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## SOCIAL EDUCIRCATION

### *Workshop 'Circus with Ethnic Minority Children'*

The Invisible Circus, Bristol, United Kingdom  
4 April– 8 April 2016



## 1) Introduction

Two and a half years ago the first edition of this Educircation workshop was held in Bristol, and it was a huge success. For this edition we chose to focus on how to deal with challenging behaviour when presented by the children and young people. The workshop was hosted by The Invisible Circus and like the previous edition, Holly Stoppit was the workshop tutor. We worked with the young people of Felix Road Adventure Playground.



## 2) The Invisible Circus and Invisible Youth

The Invisible Circus has been based in Bristol (UK) since 2002. Among other things they teach circus through workshops, produce unique circus theatre experiences and provide performers, bands, technicians, riggers, prop makers, make-up artists, costume makers, site and build crew for a wide spectrum of events and private bookings.

For this workshop we worked with Invisible Youth. This is the Social Circus wing of The Invisible Circus using circus and positive role models to engage young people and vulnerable groups.

Since the beginning of 2013 they have been practising Social Circus, offering circus skills workshops to young people from Bristol and beyond. During holidays and regular sessions at Felix Road Adventure Playground (our target group of this workshop) they teach circus skills with the focus on the process of developing a skill and the gifts that learning and succeeding bring. They want young people to see that learning can be enjoyable and that adults can be here to help, encourage and pass on skills rather than deem what is right and wrong in the process.

The workshops in partnership with Felix Road Adventure Playground are free and open access for the young people and out of this strong relationship with the playground, Invisible Youth was formed.



Social Educircation



'Circus with Ethnic Minority Children'



2016, Bristol

### 3) Workshop Tutor: Holly Stoppit

Holly Stoppit is a multi-talented person with many different tricks in her bag. She is a facilitator, teacher, director, drama-therapist, improviser. Besides this, she has a life-time's experience in social circus, community and professional theatre. For this workshop in particular Holly took part in a training in Nonviolent communication (more on this later on in the report). Also important to know for this workshop is that Holly's work is rooted in mindfulness. She offers people opportunities to connect deeply with themselves and to give themselves permission to work within their limitations.

Holly is being brought in by Invisible Circus, whom Holly has collaborated with on numerous projects in the past, including directing their massive site-specific circus-theatre extravaganza, Carny Ville. As mentioned earlier, Holly also provided the training for the last Bristol Educircation workshop.



### 4) Participants

For this workshop there were 23 participants from the 7 different countries that are involved in Educircation: Spain, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Greece, Belgium and United Kingdom. The participants formed a diverse group because of their different backgrounds. They were of different ages, had different experiences with social circus, with clowning, with nonviolent communication and with circus in general. Some of the participants of The Invisible Circus already knew the children of the Playground.





## 5) Target group (Children of Ethnic Minorities)

The target group of this workshop was children of Ethnic Minority backgrounds. We worked with the young people of Felix Road Adventure Playground, which is located in a very diverse ward with many different cultures, Ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. An Adventure Playground is a free space for children aged 5-15 to play. The Playground is a safe space that is child-led and has free open access. It aims to provide the best possible range of play opportunities for children, so they can have fun and meet new friends. Children are free to come and go and free to choose how they spend their time when there. They have the chance to take part freely in different activities such as digging, climbing, table tennis, or circus. They could choose if they wanted to participate in the circus workshop, but for the sake of the show on Friday, we asked them to choose and then hold to that choice for the rest of the week if they wanted to perform a circus act in the show. If a child changed his mind and wanted to join us after all, we would give them another role in the show. This wasn't the case. For the whole week we worked with 20 young people.



## 6) Aims

We had two major aims:

- 1) Finding positive ways of dealing with behavioural issues (an important part of this aim was connecting with the children)
- 3) Creating site-specific circus-theatre



## 7) Methodology

In the workshops Holly used a variety of techniques to serve our aims, including the theory of Nonviolent-communication, clowning, theatre, mindfulness, dance-movement, games and something she refers to as 'clown-o-therapy'. She uses the techniques she finds interesting for social circus teachers to know and to experience. Nonviolent communication skills helped her already in every area of her work so she wanted to pass them on as support for team communication and tools for dealing with challenging behaviour.



## 8) Overall structure of the week

During the week we had in the mornings a workshop with Holly and in the afternoons we did circus with the children of the Adventure Playground. Before the end of the day there was a moment of reflection on the circus session with the children. Friday we had planned a show on the Adventure Playground and in the sessions with the children the different acts were developed gradually.





## 9) Summary of the workshop exercises day by day (with thanks to Holly for the notes)

We started everyday sitting in a circle and often came back to this circle when we needed to discuss something in the group.

