



**PROJECT
“THE ROAD OF THE CITIZEN”**

**BEST
PRACTICE**

Review of the project and
evaluation of efficacy

PROJECT “THE ROAD OF THE CITIZEN”

The project “THE ROAD OF THE CITIZEN”: Information and Implementation of the Rights of the Citizens of the European Union (based on the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union) is supported by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union. **EUROPE FOR CITIZENS** (2007-2013) is a European Union programme that was aimed at fostering active European citizenship and was implemented from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013. The project financing was allocated according to the 2nd action Active Civil Society in Europe, 3rd measure **SUPPORT TO PROJECTS INITIATED BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS.**

THE PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED BY The public institution “House of Arts and Education” (Lithuania) together with partners from Lithuania, Latvia and Poland. Organisations from Lithuania and Estonia participate in the project with the rights of guests and friends.

PROJECT PARTNERS FROM LITHUANIA: Širvintos Atžalynas progymnasium; Vilnius Simonas Daukantas gymnasium; Joniškis district Kriukai basic education school; Kaunas Milikoniai secondary school; Panevėžys Margarita Rimkevičaitė technological school.

PROJECT PARTNERS FROM LATVIA: Vecsaules pamatskola, Bauska; Biedrība “Balti” together with Ziemeļvalstu ģimnāzija (Grammar School of Nordic Languages), Riga;

PROJECT PARTNERS FROM POLAND: Polish Zespół Przedszkolno – Szkolno – Gimnazjalny, Rostorzewo;

PROJECT FRIENDS FROM ESTONIA: MTÜ Foorumteater, Tallinn;

PROJECT FRIENDS FROM LITHUANIA: The Faculty of Law of Kazimieras Simonavičius University, Vilnius / Klaipėda.



VECSAULES
PAMATSKOLA
Latvija



MAIN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- ▶ 1. International training for project participants in Vilnius (15 – 17 October 2013)
- ▶ 2. International public interactive conference in Vilnius (18 October 2013)
- ▶ 3. The first interactive mini-conference at all eight schools participating in the project. Topic: Dignity
- ▶ 4. The second interactive mini-conference at all eight schools participating in the project. Topic: Freedoms
- ▶ 5. The third interactive mini-conference at all eight schools participating in the project. Topic: Equality
- ▶ 6. Additional events at Širvintos Atžalynas progymnasium and Kriukai basic education school.
- ▶ 7. Final international conference on sharing good experiences in Vilnius (30 September – 2 October 2014)
- ▶ 8. Final international public interactive conference – “A Square of Desires”, a performance of the Forum theatre in Vilnius, in the lounge of Vilnius bus station (3 October 2014)
- ▶ 9. Survey (quantitative and qualitative) of the project participants on experienced and observed violations of fundamental human rights in the EU countries – project participants.
- ▶ 10. Social advertising.
- ▶ 11. Publication of the project’s “Best practice”.

During the project implementation, its promotion took place in the media (the largest Lithuanian online news portal www.delfi.lt), website of the public institution “House of Arts and Education (www.forumoteatras.lt), partners’ websites, as well as the social network www.facebook.com/forumoteatras. In addition, information was constantly disseminated to local partners in each city; leaflets/brochures presenting the project were published in four languages (Lithuanian, English, Latvian and Polish) and distributed at the time of all events. Attributes (bags, T-shirts, pens, pencils, gifts, document folders, etc.) to enhance project visibility presentations for the events were created; besides, handouts for international events were prepared. During international events, the project participants were asked to evaluate the training held and to share their experiences and insights.



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Engiamųjų teatro kūrėjas]:

„[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: “Many years ago the theatre was a political theatre of messages, we thought, we ourselves thought that because we are artists, we knew everything, then we had to tell people what to do. We knew everything about everything. Because we were artists. In addition, they were audience, they did not know anything. And that was a mistake that we made. And then we imposed on the public ideas – we started doing the theatre of the oppressed against the dictatorship”.

PROJECT PROMOTERS – PUBLIC INSTITUTION “HOUSE OF ARTS AND EDUCATION”

- ▶ The organisation was established on 1 July 2004.
- ▶ By maintaining cooperation with 147 schools in the whole Lithuania, the organisation spread the Forum theatre method (one of the methods of Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed), and trained teachers and pupils of these schools on the use of it; also prepared and distributed methodological materials. As a result of these activities, the Forum Theatre method has been integrated into non-formal education programmes at some schools.
- ▶ The project “With the Forum Theatre – Without Violence” implemented by the organisation in 2012 received a special award by the European Crime Prevention Network.
- ▶ The organisation expands its activities using other methods of Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed: the Image Theatre, the Newspaper theatre, the Invisible theatre, the Legislative theatre, a Rainbow of Desires. At the organisation’s initiative, three books by Augusto Boal, creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed, were published in the Lithuanian language: the “Theatre of the Oppressed”, “The Legislative Theatre”, and “A Rainbow of Desires”; besides, “Interactive Methodology” (together with video materials) containing practical advice for work with methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed was prepared and published.
- ▶ Augusto Boal’s words “WE BELIEVE IN PEACE, NOT IN PASSIVITY” have been chosen as the organisation’s logo.
- ▶ The organisation was established by Rimanta Vaičekonytė. She is a director of this organization, and a manager of the project “The ROAD OF THE CITIZEN”. Rimanta graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, acquired an actor’s profession. On the professional stage, in Lithuanian and international cinema projects she has created over 30 roles. She familiarised Lithuania with the Forum theatre method after previous training on it in different foreign countries. In the course of organisation’s activities, she created over 30 local and international projects. She conducts classes and training on the Theatre of the Oppressed for youth and adults.

► The project “The ROAD OF THE CITIZEN” is coordinated by Virginija Skučaitė, psychologist. She has acquired a master’s degree in clinical psychology at Vilnius University; completed the basic level studies in Gestalt psychotherapy and currently studies according to the training programme on analytical psychotherapy by C.G. Jung. She has participated in activities of the organization since 2006. She has conducted questionnaire surveys and training for youth and adults, prepares and coordinates projects.

► Two methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed have been chosen for the project “The ROAD OF THE CITIZEN”: the Newspaper theatre, and the Forum theatre. The Newspaper theatre enables to turn simple messages into role-playing scenes, to read the news in other way, by shifting a focus and presenting different subjects as important or of secondary importance, lending different emotions for the very same text being read, etc. This allows to learn how to assess the information received in a critical way, and to relate it with other knowledge available on this topic; in a broader sense, to look for confirmation or objection to the information provided in another place. The use of this method enables to disclose the true messages underneath the abstract concepts. The Forum theatre – is probably one of the best-known and most attractive methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed. During its time, the group itself creates scenes on social topics from their own lives. The goal of

the performance – to disclose a problem, and not to solve it. The audience is invited to look for solutions. It discusses, considers how it would be possible to change the situation, whereas ultimately the spectators have a possibility to change the main character of the scene – most often this is a person subjected to some injustice – and to try out the suggested ways of solution on the stage. The goal is not to find the only one good solution – they seek to find the greatest possible number of possibilities to cope with difficult situations, and to look at a situation at a different angle, creatively; to create a reserve of action methods that will be possibly used in the future upon encountering unfavourable situation. According to Augusto Boal, the Forum theatre – is a rehearsal of life. This method actually discloses democratic values best of all, as it allows and encourages to speak out and to hear out opinions of all citizens, irrespective of their race, sex, social status, etc.

STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION

“THE BEST PRACTICE”

First, we will provide **GENERAL INFORMATION** on the project, by outlining core activities, total number of participants, and other project indicators.

Then, we will discuss specifically separate project activities.

Ultimately, we will discuss project achievements, limitations and follow-up opportunities.

While discussing one of our activities, we will simultaneously provide problems revealed by the questionnaire survey, trends, feedback of participants on issues related with project topics. When talking about international events, we will also be guided by assessments expressed by the main participants (teachers and youth leaders from each school participating in the project).

56 respondents participated in the questionnaire survey, of which 25 men and 31 women within the age group from 13 to 55. Questionnaires were completed by participants of the project “The ROAD OF THE CITIZEN” at each school - by a teacher, youth leader, and members of the Forum theatre youth groups that organized interactive mini-conferences at schools. 5 schools are from Lithuania, 2 from Latvia and only one from Poland, therefore, the number of participants does not allow us comparing information furnished by different countries and identifying statistically significant differences, therefore the respondents are treated as a homogeneous group representing citizens of EU countries, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland. This also points out one of the possibilities for future projects – to expand the scope of survey, to involve a greater number of respondents, as well as to assess differences between states participating in the project. The participants also answered open questions by which they illustrated their attitude towards human rights and their violations, possibilities to improve the situation. When talking about each topic, we will provide thoughts, observations of project participants.

