

MICRO-CONTEXTS

Activity developed by La Xixa Teatre based on
Mohamadou Diol's techniques of Theatre of the Oppressed



OVERVIEW

How aware are we of ourselves (our bodies, our identities, the way we communicate, etc.) and the impact we have on others? This exercise helps us explore how our bodies respond to different contexts.

LEARNING CONTEXT

This activity can be done online, offline with social distancing and offline with physical contact.

DURATION

60'



PARTICIPANTS

Minimum number of
participants: 6

Maximum number of
participants: 30

Recommended number of
participants: 16



MATERIALS

In the offline version:
3 chairs



OBJECTIVES

- Become aware of the impact that different contexts have on ourselves and our bodies.
- Become aware on the impact we have on others.
- Understand and explore how the impact we have on others influences our relationships.



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INSTRUCTIONS STEP BY STEP



Online version

1. Ask for 5 volunteers who will act as themselves in a given context. The rest of the group must observe and take notes of what they see, what calls their attention, body language, etc.
2. First context: “you are sitting in a waiting room with other people, in silence, while you wait to be called for a job interview”
3. Each volunteer must focus on becoming themselves in that context: how are you feeling? How is your body positioned? What kind of movements, if any, do you do? Are these intentional or unintentional? Invite participants to get into an inner monologue, where they are speaking to themselves in their minds, while they remain silent. Volunteers may not speak or interact with each other.
4. Ask for 5 more volunteers and repeat for context 2: “there has just been an important conflict with a group of youngsters you are working with. You are all sitting around a table in silence. You are waiting for them to come forward and take responsibility for what has happened.”
5. Ask for 5 more volunteers and repeat for context 3: you are visiting the house of your partner’s parents for the first time. You are all having dinner at the table. You silently listen to the family conversation.”

Offline version

1. Ask the group to sit in a semicircle as an audience. Place three chairs at the front, facing the audience, with at least one meter distance between them.
2. Each chair is going to be a context, so that the first chair left to right is context one, the middle chair is context two, and the third chair is context three (see online version for context description). Give participants the explanation of what context each chair represents.
3. This exercise must be done in silence.
4. Ask a participant to sit on chair one.
5. Together with the entire group say “Action!” so that the participant begins to act as themselves in that context taking the following into account: how are you feeling? How is your body positioned? What kind of movements, if any, do you do? Are these intentional or unintentional? Invite the participant to get into an inner monologue, where he or she are speaking to themselves in their minds, while they remain silent.
6. After a minute or two, say change, so that the participant moves to chair two (context 2), and another participant from the audience takes their place in chair one, and begins acting as themselves in that context.
7. After a minute or two, say change, so that both participants move to the next chairs, and a new participant from the audience sits on the first chair.
8. After a minute or two, say change, so that all participants move to the next chair and a new participant sits on the first chair (by now the first participant will have gone through the three chairs, and can now go back to the audience to observe his or her peers).
9. Repeat until all participants have navigated through the three contexts. In the meantime, the audience must observe, and if desired, takes notes on what they see is happening.

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DISCUSSIONS AND DEBRIEFING



Questions for discussing and debriefing the exercise:

- What was easy and difficult?
- What was different in each context? How are the social and power structures present in each context?
- In what way do these structures impact our bodies and the way we perceive the different situations?
- What impact do we have on others when we are among peers?
- What impact do we have among our groups of youngsters?
- What impact do we have in personal contexts?
- How are these impacts different from each other?

TIPS AND HINTS



Some participants might have difficult time acting in front of others if this is not something they have done before. You may want to begin with warm-up activities that help participants feel more comfortable with acting and being watched by others.

THEORY



Boal, A. (1992) *Games For Actors and Non-Actors*. Routledge: London.



INTIMACY,
RELATIONSHIPS &
IRIS INTERCULTURALITY
IN YOUTH WORK

<https://intimacycrosscultures.eu/>

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