federation of Amateur Actors.

With regard to 'therapy', in Italy and other countries there are numerous courses at university Level and in adult education that explore the psychological aspects of theatre which may form an element of the work of a social theatre operator.

As part of the desk research, a range of skills in terms of knowledge, skills and qualities were put forward and these are synopsized in the professional profile.

Education and Employment

There are a number of areas to look at in relation to education and employment. Funding, employment stability and a lack of social recognition are the key areas that need development. Another area of development is in relation to educational services in cultural institutions and in foundations, museums, cultural centres. These areas of work are necessary in order to improve the impact of the work, as well as the professionals' employability situation.

Bibliographies

A bibliography has been prepared based on information provided by six partner countries - Italy, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Slovenia - see appendix one.

Some food for thought for further discussion

Definitions: It is often difficult to define precisely what theatre in social and community contexts means because of the broad scope of the work. Instead of looking for strict definitions sometimes it is more beneficial to define the ethos or values that underpin the work, despite its broad and varied content. In terms of ethics and values, these are central to the work. The work always aims to promote ethics and values of equality, collaboration, inclusion, partnership, openness, experimentation, risk-taking and creativity, and acknowledging that everyone has creative potential.

Professional or Amateur: Is a social theatre operator / theatre facilitator a professional who conducts work in professional arts contexts even when working in social and community theatre practice?

Drama and Theatre: What are the differences between the terms drama and theatre?

Digital skills: Ability and skills required to conduct theatre workshops in social and community contexts online or in digital format.

Social and Political Views: Political views never impinge on the work beyond the basic philosophy of being in sympathy with the oppressed in any situation and the belief in humanity's ability to change. The facilitator is 'neutral to the group opinion and decision'.

Theatre or Arts Facilitation Training: Portugal raises the important point that the growing demand for a more equitable and participative society is triggering stronger interactions between the arts and social contexts supporting both individual and collective needs. The arts in social and participatory contexts are multi-faceted and complex and Portugal also highlight the fact that some artists who are trained in one particular artistic artform, are crossing over and working on cross-art projects, combining different artforms artistic languages.

ROUNDTABLE FINDINGS

From the roundtable discussions hosted by each partner organisation, a number of findings have come to light.

1. There is a need for a definition of a Social Theatre Operative (STO) to be developed and included in European classifications of professions and specialties. This definition is necessary for a number of reasons:
 - Value – STOs are often undervalued by organisations and by society. A definition of the STO as a profession can highlight the work as necessary in schools, social work, in solving social problems, and in working with vulnerable groups.
 - Financial – STOs can often be under- or un-paid. This can act as a deterrent to those considering the field as a profession. Establishing an STO under a European classification of professions raises the status of the role and its right to be paid.

- 2.** More data needs to be collected on the work of the STO, and its impact on society. This will:

 - Highlight the ability of an STO to empower workshop participants, develop participants' interpersonal relationships, promote personal awareness and to improve participants' quality of life and social inclusion.
 - Highlight how the impact of an STO's work can spread beyond workshop participants to further society.
 - Act as a tool of the professionalism of the work.
 - Provide information on the tools, knowledge, skills and competencies needed for an STO.
 - Provide information for the formation of standardised European training.

- 3.** The term "Social Theatre Operator" (STO) may need to be altered or amended, as:

 - The term does not fully encompass the multitude of duties an STO is responsible for.
 - The term relating to an artform does not highlight the work of STOs being done in a variety of fields and professions, such as in schools, in social work, working with vulnerable or disadvantaged persons, and its focus on creativity, education, inclusion and empowerment.
 - The term is unknown.

- 4.** The role of the STO is multi-faceted and includes but is not limited to:

 - Facilitating a theatre workshop process (one workshop or a series of workshops) to pass on skills in drama and theatre practice and to use creative methodologies of drama and theatre to explore a range of issues.
 - Developing the work according to the expressed needs of the participant group.
 - Leading or guiding the theatre workshop process in order to enable or empower the participants to partake in the drama and theatre process and to develop skills in drama and theatre practice as well as using the drama/theatre process to explore issues of interest to the group.
 - The privileged link between art and people. Without them, a lot of people wouldn't experience art.

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