Questions have been mostly answered by young people and their teachers. Thus, responses actually reflect daily life at school and communication after classes in the city and town community among young people and with adults; situations, attitudes encountered by these people, also trends visible in the media.



AUGUSTO BOAL [Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: *“We have to go back to the past, see what we have done in the past, in the present using theatre; we have to invent the future, and not to wait for it. If we invent the future, the best possible will come. If we wait for it, the worst surely is coming”*

GENERAL INFORMATION

In total, **30** events took place in the project. **26** of which were national, implemented in each country (Lithuania, Latvia and Poland) separately. **4** events were international, and took place in Vilnius, Lithuania, where representatives from the countries participating in the project arrived.

IN TOTAL, 3336 individuals directly participated in project activities, of which **1410** men, **1926** women.

518 persons represented socially vulnerable/disadvantaged groups.

2490 young people under **30** directly participated in the event. 623 individuals belonged to the age group from **30** to **65**, and **223** participants were **65** and over.

According to our estimates, the project indirectly reached a million people. Based on information furnished by the LRT TV broadcasting report, the social project advertising broadcast through the Lithuanian radio and television TV channel has reached 570,000 people. Mere information on the international event "A square of Desires" in the social network www.facebook. It reached over 5,000 people. Information was disseminated by partners in their schools and communities; they informed on that cooperating institutions, as well as local media.



AUGUSTO BOAL

Augusto Boal [Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: "Theatre of the Oppressed gives us the right to speak our minds, and, using the power of Art, to invent solutions to our problems. Through theatre we discover that we are more capable than what we thought, able to free ourselves from our oppressions".

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL EVENT: TRAINING FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS IN VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

**DATE:**

2013 October 15 – 17

**VENUE:**

Vilnius, Lithuania

**NUMBER OF
PARTICIPANTS:**

29

**IŠ JŲ:**

Of which: 7 men, 22 women.

The event was attended by 9 persons under 30, 16 represented the group from 30 to 65, and 4 participants were 65 and over.

**ACTIVITIES:**

the three-day training was attended by participants from five schools in Lithuania, two - from Latvia, and one – from Poland. Each school was represented by a teacher and a youth leader. For holding training on the methodology of the Theatre of the Oppressed, specialists Nikolai Kunitsõn and Gertha Teidla-Kunitsõn came over from Tallinn, Estonia. On the first training day, participants became familiar with theoretical information. The organization's director and the project manager Rimanta Vaičekonytė together with the project coordinator Virginija Skučaitė introduced "House of Arts and Education" and briefed on the project "THE ROAD OF THE CITIZEN". The Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union was introduced by Asta Visminaitė, representative of the programme office in Lithuania. Arnoldas Matijošius, lecturer from the Faculty of Law of Kazimieras Simonavičius University, raised awareness of the documents governing human rights in the European Union, whereas the Pro-dean of the Faculty instructed on the peculiarities of organising interactive conferences (provided for in the project). Several representatives of this university

participated in the training held seeking to get ideas how to adapt the innovatory methods for introducing legal topics at their faculty. On other days, the participants became familiar with methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed (the Forum theatre and the Newspaper theatre) and the possibilities offered by them to disclose situations where human rights are violated. They were trained to involve the audience into interactive discussion on inequality, discrimination, possibilities to change the situation, etc. With lecturers' assistance, two role-playing situations showing how people are deprived of their rights were created during the training. These performances were introduced later, at the time of public international interactive conference. The role-playing situations were created through group discussion of participants on most often observed and experienced violations of rights, and afterwards, two the most relevant and best familiar situations were selected.

In the course of this conference, the participants were asked to share available information on human rights, knowledge and skills acquired during training, thoughts on the relevance of topics, expectations and fears, related with further implementation of activities in the project.

Several persons who participated in the training told, that they had known a lot about human rights in their country and the European Union; the majority of them, however mentioned that they lack this knowledge. Below are provided several answers of participants:

☛ *As much as I know, there are a number of cases in Latvia, when no attention is paid to human rights. There is much violence at home, schools, bullying.*

☛ *Not very much. Only to the extent, that it [European Union] promotes equality of sexes and races, tolerance.*

☛ *I have known little. Now I know more and I will be curious to find out more.*

☛ *I have known about human rights defined by the European Union to the extent of cases heard at courts and publicized in the media.*

☛ *The participants specified the main benefit received in the course of training laid down below:*

☛ *[I found out that] Nobody is better than others are.*

☛ *I found out about the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, also more about the methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed, as well as how to use them working with a group.*

☛ *I understood that we, like the majority of other people, do not think about these things in daily life.*

☛ *I developed a critical attitude, saw discrepancy between the rights and reality; I think that we have to urge Lithuanian representatives in the EU to draw attention to that.*

☛ *The majority of participants stressed that it was important to know more about human rights. Below are provided several answers in proof of that:*

☛ *This is very important, as being aware of your rights you may protect yourself from discrimination and injustice in your respect.*

☛ *It is important to know them in order to be able to exercise these rights, to know when they are violated, and not to infringe upon the rights of other persons. This way everyone will be able to improve, to develop a civilized and human cooperation.*

☛ *Being aware of your rights boosts maturity of society and makes our society friendlier.*

☛ *It is important for people to know their rights in order to be full-fledged citizens of the European Union.*



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: Of course theatre is politics above all – politics in the sense that whatever we do here, is not to stay here. Whatever we do here, we will go out and do in real life. Whatever we learn here is to be extrapolated. To be a citizen – is to change society. To be a citizen is to help make society better“.

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL EVENT: PUBLIC INTERACTIVE CONFERENCE IN VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

**DATE:**

2013 October 18

**VENUE:**

Vilnius, Lithuania

**NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:**

206

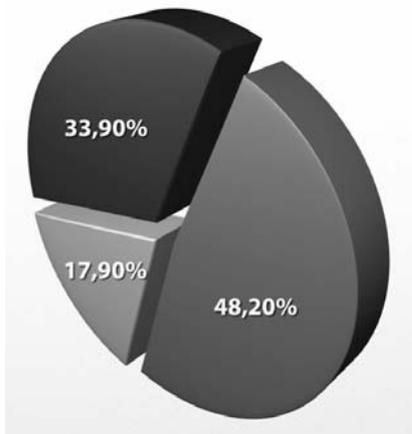
**OF WHICH:**

81 man and 125 women, 30 event participants belonged to socially vulnerable / disadvantaged groups. By age, the distribution of participants was as follows: 160 young participants under the age of 30, 30 participants belonged to the age group from 30 to 65, 16 participants were 65 and over.

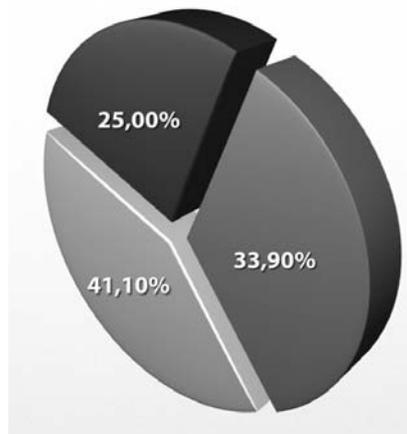
**ACTIVITIES:**

during three-day training, the project participants together with the lecturers Nikolai Kunitsõn and Gertha Teidla-Kunitsõn from Tallinn, Estonia, prepared two scenes reflecting violations of human rights. They were introduced during the first interactive conference. The assembled participants found out about the project, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Besides, they had an opportunity to observe situations where human rights defined in this Charter are violated, as well as to discuss how frequently similar events take place in real life; to offer their solutions and to try to get involved into the performance and to try out the ways of solution suggested by them. For the main project participants who afterwards continued activities at their schools and cities – teacher and youth leader of each school – this was a unique possibility to try out practically the methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed at work with a plentiful audience and to see how these methods work in practice. Later they adapted these skills by organising interactive mini-conferences for their community.

Before discussing each topic (dignity, freedom, equality) examined in the project in detail, we will briefly outline general trends associated with the implementation of human rights in the project countries revealed during the questionnaire survey.



48.2 % of the participants indicated that they agreed or totally agreed that human rights were frequently violated in our countries. **17.9 %** disagreed, and **33.9 %** of the project participants refrained from expressing their opinion. Thus, this shows that the topic and methods, selected to facilitate the learning of overcoming experienced injustice in an active way, are also relevant nowadays.



33.9 % of the surveyed project participants were not inclined to agree with a statement that the society surrounding us was tolerant. **41.1%** did not express their clear opinion on this issue (they chose the statement “neither agree, nor disagree”), whereas **25 %** were tended to agree with this statement. The interesting fact was that this was the only one statement not evaluated as “totally agree” by a single respondent. This shows that there was no single person among the project participants who would be firmly convinced that our society was tolerant.

► Quite a number of persons were inclined to assess that self-expression of us and people surrounding us was restricted. This statement was approved by as many as **53.6 %** of the project and survey participants.