The first day Holly wanted to create a safe space for us to do the workshop in. She assured us that she only gives invitations to us, not demands. In other words: we were free to not participate in any particular exercise. And also important that we could fail, 'fail big time'. On a regular basis we needed to feel how we were and check in with our body, breath, energy and mood (mindfulness). After the daily reflexion and sometimes at the beginning of the day we were also asked to show how we felt by making a movement, using mimicry or sounds.



### Monday:

The first exercises had to do with getting to know the space and each other and feeling connected. It was important that we would try to make connections with the young people.

After getting an introduction of the workshop and a health and safety check, we started with some walking meditation exercise (mindfulness). We walked around and followed the instructions of Holly ie. tuning into your breath. Then we kept walking slowly around in the space, but now we were instructed to be aware of the other people in the space and we needed to balance the space (making sure there is an even spread of people around the whole space at all times.) The exercise became more difficult when we had to make equidistant triangles with two other people in the group.

For the next exercise we needed to fill the space by shaking more and more different body parts into the space. This was followed by interacting with the other people in the space whilst shaking.

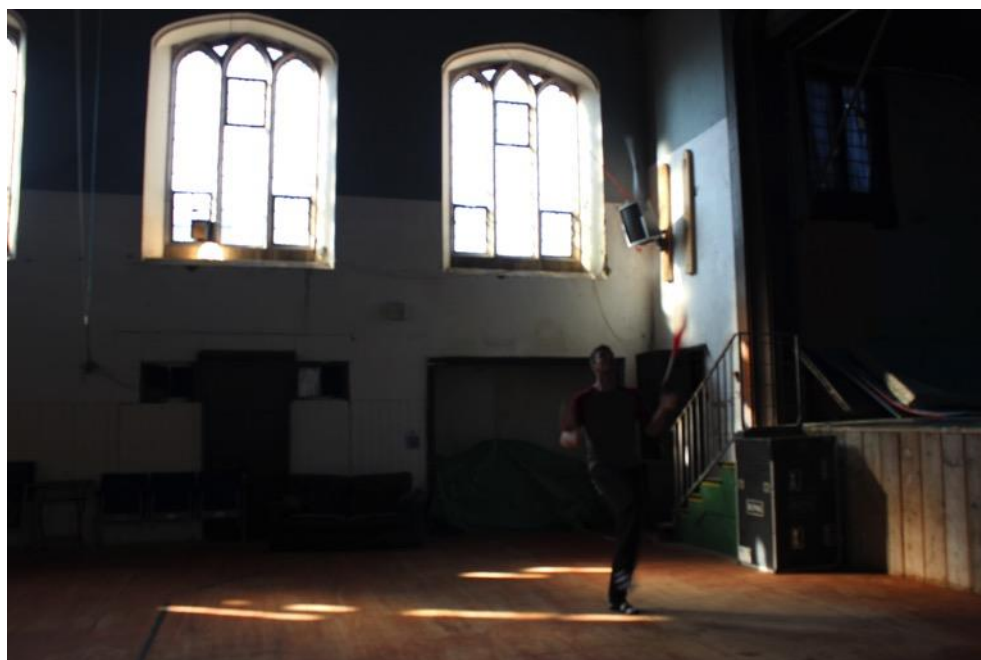
Then came a confronting exercise that most of the participants will remember for a long time: Eye contact. We needed to look in the eyes of another person for about 10 minutes. Meanwhile Holly was giving instructions to keep us relaxed and focused on the eyes and the person, ie. relax all the muscles of your face, see the colours of the eyes and imagine them as a baby, toddler... To end this exercise we had time to talk with our eye-partner about this experience. This exercise allows people to explore their ease and difficulty around seeing

and being seen and at the same time it's an opportunity to explore among others things: connection, vulnerability and tension. This last thing is an important factor of disconnectedness.

Holly opened up this exercise to the whole group and we repeated the second meditation walk but now we needed to look into the eyes of the other people in the space while we kept breathing. After this playfulness was added jumping together with another person when eye contact was made.

We did other exercises for experience in connectedness like making sounds together, a name game, gang-making game (dividing the group into cliques of different opinions).

The last part of the workshop on the first day was facilitated storytelling and contained exercises in pairs. For the first one we needed to get an idea on what it's like where your partner lives. You needed to ask question to get the detailed pictures or the feelings. The second exercise was called collaborative storytelling. In turns we needed to say the phrase "yes and..." and then to complete the story. This triggers to be spontaneous which in turn improves the relationship.



## Tuesday:

After we did a body scan (mindfulness) while we were sat, we started the day again with a walking meditation but soon it turned into an experience of flow. Flow is a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter, like being in an automatic state. When we allow things to flow, wonderful connection can happen, also with the young people. We needed to let our hands lead us through the space, then arms, knees, legs, hips and head. We needed to move like water and subsequently we could connect our fingertips to the fingertips of another person and dance together. Then we could give impulse by ticking another person on their body. The exercise ended with the whole group coming together in one clump, being relaxed and really feel the connection with the group.