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: “One of the main functions of our art is to make people sensitive to the „spectacles“ of daily life in which the actors are their own spectators, performances in which the stage and the stalls coincide. We are all artists. By doing theatre, we learn to see what is obvious but what we usually can’t see because we are only used to looking at it. What is familiar to us becomes unseen: doing theatre throws light on the stage of daily life”.

THE FIRST MINI CONFERENCE AT SCHOOLS (NATIONAL EVENT)



DIGNITY

Interactive mini-conferences on the topic of "Dignity" took place at eight schools participating in the project.



TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

860.



OF WHICH:

340 men and 520 women, 106 belong to socially vulnerable / disadvantaged groups, 670 participants were under 30, 149 – from 30 to 65, 41 – above 65.metų.



SUBTOPICS:

HUMAN DIGNITY:

human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected.

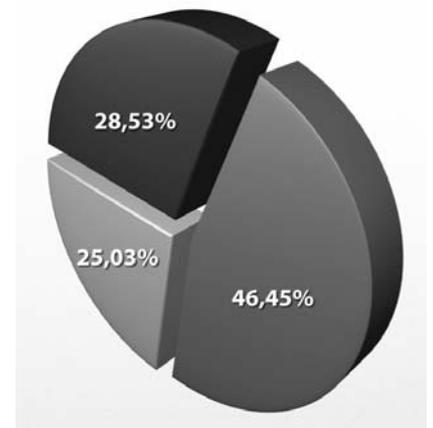
THE RIGHT TO PERSONAL INTEGRITY: every person has the right to physical and mental integrity.



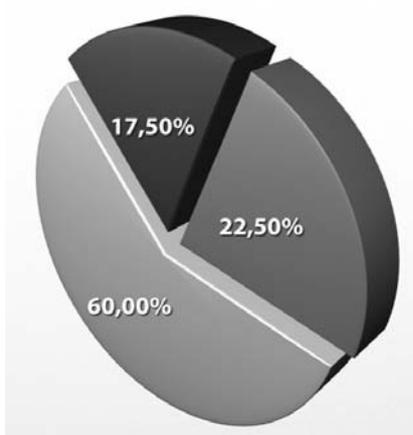
ACTIVITIES:

A teacher and a youth leader who took part in the first project activity in Vilnius, upon coming back to their schools, created a small Forum theatre group that organised the first interactive mini conference. The audience was presented reports on the "Dignity" topic, whereas its violations were disclosed using the Forum theatre and the Newspaper theatre. Gathered spectators actively expressed their opinion, discussed, acted, as well as looked for solution to solve difficult situations. As it turned out afterwards, this was one of the most complicated topics of the conference, as the concept "Dignity" is hardly definable. Thus, first of all the participants had to find out how they understand what dignity meant and when people were deprived of their right to dignity, and then to create scenes on that and discuss what and how it would be possible to change in this field.

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH DIGNITY, HIGHLIGHTED BY THE PROJECT PARTICIPANTS:



46.4 % of the project participants think that human dignity is not violated in their country. **25 %** do not have an opinion, **28.5 %** claim that dignity is nevertheless violated.



22.5 % claim that dignity violations in their country are more frequent than in the remaining EU, **60 %** - that the problem is similarly relevant, **17.5 %** - that these violations occur less seldom than in other EU countries. Thus, an opinion prevails that, in terms of possibilities of people to feel dignified, the countries participating in the project essentially do not differ from other European Union countries.

FEEDBACK AND OBSERVATIONS BY PROJECT PARTICIPANTS ON DIGNITY AND VIOLATIONS THEREOF:

☞ *In my opinion, human dignity is violated in Lithuania due to people's narrow attitude. Increasingly more attention is paid to how a person looks, and not to what he/she is.*

☞ *Most often, pupils who have the greatest number of friends in a class, the "elite", violate dignity of others, by pestering them. They express their opinion that is not benevolent, and is degrading.*

☞ *Frequently, human dignity is violated when a person is judged by appearance, the first impression.*

☞ *Human dignity is very often violated when insulting, discriminating or mocking at a person. There is a quite big number of such cases in our society.*

☞ *I would think that dignity is violated when another person abuses the one who is weaker, not physically, but psychologically.*

☞ *Dignity of one of my friends was violated when a classmate permanently sneered at him. His friend, however, was no any better- he not only concealed this fact from the school management, but also used physical violence.*

☞ *Many people work in Latvia, however they earn very little. They may not maintain their family; therefore have to leave the country and to start working abroad.*

☞ *Children are often degraded as they have less money than other pupils do in the class. A schoolchild, who is not so rich, often has fewer friends and is subjected to ridicule. This is because he/she does not have fashionable clothes or things (e.g. a cell phone).*

☞ *In the class, children mocked at a classmate because she was a fresher, therefore very timid and not able to defend herself.*

☞ *One of my acquaintances was subjected to severe insults because of the style he dressed, music he listened to, communication and world outlook. This happened and still happens every day.*

☞ *A girl was ignored because of her style. It became evident how she became closed.*

☞ *I think that dignity is a valuable, which depends on the personality more than on circumstances. Everyone may live in dignity. Human dignity is hurt by poorly paid jobs or under-appreciation of one's efforts.*

☞ *One familiar woman felt stressed out, vulnerable, as she had received ambiguous messages from her boss. After a consultation with a lawyer it turned out that, she would probably lose the case.*

☞ *There is a lot of violence at our school. This probably happens because our TV shows similar things practically every week.*

Thus, we may notice that project participants mostly associate human dignity with disrespect to them, superficial assessments, mockery (because of a poorer material or social status, etc.). A feeling that a man may not live dignified is also associated with insufficient appreciation of his/her efforts and work, necessity to leave the native country and to look for a job in other EU countries.

MOST MEMORABLE SITUATIONS OF THE FORUM THEATRE OR THE NEWSPAPER THEATRE ASSOCIATED WITH THE VIOLATION OF DIGNITY:

☞ *Buvo keista, kad skriaudėjai šaipantis iš aukos, žiūrovai nesijuokė, o rimtai žiūrėjo į vaidinamą situaciją. Jie labai gynė auką nuo skriaudėjo, stabdydavo situaciją, vos tik pamatę, kad aukai gresia pavojus.*

☞ *It was strange that when the offender sneered at the victim, the audience did not laugh, but looked seriously into the situation being plaid. They actively defended the victim from the offenders, stopped the situation as soon as they saw that the victim was under threat.*

☞ *I memorised the reaction of the younger spectators towards the offended person. They persistently tried to look for solutions and replaced one another on the stage. Indifference of senior spectators surprised me too; or maybe this was shyness to express their opinion.*

☞ *One of the most relevant topics plaid was about the discrimination at school. A very frequent topic at school was shown – a “fresher” in a class becomes as “dogsbody” and is constantly discriminated, whereas nobody does nothing to help the person. I remember when the audiences shared very different thoughts, and some even accused the “fresher” that she did not fight for herself.*

☞ *I memorised a scene on mockery– a situation at school where a girl was subjected to mockery because of her clothing. We heard a lot of feedback that this conformed to reality.*

☞ *At the beginning of the mini-conference, schoolchildren laughed at a girl who was in a very difficult situation. I felt that this was very wrong and was sorry for her very much. I could image how she was feeling. Finally, the audience succeeded in changing the situation for the better.*

☞ *A situation on the school and a small Romani girl (gypsy). The majority of the audience told that this was a stereotypical situation in fact; we, however, had a possibility to see this from the side and it became evident that human dignity was violated.*

☞ *I was most affected by a theatre scene on material valuables. It was shown that many people love things more than people do.*

WHAT COULD CHANGE THANKS TO PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF DIGNITY? PARTICIPANTS’ THOUGHTS:

☞ *You better perceive what is going on, when you do it yourself and see that from the side. There is a saying: “say it to me – and I will forget; show it to me – and I will remember; involve me – and I will understand”.*

☞ *We will never succeed in proving to all people that dignity of every person must be respected; this, however, will help perceive how particular behaviour affects other people;*

☞ *I think that such projects make you know your own value and that of others.*

☞ *By getting an insight, knowing a person who experiences bad things from close up, we begin to understand that we would not like to be in the place of that person, and try not to treat others in the same way.*

☞ *When you look at everything from the side, you as if recover your sight. Maybe the offenders themselves find it hurtful, as they see their true face.*

☞ *When you look from the side, it seems very cruel, and you start to think what you yourself or others do wrong.*

☞ *It helps give a serious thought to that; makes you not to be silent when you see such a situation.*

☞ *While acting in the project we saw the reality that youth knows very little on the subject of rights; by the way, they are not too much interested in that, therefore different attractive presentation forms are simply necessary.*

☞ *I realized in this project that every man has feelings, experiences, and none would like that somebody mocked at him. This teaches that all people must be respected evenly, as they are the very same, like I am.*

☛ *I think that such theatre forms help see the problems we do not see in daily life, as we simply ignore them.*

☛ *It is simply possible to talk with people how to nurture dignity, how to assess others and yourself in a dignified way.*

☛ *A person sees a situation, and when that person sees a similar situation in the future, maybe he/she will remember that and will act in the right way.*

☛ *When the audience sees a problematic situation, it has a possibility to change particular things and to see how it works. Situations are realistic; they may help people nurture empathy in themselves.*

☛ *When a project involves more peoples and persons, although they are hostile towards one another, they learn to respect others and become more tolerant. It is a pity that those who need to learn the most how to respect dignity of other people do not so actively want to change for the better.*



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: "Theatre of the Oppressed is the Game of Dialogue: we play and learn together. All kinds of Games must have Discipline – clear rules that we must follow. At the same time, Games have absolute need of creativity and Freedom. The Discipline of our Game is our belief that we must re-establish the right of everyone to exist in dignity. Our Freedom is to invent ways to help humanize Humanity".

THE SECOND MINI CONFERENCE AT SCHOOLS (NATIONAL EVENT)



FREEDOMS

Interactive mini-conferences on the topic of “Freedoms” took place in each eight schools participating in the project.



TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

931



OF WHICH:

398 men, 533 women, 159 represented socially vulnerable /disadvantaged groups, 740 participants were under 30, 141 participant represented the age group from 30 to 65, and 50 participants were 60 and over.



SUBTOPICS:

RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY: Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, CONSCIENCE AND RELIGION: 1) everyone has the right to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance. 2) The right to conscientious objection is recognised, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of this right.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION:

1) Everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training. 2) This right includes the possibility to receive free compulsory education. 3). The freedom to found educational establishments with due respect for democratic principles and the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions shall be respected, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of such freedom and right.

FREEDOM TO CHOOSE AN OCCUPATION AND RIGHT TO ENGAGE IN WORK:

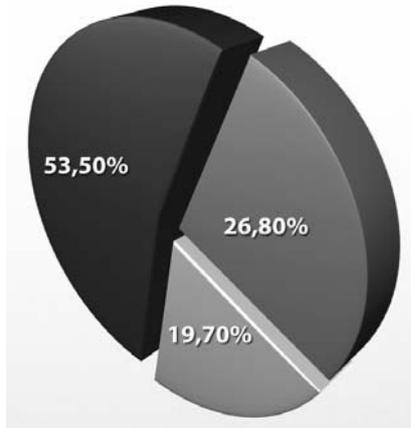
1) Everyone has the right to engage in work and to pursue a freely chosen or accepted occupation. 2) Every citizen of the Union has the freedom to seek employment, to work, to exercise the right of establishment and to provide services in any Member State. 3). Nationals of third countries who are authorised to work in the territories of the Member States are entitled to working conditions equivalent to those of citizens of the Union.



ACTIVITIES:

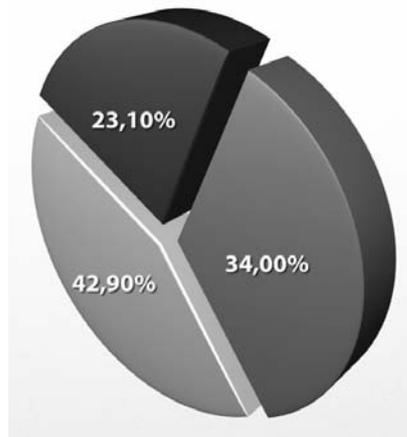
A teacher and a youth leader of each school, together with a small Forum theatre group, organized the second interactive mini-conference on the topic of “Freedoms”. During the conferences, theoretical reports, prepared by lawyers or school teachers were delivered; Forum theatre and Newspaper theatre performances on the topics of the violation of freedoms were created on themes relevant for local communities. Similar to the first mini-conferences, spectators were involved to participate, discuss, share experiences and suggestions, what should be different that those whose rights were restricted found courage to fight for themselves, to regain their fundamental rights and freedoms, whereas the surrounding people were not indifferent to these situations. As the scenes were created by schoolchildren, they often chose topics topical for them, mostly associated with the right to education and freedom to choose an occupation. Some schools have encountered the situations when the freedom of conscience or religion or the right to liberty and security of person was violated, therefore several scenes also focused on these topics.

DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE FREEDOMS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE PROJECT PARTICIPANTS:



26.8 % of the project participants claimed to believe that the right to liberty and security of person was not properly ensured in their countries; **19.7 %** were not sure on this issue. We were pleased that as many as **53.5 %** of the EU citizens of these countries thought that the right to liberty and security of person was ensured.

► As many as **48.2 %** of the respondents noted that people around them were subjected to undermining pressures because they thought differently from the remaining ones.

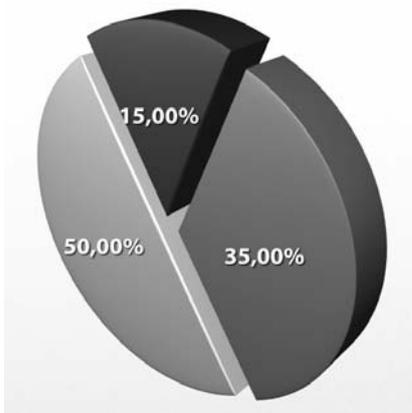


► **34%** of the surveyed project participants noted that people fell victim to other members of society in their countries because they confessed a different belief than the majority ones; meanwhile **42.9 %** of the respondents did not agree with that; whereas **23.1 %** did not have a clear opinion on this issue.

► As the majority of project participants are young persons who still attended school, the most relevant issues to them were associated with educational situations. As many as **76.8 %** of people expressed an opinion that their right to education was not ensured. Their more detailed answers revealed that this was mostly accounted for by bigger prices of school suppliers and limited opportunities to study at a higher school. These restrictions were mostly associated with financial issues.

► **46.4 %** of the respondents to the questionnaire claimed that young people could not choose a desired profession or occupation. The explanations provided also pertained to limited financial possibilities to acquire a desired speciality. Another trend that

has been revealed and surprised the project promoters and investigators was the fact that quite often future speciality and career of children is taken care of by their parents, not by teenagers, young people themselves. By performances of the Forum theatre created on this topic at different schools a common recurrent motif was revealed - children's attempt to fight with parents and to choose a desired profession, and, still while studying at school – to choose the disciplines they wanted to study at a higher level in order to pass examinations that would help them get admission to the desired speciality. It seemed that an attempt of prestige, efforts to realize ambitions not implemented by oneself through children was still very vital in society.



Residents of Lithuania, Latvia and Poland optimistically saw the situation of their countries as compared to general trends in the EU. **15%** claimed that problems related with violations of freedoms are more frequent in their countries than in other EU countries; **50 %** thought that the situation was the same as in the remaining EU countries; whereas **35 %** thought that this problem occurred in their country less seldom than in other Union states.

FEEDBACK AND OBSERVATIONS BY PROJECT PARTICIPANTS ON THE FREEDOM AND VIOLATIONS THEREOF:

☛ *Schoolchildren may not continue education at higher education schools, as the prices are very high, whereas the provided benefits are not so great.*

☛ *My friend wanted to choose an occupation, but the "buddies" told to choose the speciality already chosen by them.*

☛ *Restriction of freedoms, e.g. inability to choose an occupation is a common problem in Lithuania. This is due to old-established views that the parents, not the children, choose an occupation.*

☛ *The majority still are not fond of the so-called "geeks"; therefore, there are cases that they insult them and it seems they try to prove that it is horrible to "cram books"; others find it funny how Muslims pray, etc.*

☛ *I have a friend who is a Jehovah's Witness. She experiences a lot of negative attitude from her family members and surrounding people.*

☛ *A boy was spit at, because his opinion was in conflict with that of others.*

☛ *They criticized and laughed at another person, as his belief was different from those of others.*

☛ *I have happened to hear a great number of commentaries if one looks or thinks differently, is not a part of the "grey mass", "how dare you look like that"; "how dare you?"*

A number of participants noted that the freedom of young people was restricted, when they could not choose what subjects they would like to study and what speciality they would like to select, also felt that their parents tried to realize their own unimplemented expectations through them. During the conferences some schoolchildren told that in the future, when organising events on similar topics, it would be

beneficial to invite as many parents as possible, and to raise this issue for discussion; to ask parents themselves how they would suggest changing the existing situation and help the child who could not choose what he/she would like. Participants of the restriction of freedoms noticed that also in other fields, such as religion or selection of a lifestyle, or even the freedom to have your own style, quite a few young people felt stressed, as distinguishing oneself from the common crowd could provoke rejection reactions on part of other group members.