The next exercise we did also with the young people to which we named the game: 'king/queen for one day'. It goes as follows: everybody stands in to lines facing each other (like a corridor of people). We are taking turns so one person at a time comes to the beginning of the corridor and asks the group specifically for what they need ie. being carried, massaged,... The individuals in the group then decide if they want to do the thing they are being asked to do or not. They do not have to. This is also an attempt to enhance the connection in the group and the feelings of giving and receiving acceptance and support.

Then Holly introduced us the theoretical framework Nonviolent Communication. We will now elaborate on this briefly in order to comprehend why this is so important for working with behavioural issues.

Nonviolent communication (NVC) is a system or a way of communicating with empathy and connection as the pillars. Our society is used to people being violent in their communication (ie. criticism, humiliation, labelling, ignoring,...). We do this to defend ourselves or gain power. In the workshop we brainstormed in the group what the different types of violent communication are and the reasons to communicate that way (Appendix 1). NVC focuses its attention in three areas, illustrated in the branches of a tree (see picture on the right). Self empathy, self expression and empathy with others. NVC states that we have to observe behaviour in a non-evaluative, non-judgemental way. On the basis of a role-play between a circus teacher and its student, we learned to reflect on a situation with a framework NVC provided. First the non-judgemental observations, then the judgements that are possibly present in the person, next look deeper on the inside of the person and try to guess what the feelings and needs are of that person to react that way. So it's quite important to be aware of your own and other people's feelings (workshop exercise: listening to music and write down what you feel) and your needs. When we look beneath the behaviour, to the feeling and needs, it increases our compassion and thereby brings us into deeper connection with other people. If a child shows some behavioural issues, try to understand where the behaviour comes from (out of which feelings or needs)



### Wednesday:

We started with an open discussion in the circle on some unfulfilled expectations (more on that later). The first exercise of the day was a warm up. We had to position our body so it would feel comfortable (standing, sitting or laying down), doing what our body needed and we followed the instructions of Holly: bring attention to different body parts and concentrate on your breath. Then start repetitive movements in your feet, knees, hips, back until the whole body is in movement. Move around in the space and open your attention to the others and copy any dance moves you like.

Then we did 3 exercises in pairs (A & B) who are certainly worth elaborating in this report. We started by individually exploring the space with our senses then A continues to explore the space through the senses and B copies and then swap roles (Mirroring). This exercise is powerful: if you match a person's physicality, their energy, their speech rhythms and their postures, we can step into their world and connect with them much easier. Then for the Blocking exercise A continues to explore the space through the senses and B tries to make them stop doing whatever they are doing. We had to stay playful and swap roles. Sometimes it's necessary to say 'no' to keep the boundaries and to ensure the safety. The third exercise was called Enticing, which included A trying to entice B into playing. B only joins in if they feel like they genuinely want to and then swap roles. We learned to use our charisma and enthusiasm to engage others in the activities. After each exercise we had the chance to reflect with our partner on how it was.





### **Thursday:**

We started the day again with a guided sitting meditation (mindfulness). For this workshop the focus was on creating site-specific theatre. First we needed to walk in the space and keep it balanced while Holly gave instructions: feel the feet on the floor, your feet are so soft and squidgy, the softness stretches to other body parts like the face and arms, speed up but keep the softness in the body, add a bit of sound. For the second part of this exercise Holly asked us to stop and explore leaning to one side and the other, then lean extreme and get out of balance. When that happened we needed to run around and stop and start again whenever we wanted. The third part of this exercise had to do with the awareness to the other people in the room. We had to let their movements affect ours. The ending result was a sort of instant group composition.

We stood all in a circle for the following exercise and one person crosses the circle with an action and sound. The person then gets to take on the movement and sound and while crossing the circle he/she changes it.

The next game is called Flocking and goes as follows: 4 people in a diamond shape (or 3 people in a triangle) keep the shape of the diamond while moving around the space. The person at the front leads the group but when they stop and turn, the leadership is passed on to someone else. We started with simple walking and then explored the different possibilities with movement qualities, levels and bringing in sounds. This exercise helps people to attune with each other and allows us to access our creativity within the boundaries of structure and feeling listened to and supported in your idea.

We had a little game with small groups in a circle. Everybody takes in turn the lead and instates a movement (to music). Each person of the group develops the movement of the person before. When everyone has had 2 turns, the group then works together to keep developing the movements with fluid leaders.

For the next exercises we used the stage with a few props on it. First, one person at a time puts himself somewhere in the site. When this person leaves the site, the next person enters it and finds another position. Second, in pairs: A finds a position. B looks at A and the site and places their body somewhere in relation to A and the site. A leaves the scene and C enters, looks at B and the site and places their body somewhere in relation to B and the site. Thirdly, people enter the site and place themselves in relationship to another person but nobody leaves. The audience guesses what this 'story' might be about. Fourthly, groups of 4 copying each other in the site with fluid leaders, using the site and the things in it.