☛ MOST MEMORABLE SITUATIONS OF THE FORUM THEATRE OR THE NEWSPAPER THEATRE ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS TO FREEDOM:

☛ *Watching a Forum theatre scene on the freedoms, spectators recognized it very quickly because of their personal experience. They urged the mother to change her opinion and to admit that her daughter had the RIGHT to decide by herself what occupation to choose.*

☛ *The most memorable situation was on the freedom of choosing an occupation. Pupils realized that they had the right to choose a vocational career by themselves; however, they found it hard to speak with parents and to convince them that they were right.*

☞ A scene that was created by the audience where a journalist was prohibited from writing on a particular, non-popular topic became memorable. It was surprising to find out that the majority of the audience did not understand why it was not good to censor the freedom of the press.

☞ I remember a situation on mockery. This affected me a lot, as this reflected the school-children's attitude the way it actually was.

☞ I personally have not been in such situations where I was not able to act the way I wanted or felt. Yet, when I had to play a victim's role, I felt that this was very bad, when you could not act or speak the way you wanted, and only had to do what a group expected from you.

☞ When we showed a performance, the audience reacted in storming way. At the beginning, they laughed and even wanted to make the situation worse. This showed that problems associated with the freedoms of people were very great. Our performance helped us highlight this problem, but I think that we have to work on this problem further.

WHAT COULD CHANGE THANKS TO SUCH PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF FREEDOMS? PARTICIPANTS' OPINIONS:

☞ Maybe, the majority will pay less attention towards what others will try to prove to them, as they will know that they have the right to freedom.

☞ I think that this may simply change the opinion of people and help them understand that people need more freedom.

☞ I think that it is important to direct youth, where they may find knowledge about rights, and use these freedom correctly, with due responsibility.

☞ It would be relevant for parents to see some scenes to make them think what their children, not they themselves, want.

☞ This project helps understand that not only we have freedoms, also other people too.

☞ The project helps perceive the necessity of freedom itself – not as a superficial, but as an essential part of human existence. Freedom is associated with rights and duties.

☞ After performances, a lot of us had a thought that such situations were also in daily life, and they take place all the time, but only we do not see them.

☞ Before the mini-conference, the majority of pupils did not understand that this was a problem. It seemed to them obvious that freedoms of some pupils were restricted; however, they did not think that this was a problem.



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: All spectators (of the Theatre of the Oppressed), equally free to experience the liberating seizure of speech, have the same right, democratically, to expose, by acting (not by talking alone) their own opinions"

THE THIRD MINI-CONFERENCE AT SCHOOLS (NATIONAL EVENT)



EQUALITY

The third interactive mini – conferences on the topic of “Equality” took place at all eight schools participating in the project.



TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

875.



OF WHICH:

385 men, 490 women, 153 representatives of socially vulnerable / disadvantaged groups. The conferences were attended by 758 persons under 30, 91 person within the age group from 30 to 65, 26 persons – older than 65.



SUBTOPICS:

PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION: any discrimination, especially on the grounds of sex, race, colour of skin, national or social origin, genetic features, language, religion of belief, political or other convictions, association with a national minority, property status, birth, disability, age, sexual orientation.

Diversity of religions and languages: The Union respects the diversity of cultures, religions and languages.

EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN: Equality between women and men must be ensured in all areas, including

employment, work and pay. The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex.

CHILDREN’S RIGHTS: 1) Children shall have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being. They may express their views freely. Such views shall be taken into consideration on matters, which concern them in accordance with their age and maturity. 2) In all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions, the child’s best interests must be a primary consideration. 3) Every child shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis a personal relationship and direct contact with both his or her parents, unless that is contrary to his or her interests.

RIGHTS OF ELDERLY PEOPLE: The Union recognizes and respect the right of elderly people to live in a dignified manner and independently, as well as to participate in social and cultural life.

INTEGRATION OF DISABLED PERSONS: The Union recognizes and respects the right of disabled persons to use measures ensuring their independence, social and professional integration, as well as participation in community life.



ACTIVITIES:

At each school, a teacher, a youth leader and a small Forum theatre group that had increasingly more actively contributed to the organisation of events when the project gained momentum, invited everyone into the third interactive mini-conference on the topic of “Equality”. This topic actually received the most feedback and commentaries. On the other hand, the group already had experience in creating scenes; therefore, no wonder that each time they found it easier to do that; besides, the topic of Equality itself provoked many reactions. The majority claimed that they had encountered discrimination, inequality among different sexes, races, ethnic and other groups, and had painfully experienced their own experience, or that of their friends. This was reflected in the created scenes, public reactions and participants’ opinions in the questionnaire when answering to open questions. Questions on inequality seen and discrimination in daily life received the most comprehensive answers.

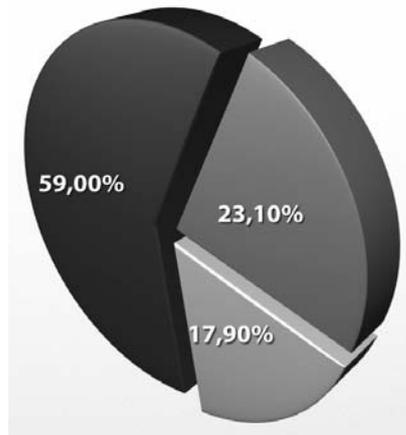


AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: "We believe that all relationships between people should be of dialogical nature. We should have a moment in which we listen to the others, and in which we speak but we know that between men and women, between blacks and whites, between north hemisphere countries and south hemisphere, all those dialogues become very soon a monologue".

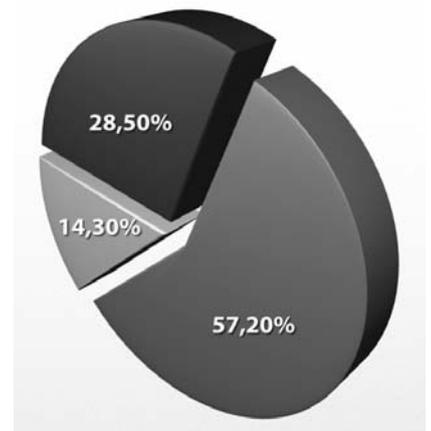
DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH EQUALITY HIGHLIGHTED BY THE PROJECT PARTICIPANTS:

► **51.8%** of project participants agreed with the thought that people in the countries participating in the project were discriminated due to various and different reasons.



59% of the participants thought that men and women had equal rights in the family; **23.1%** avoided to express a clear opinion on this issue; **17.9%** did not agree with this statement.

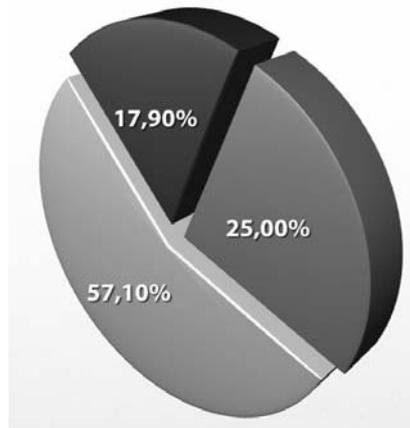
► When talking about equal rights of men and women at work, none of the respondents indicated that he/she "totally disagreed" with the statement that women and men had equal opportunities at work, and **58.9%** indicated that they agreed or totally agreed with this statement. Thus, among the participants there was none totally convinced that women or men were discriminated at work or subjected to unequal requirements and conditions.



57.2% were convinced that children's rights in these countries were ensured properly. **14.3%** did not agree with that, **28.5%** did not have a clear opinion. Thus, although we have seen previously that quite a few of participants were tended to assess that the children's right to education was not ensured properly, when talking about children's right in general an opinion prevailed that they were ensured adequately.

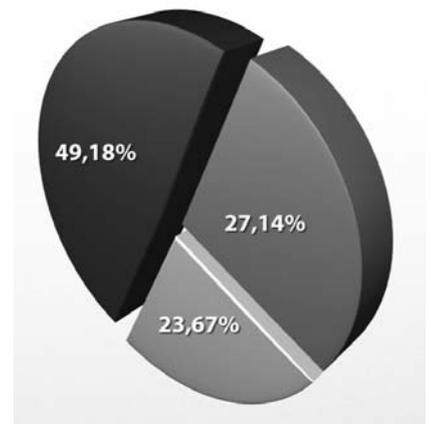
► As many as **41.8%** of the project participants thought that elderly individuals did not have sufficient possibilities to lead a full-fledged life; **28.6%** thought that elderly people were discriminated against.

► **51.8 %** of the respondents claimed that they thought that disabled persons were not provided with the conditions to access the places they want and to use public transportation. The same number of project participants thought that disabled persons were not provided with sufficient opportunities to become integrated into social and public life. Half of the respondents were of the opinion that disabled people were discriminated against. Both, the survey and conversations with people participating in the project disclosed that only recently disabled people received a more respectful and tolerant attitude towards them. As a very recent experience, mockery against them, unwillingness to accept them in the peer group was mentioned. Currently, these attitudes are declining, however they are still not ultimately vanished.



▼

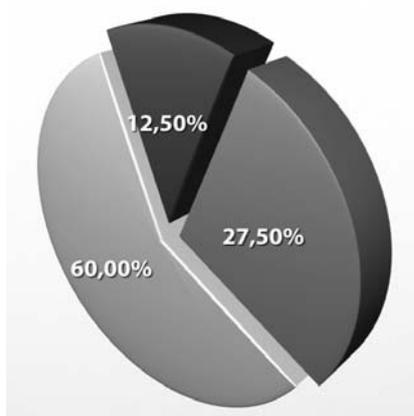
The project participants quite positively see the situation of national minorities in the countries participating in the project. **57.1 %** of the participants claimed that individuals of other nationalities were accepted in our countries quite benevolently. **17.9 %** did not agree with that, whereas **25%** were neutral. Nevertheless, during the discussion a trend became manifest to feel hostility to some ethnic groups that in reality had had no any direct contact with their representatives. Thus, an impression is made that some old stereotypes and preconceptions are still persistent and one has to work seeking to achieve that these nations are united by their affiliation to the common European Union, and are not instigated against each other by a clash of grievances in the past. We noticed that negative attitudes mostly spread when there is no direct link with representatives of the discriminated group, therefore one of activities in the future could be closer cooperation among different countries, and better, more personal knowledge of one another.



▼

When talking about the discrimination of races, the majority of project participants had no clear opinion. The statement "other races experience discrimination in your country" was assessed by **49.18 %** participants as "I neither agree, nor disagree". **27.14 %** were inclined to agree with such a statement, whereas **23.67 %** - not to agree. Probably, this may be accounted for by the fact that a comparatively small number of other race people live in our countries and therefore it is difficult to see and to name society reaction to these groups.

► There is quite a different picture when we talk about the acceptance of people with different sexual orientation. As many as **73.2 %** individuals who participated in the project claimed that these persons were discriminated in our countries. These figures correspond to the problem revealed by the majority of surveys on tolerance and discrimination, that other, non-traditional sexual orientation persons encounter consistent discrimination, and sometimes - even violence.



27.5 % of the participants were tended to assess inequality and discrimination in our counties as a more frequent problem than in other EU countries, 60 % - as similarly frequent, and 12.5 % of the persons participating in the project- as more rare.

FEEDBACK AND OBSERVATIONS BY PROJECT PARTICIPANTS ON EQUALITY AND VIOLATIONS THEREOF:

They did not want to admit to school a Jewish boy due to the impact that he could have on other pupils at the school.

A boy who was of different sexual orientation was ridiculed.

They showed over the TV a disabled person who could not access the municipality, as there were only stairs, and the individual was in a wheel chair. He had to arrange documents regarding his disability in that municipality.

I personally saw how a disabled driver was not yielded a parking space, and a fully able driver parked a vehicle in the space for disabled.

There was one disabled boy at our school who could not access some places in the school. He could not also use a rest-room on the first floor. At school there was only one such rest-room he could use. In our city, some disabled person could not access some stores, hairdressing saloons, libraries. Some schoolchildren laughed at senior or disabled persons, e.g. those with Down syndrome.

I have a friend who was constantly discriminated at his childhood. This affected his life very much, and now he behaves in the way the persons who used to discriminate him behaved.

Swarthy individuals are discriminated against in Lithuania.

Transvestites are discriminated against in Lithuania.

People hate gays and lesbians, even though they do not know them. All people are good and one should not be prejudiced against them only because of their age, sex, or disability.

The issue on the integration of disabled to society is especially relevant. Both, senior and young people are simply afraid of disabled people, because they do not know how to behave. During one class, children depicted a disabled person as foolish, angry, ugly and uninteresting person.

Practically every second pupils is discriminated in my class.

Most often, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation occurs. Another thing is that woman and men do not get an even pay – this is also discrimination.

I have not experienced this by myself, but I think that if somebody sees another race person, his picture on the internet, he/she will say some nasty comment.

One of my acquaintances was discriminated against because of his mental disability.

A friend has a particular disease and frequently receives a very great deal of negative reactions.

Once, a black-skinned person visited the school, and everybody ran to see him, as if he was some animal, and talked about him in a mocking way.

They often make mockery of disabled people, and they do not have conditions to assert themselves. Anyone who is somewhat different from everybody else is discriminated against.

As we see, the participants' answers also reflect common trends: it is always possible to find a pretext for discrimination. The project participants see around themselves consistent examples of discrimination when a target may become anyone – different race or nationality, unusual appearance or hobbies, and often, also a person in no

way different from the others. We are pleased that project participants see and do not approve that; they also look for the ways to change such situation and help maltreated people.

MOST MEMORABLE SITUATIONS OF THE FORUM THEATRE OR THE NEWSPAPER THEATRE ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS TO FREEDOM:

☛ *I memorized a scene when one young woman was discriminated against due to different belief, different race. The audience's reaction was such as in other situations – nobody did nothing and allowed this to happen.*

☛ *What surprised me during the conferences was that children and teenagers, who were titled as tinkers by teachers, looked for the ways to improve the situation or at least had a thought about it.*

☛ *A scene on racial differences. The interesting fact was that the audience was not indifferent to the victim; it discussed, gave advice and tried to solve the problem.*

☛ *In this mini – conference I memorised the best a scene when a fellow introduced a Romani girl, a "gypsy", to a group of his friends. None of the group of friends liked her. One fellow's girlfriend quarrelled with her and poured water over her.*

WHAT COULD CHANGE THANKS TO SUCH PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF EQUALITY? PARTICIPANTS' OPINIONS:

☛ *Individuals become familiar with people of different characters, nationalities, races. Communication in such a project, associated with the Forum theatre, helps better understand other people, and ultimately, you learn to respect even those whose personalities are very different.*

☛ *There is no better educational programme than the one, which involves you and makes open up your eyes, look at things in a slightly different way.*

☛ *Everyone from the participants found out about it [equality] more, and now can convey this information to others, to disseminate it.*

☛ *In my opinion, thanks to such events, people feel the way a discriminated person feels; they realize that this is a very bad feeling and give a thought that maybe they should not do this to other people.*

☛ *Such projects help understand that other race or age people are absolutely the same as we. We must understand this and cease discriminating others, as this doesn't bring any joy to neither offenders, nor victims.*

☛ *Such projects show that people are equal, yet practically nobody respects equality and the majority of people think that they are better.*

☛ *It is simply possible to instil a thought in people that if you are different, this is not bad.*

☛ *Thanks to these mini-conferences, some pupils of our school started to treat differently senior or disabled people.*

ADDITIONAL - FINAL EVENTS ORGANISED BY SCHOOLS - PARTNERS

Two Lithuanian schools representing little towns – representatives of the Širvintos Atžalynas pro-gymnasium and the Kriukai basic education school – arranged and implemented additional events for project dissemination. They were aimed at raising awareness on the project idea for the greatest possible number of people, spreading a message on human rights to communities in other towns and different generations. The Forum theatre group in Širvintos joined an annual campaign “A week of action without mockery”, where using the methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed they introduced the European human rights to representatives of school communities in three towns.



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: “Even if one is unaware of it, human relationships are structured in a theatrical way. The use of space, body language, choice of words and voice modulation, the confrontation of ideas and passions, everything that we demonstrate on the stage, we live in our lives. We are theatre!”

The Kriukai basic education school, seeking to foster a greater sense of active citizenship, socialization and responsibility for their own and other’s future they create, invited different organisations to an event where they talked on human rights regulated by the European Union, future perspectives, everyone’s personal responsibility for creating a common future. They remembered an enlightened person, a famous promoter of Lithuanian-ism from Joniškis region, nobleman S. Goesas. The event was attended by district schools, library representatives, and local seniors.

In total, 104 persons participated in additional events, of which 44 men and 60 women. 63 participants under 30, 26 – between 30 and 65, 15 –65 and over, ~20 – representatives of socially vulnerable / disadvantaged groups.

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL EVENT: FINAL CONFERENCE IN VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

**DATE:**

2014 September 30 – October 2

**VENUE:**

Vilnius, Lithuania

**NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:**

31

**OF WHICH:**

5 men and 26 women, 10 participants under 30, 20 – between 30 and 65, 1 – above 65.

**ACTIVITIES:**

The final international conference of the project was designated for sharing experiences, discussion of implemented activities and achieved results, follow-up planning. Besides, attention was paid to further examination of the issues related with the European Union and human rights. The director of the public institution “House of Arts and Education”, the project manager Rimanta Vaičekonytė and the project coordinator Virginija Skučaitė summed up the works fulfilled by all of them together, whereas the theatre and improvisation specialist Silvija Stonkutė boosted the participants’ energy level with games and exercises. The former European Parliament member (2004 – 2014), signatory to the Act the Re-establishment of Independence of Lithuania (11.03.1990) Justas Vincas Paleckis delivered a report “Rights of European Union citizens. World politics and human rights”. Asta Visminaitė introduced Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union. Lecturer from Kazimieras Simonavičius University, European Union law specialist Jolanta Tupko – Mazur talked about the topic “History of the EU, main legal documents, EU perspectives, common currency. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Dignity, freedoms, equality”. A member of the Lithuanian

Pupils Parliament, education and science committee, vice-chairman of Vilnius region Daumantas Stundžia talked on issues relevant to the major part of the assembled audience – about rights and duties of youth.

The organizer of non-formal education from Lithuanian children and youth centre invited the assembled participants to plan a project follow-up, to choose topics on which they planned to work in the future, to create ideas for further activities.

Each project participant introduced activities they had implemented, and finally, all together (under the guidance of percussionists Martynas Sučyla and Lina Sučylienė) created a percussion show for the public event.

At the beginning of the project, during the first trainings, we asked the project participants what they knew about human rights. Now, towards completion of the project, we asked to share what rights personally seemed to them the most important. Quite a few participants mentioned the right to choose an occupation (in the course of the project it turned out that the children’s right to choose an occupation by themselves was still very problematic in the countries participating in the project), freedom of belief, equality.



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: "The Theatre of the Oppressed was never an equidistant theatre which refused to take sides – it is the theatre of struggle! It is the theatre OF the oppressed, FOR the oppressed, ABOUT the oppressed and BY the oppressed, whether they be workers, peasants, unemployed people, women, black people, young people, old people, people with mental or physical disabilities – in the end, all those on whom silence is imposed and from whom is taken the right to a full existence".

ANSWERS OF SOME PROJECT PARTICIPANTS ON THE RIGHTS PERSONALLY IMPORTANT FOR THEM:

☛ *All they (human rights) seem important and significant. Sometimes, one could not exist without the other...*

☛ *For me, equality among people of different age, nationality, thinking, and each individual's personal freedom is important.*

☛ *Dignity – this is the most important for everyone and everywhere.*

The participants themselves claimed that they had learned much about human rights, as well as European Union documents regulating these rights. This provided them with the possibility to expand not only their world outlook, but also to notice more often whether their

friends and acquaintances know these rights and exercise them. Therefore, we asked them to define briefly, whether, in their opinion, society knew enough about these rights, and whether these rights were ensured. Practically all participants answered that, in their opinion, society knew little about human rights, only to the extent that they exist, and maybe several fundamental. This shows that still a lot could be done in this field.



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: "Human Rights – are rights for all, simply by virtue of belonging to the human species, and not to one particular nationality, race, group, class, caste or party".

BELOW ARE PROVIDED ANSWERS OF SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS TO THE QUESTIONS WHETHER PEOPLE HAVE SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS:

☛ *The majority still lack knowledge, namely on the issue of rights; we have not been aware of at least half of them, and have heard about only about the fundamental ones.*

☛ *People do not know about the rights sufficiently. I think that this is important for all citizens, irrespective of their age, sex and even education.*

☛ *Of course, no! Why? As the majority still lack knowledge on their rights. We do not even know about some of them.*

☛ *Our society moves towards the perception of human rights, yet this is not fully developed. Maybe, the most attention should be devoted to children's care or nursing institutions, and even detention facilities.*

☛ *I think that people in my country do not have enough information on these rights, e.g. Romani people.*

During the final meeting, it was possible to feel an obvious difference, as compared with the first meeting of project participants a year ago. First, the participants did actually know more about human rights, European Union documents defining them, and could participate in a discussion with lecturers, speak out their opinion and ground it. Besides, they already were skilful in using the methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed, found their style to work with the audience and to involve it into active participation. Each school, while familiarising with the works implemented during the project, had to organise a brief practical activity for other participants. It disclosed their creativity, an ability to involve, express one's mind. It was nice that a couple of schools shared the plans of knowledge application. The project participants actively promoted democratic values at their schools which, we think, would have a great feedback seeking to enhance the awareness of European Union people and economic growth.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL EVENT: FINAL PUBLIC INTERACTIVE CONFERENCE "A SQUARE OF DESIRES"

**DATE:**

2014 October 3 d.

**VENUE:**

Lounge at the Vilnius Bus Station,
Lithuania

**NUMBER OF
PARTICIPANTS:**

~ 300

**OF WHICH:**

~ 150 men, ~ 150 women, ~
80 people under 30, ~ 150
people between 30 and 65, ~ 70
people 65 and over, at least 50
representing socially vulnerable /
disadvantaged groups.

**ACTIVITIES:**

a teacher and a youth leader from each school that participated in the international conference were also joined by a small Forum theatre group of each school. Thus, at least 5 children and 2 teachers represented each school. A public space – lounge of Vilnius Bus station was chosen as a venue for the last project event "A Square of Desires". Not only those who knew about the event beforehand (the event was promoted through the Lithuanian national television, internet space, posters and distributed booklets), but also residents of Vilnius city and guests from Lithuania and other countries who accidentally happened to be in that place could participate in the event.

It was difficult to indicate exactly what the total number of participating people was. A part of them did not have a possibility to stay in the whole event – upon buying a bus ticket and seeing that some event was taking place, they could participate in it only till the departure of their bus. Nevertheless, everyone was given a flyer introducing the programme, the project and the project idea, and volunteers explained everyone interested about what was going on.

An artistic programme, guests' opinions, reports on the topic of human rights, as well as Forum theatre performances disclosing the violations of human rights were combined in the event. The representative of Lithuania in the European Parliament Petras Auštrevičius gave a speech at the event. Prof. Dr. Arūnas Augustinaitis, rector of Kazimieras Simonavičius University, and a representative of the project funding Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union in Lithuania Asta Visminaitė delivered welcome speeches. The master of law Maksimas Kozlineris introduced the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and three chapters on dignity, freedoms, equality that were analysed in detail in the course of the project. The event was conducted by the specialist of the Forum theatre, psychologist Austėja Beinartaitė.

The project participants impressively presented a pre-rehearsed percussion show with professional percussionists Lina Sučylienė and Martynas Sučyla, by "shaking" the whole bus station and its access ways and this way inviting all people travelling across the country to enquire what was going on.

On the improvised stage, two Forum theatre performances revealing painful situations were shown. The audience discussed them, shared experiences and advices, and tried to change what was happening on the stage.

This was the final and the main project event in which all participants had already been prepared to show their skills and knowledge, to disseminate further the message they had received - **THAT BEING CITIZENS OF THE COUNTRIES BELONGING TO THE EUROPEAN UNION THEY WERE ALSO CITIZENS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, AND THAT EU CITIZENSHIP SUPPLEMENTED THE NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP AND BESTOWED PARTICULAR IMPORTANT RIGHTS.**



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: "Since we are children, we play theatre, until the adults tell us to take life seriously and not play any-more. And when they do it to us, it is a crime, aesthetic crime, we are deprived of this powerful language of theatre".



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: "There are days when we wake up in the morning feeling happy because the sun is shining, trees are green and the sky is blue. Work of Nature. There are days when we wake up in the morning feeling happy because we have created something new; we have been capable of transforming Nature. Those are the days of harvest when we reap the fruits of our labour. We have worked hard to make it happen and have understood that, to be citizens, it is not enough to live in society: we have to transform it. That is the work of human beings".

PROJECT RESULTS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

- ▶ A message was spread among citizens of Lithuania, Latvia and Poland that they were also citizens of the European Union.
- ▶ Communities of eight schools in three countries had a possibility to become familiar in detail with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and other European Union documents governing human rights. They spread this knowledge further to their community members.
- ▶ In three countries, methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed were spread: the Forum theatre and the Newspaper theatre. The project participants had been trained to use these methods at work with people groups seeking to disclose the most relevant topics and difficulties.
- ▶ The project participants were fostered both, directly and indirectly, to draw attention to unjust social situations and human rights violations in their environment they had not noticed before. "A rehearsal of life" in performances of the Forum theatre would help find the ways to react to these situations actively in the future.
- ▶ Feedback and observations on the violation of human rights, the ways of changing the situation offered by citizens from the three countries have been gathered.
- ▶ A cooperation network among four countries was established: three ones participating in the project (Lithuania, Latvia and Poland), and Estonia whose lecturers participated in the project training.
- ▶ The project involved different age and social status people: schoolchildren, teachers, university students and lecturers, seniors' community.
- ▶ Information on the project also has reached members of the European Parliament. We hope that the project ideas have captured their interest and we would be able to cooperate more closely in the future.
- ▶ Information on the project, its activities, goals, tasks, promoters and supporters has reached about 1,000,000 European Union citizens..

At the time of the last meeting of the main project participants (teacher and youth leader) who organised all mini-conferences at their schools and had a possibility to observe the whole process, its impact, people's reactions, changes, we asked on how they treated and assessed the main project achievements. Several answers are provided below.



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: "When I went back to Brazil we developed what we call the Legislative theatre. Because the idea that we have is not to understand the world, it is to transform the world. During that period, we produced 13 laws, city laws, in the city of Rio, by doing Forum theatre, Invisible theatre, all kinds of theatre of the oppressed".

Never I had the opportunity that I have now – to say I support my government. In Spanish they use to say the phrase, - if there is a government, I'm against it. And I am one of those persons who I guess is against any governments in any place. But now I am very happy to say that I support my government. I am in favour of my government; it is the first time in my life. I could not wait for that".

RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT IDEA AND ACHIEVED RESULTS. EVALUATION BY THE PROJECT PARTICIPANTS:

☛ *The project idea and activities meet the needs of society and participants themselves.*

☛ *I assess the project idea very positively; people's self-esteem was strengthened; youth was involved into activities, their responsibility increased.*

☛ *I assess the idea very positively. Unique activities get you involved into this project, and because of them people want to spread these ideas to others.*

☛ *The activities were good in a sense that they involved all generations. This was interesting to both, young people and senior people.*

☛ *The most important results achieved during this project: fostering youth to take interest in the European Union documents; perception of their importance; knowledge of other nations' people as equal to you.*

☛ *The grounds of the fundamental human rights – dignity, freedoms, equality – have been assimilated. Many new games have been learnt, experience acquired whilst studying and observing presentations of other participants, listening to lecturers.*

☛ *The most important is the fact that these ideas on human rights reach pupils, and they find the ways to talk about them.*

☛ *Cooperation between Lithuania, Latvia and Poland is very important. The final conference of the project was also a great achievement – we managed to understand one another and to unite for discussing the experience of the whole year.*

☛ *Youth saw how little they knew about human rights.*

☛ *Pupils were informed on human rights. People from different countries discussed the problems and offered solutions.*

☛ *The project encouraged people to think. The more thinking people, the more beautiful humanity is.*



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: "When I had to leave Latin America because there were dictatorships all over, then I came to Europe. And in Europe I discovered that many more people commit suicides in those countries than in Brazil, Argentina or Chile. They were shot to death but they did not commit suicide. So we had to analyse also what was the oppression that was inside the heads of people, not what everyone could see, but what victimised us inside our heads. So we developed Rainbow of desire, which are now 15 techniques to try to theatricalize the oppression that we have internalized".

GUIDELINES FOR THE FUTURE

During the project implementation, the last meeting of all participants and evaluation of results we consistently tried to draw attention to the things we could have done in a different, more comprehensive way, and to identify the areas that lacked our attention. We tried to remember this as a lesson for the future – maybe for new projects, maybe for further independent activities of each partner in continuing the project ideas. Then, we tried to sum up the things we should pay greater attention to while implementing similar type projects in the future.

► When analysing topics associated with human rights, also to make use of other interactive methods capturing the interest of people, in order to involve citizens into the society change process in the most varied ways. People who participated in the project mentioned that active and involving methods considerably facilitated the perception and memorisation of sophisticated information. Nevertheless, some drew attention to the fact that topics remained rather difficult, and it was difficult to

cover a plenitude of documents, therefore it was important to find suitable ways to assimilate sophisticated theoretical information.

► Seeking to attract attention of authorities, it would be expedient to apply the method of the Legislative theatre, and when working with people's inner attitudes (an inclination to assume the victim's or the aggressor's position, to solve conflicts in violent ways, etc.), it would be suitable to use the method of the Rainbow of Desires. These both methods belong to the system of techniques of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed. Although we spread a message among society members on the protection of human rights and looked for the ways to convey the collected information to authorities, nevertheless it would be expedient to establish closer cooperation with politicians of each country and European Union seeking to improve together the social and psychological situation in our countries.

► In order to improve communication skills, to make oneself understood better, the participants' knowledge of English was improved in parallel, what all together would provide better opportunities to integrate into life of the European Union.

► It would be useful to involve the most diverse social groups, and pay more attention to national minorities, discriminated groups, their cooperation with other society members. As we have become convinced at the time of project implementation, we were afraid of those we did not know. It is probable, that a wider network of personal relationships we have, we would be less inclined to downgrade or to discriminate others.

► To involve into these activities as many countries with different experience as possible; to organize international events in each participating country; to provide participants with the greatest number of opportunities to see how different member states of the European Union live and cope with difficulties.

SUGGESTIONS OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

HOW TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS EFFICIENTLY. POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FOLLOW-UP OF VISIBLE ACTIVITIES:

► We ought to explain, to act in attractive, understandable forms. I would suggest involving public organisations, politicians, and youth.

► Society has to hear about human rights, to see, and to test this in practice. All methods used at the time of this project are good for this purpose.

► I think that we ought to create advertising, to speak about it more and to the widest possible audience.

► Popular people and politicians should show in public good examples and provide explanations.

► We should continue the activities, as there is a real possibility for that and many people would like to engage in these activities.

► I already see myself as a participant of the project follow-up (at the organisation level).

► The experience acquired provides with a possibility to continue the commenced activities at our school.

► There are many possibilities to continue the commenced activities, and this is simply a

matter of will. I see excellent perspectives for establishing relationships with other Lithuanian schools and involving the greatest possible number of countries.

► Possibilities for the follow-up are very big. As we exercise human rights all the time, therefore it is very important for everybody to know about them.

► The games we have learned may be used at schools, as they help schoolchildren be more open and have more confidence in themselves. Teachers should inform schoolchildren on human rights.

► I would suggest using the improvisation theatre. A political type conference for youth would fit for attaining the goals.

During the last meeting, some schools – project participants identified already specific events scheduled for the future, as a follow-up of this project. Plans of other participants are not so specific. They, however, show that everybody is motivated not to give up the activities they have started. Both, Lithuanians and foreign partners actively maintain further relationships, cooperate, consult, organize youth meetings, and initiate

the involvement of younger schoolchildren into activities of the Forum theatre group with an aim to convey the accumulated knowledge. Thus, the project participants acquired knowledge about Human Rights, and European Union laws safeguarding them, as well as about the situations when these rights are disregarded and always-existent possibilities to change and to solve these situations. They also learned about the methods of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, and became aware of thoughts and ideas of Augusto Boal himself- unwearied fighter for Human Rights. In addition, they expanded their social circle that currently covers at least three European Union states.



AUGUSTO BOAL

[Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed]: "And I only have one dream. It is to dream all my life. That is my only dream. I would like to go on dreaming. And if I can dream of things, well, I dream of solidarity among men and women, black and white, solidarity among countries, and solidarity to create ethics".

FINAL NOTES. PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK ON THE PROJECT, THEIR FEELINGS AND WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:

☛ I would like that there are more such projects and they covered, involved groups of different age, races and religion. In order to help man and society improve, you should look at everything from the side and analyse that.

☛ I am very pleased that such a project has been started as it encourages people to become more tolerant, involves them into different activities, as well as teaches to be equal in life with surrounding people.

☛ I like this project very much; as I may be someone, I have never been before.

☛ The important thing is that pupils as if actually "touched" Human Rights, felt that every man might contribute to the solution of small and big problems.

☛ This is an excellent way to make people give a thought, to look at problematic situations from the side, and to cease being indifferent.

☛ This project changed my thinking, made our group closer, and we were very pleased to plug into the lives of characters.

☛ I understood, cleared for myself and became convinced that too little is talked on the topics mentioned above both, at

school and home. It could be that there was no common system on who, in what ways it would be possible to do this in the most efficient way.

☛ The project is important, as every other human being is ridiculed in Lithuania.

☛ In my opinion, the Forum theatre is the best way to show daily problems. If pupils prepared lectures or reports, nobody would listen to them and nothing would be remembered afterwards.

☛ I liked the project, as I did not know before what the Forum theatre was, did not have knowledge on particular topics. Now I have learned much valuable information.

☛ This project made me think about problems. I think that it has opened eyes to a number of people.

☛ During conferences, we solved problems, yet we tried to maintain a merry and friendly atmosphere, as in our country [Latvia] we were already tired of the problems!

☛ People get accustomed to particular situations and do not see some problems. When a situation is shown in a different way, angle, they notice them and maybe change their opinion

about that. I think that because of that the world becomes a little better place.

☛ There was an equal amount of hard work and fun in the project. We became closer to one another. Most importantly, we could do something good for our small community!

☛ The method of the Forum theatre is good in a sense that we see what others think on particular topics. Schoolchildren became involved into performances, and I think that they will remember this for a long time. I also think that this experience has changed their attitude.

☛ The most important thing is that after each mini-conference something is left deep inside you. Man, after seeing a similar situation, immediately "comes to grips".

☛ This project is one of the most wonderful things. I have learned a lot by myself and I think that I will remember it all my life.