The following exercise has the name Instant Clown and in short, it is about being baffled. Imaging you have a button on the back of your head and if you press it, you are baffled when you explore the space and everything and everyone in it.

There was another exercise that was focused on discovering what an object is and possibly can become ie. a scarf becomes a guitar.

### **Friday:**

During the adult training session we prepared for the final performance in the afternoon on the Playground. We finished the story (Appendix 4) and a schedule/ a walk-through was made that placed each act in a certain order on the Playground.



## **10) Circus sessions with the children and young people and daily reflexion moment**

### **Monday**

For the first day we had a casual open and free circus session with the young people on the adventure playground. Our mission was to connect with the young people, play circus and start to find out a bit about them. During the workshop, Invisible Youth were looking to recruit more participants for the young people's workshop. At a certain moment small groups of adults and young people were formed. The young people guided us through the playground with stories both real and imagined. The adults needed to facilitate to get the full stories of the children. Out of these collected stories the show would arise.

The reflection of the first day was focused on the connection we felt or didn't feel with a young one during the circus workshop. With the whole group we made a manifesto of 'how to make connection' (Appendix 2)



## **Tuesday**

Tuesday the young people came to us in All Hallows Hall. We chose this location because it would be easier for the young people to be focused. We started with a fun 'follow me' game to show them the space while hopping and jumping in a line behind Holly. We introduced the hall and the plan for making a show on Friday with some questions they could ask, yes/no. Then Holly and the young people set the group boundaries and made a list that was put on the wall, so everyone could check it all the time (Appendix 3). Then we had with the children a physical warm-up with shaking of the limbs. Next we passed along in a circle an invisible ball that grew bigger, smaller, lighter, sticky, hot etc to get their focus and creativity going. After the introduction of the adults and what their favourite circus skill is (through telling or showing), we had one hour that the young people were free to try whatever they wanted to do and learn. Meanwhile Holly was writing the story for the show on Friday based on the stories that the children told before. We ended the session with going round in the circle saying one thing you enjoyed today and the story of the show (The Laughing King/Queen) was shared with everyone (Appendix 4). When the young people left, we reflected on the behaviour we saw, using the NVC structure (Observation, Judgment, Feeling and Need).



## **Wednesday**

Wednesday we had first 15 minutes to talk about what we will do this afternoon in the circus skills session. There were roughly 7 main skill groups: Aerial, Flower sticks, Scarves, Poi, Acrobatics and Staff. The focus of the afternoon was to be developing skills, practicing them and beginning to find a routine. When the children arrived we did a recapitulation of the group boundaries and a warm up. One at a time everyone in the circle had to say his/her name and attach a movement to it. Then everybody could copy the name and the movement. Everyone was also free to say pass. Say once more your name and movement but this time bigger. One of the teachers of The Invisible Circus ran a fun physical warm up (including running to another spot in the circle) and some focusing exercises (ie clapping in rhythm). Subsequently we did the exercise 'King/Queen' for the day (see the part on the workshops).



For the next game Holly wanted the young people to think about how the people are in Happy Land. Sitting in a circle but all turned to the same side, we asked the next person one at a time, in a loud Italian accent 'Hey passa me a hat!' After this you pass a hat on to the head of the person in front of you. In the count of 1,2,3 hat, until everybody has a hat. Then everyone had the chance to look at each other and walk on a catwalk imagining and describing which clothes they could be wearing, using their imagination. Next was the circus practice into the groups and we could in the end show to the others what we'd achieved that session. At the end of the session there was a circle talk about one thing you enjoyed.

The reflection was again about the connection with the children during the session.



### **Thursday**

We started with some young people telling the group 'hello everybody' using different funny voices and then everybody copies back in the same way. Then followed a few clowning exercises. The first is called the Body Parts Laughter. In every body part, there is a different kind of laugh. Holly demonstrated and everyone had to copy back (laughter in the belly- ho ho ho/ laughter in the heart- ha ha ha/ laughter in the shoulders- hu hu hu /laughter in the face- hee hee hee). In the next game someone starts with a laugh and crosses the circle to give it to another person who crosses also the circle but changes the laugh. Then we had to chance to make our own piece of circus theatre, adults and young people together. The act needed to try to make the king/queen laugh. The acts were finished and the adults could reflect on the day. We talked about boundaries and possible trigger point of some of the behavioural issues. It's important to stay in connection with the child (using the NVC tools). We concluded the discussion with a plan of action. We will create a schedule in the morning that will provide the young people with clear boundaries for the final day.

### **Friday (THE CIRCUS SHOW)**

Preparing the children for the show and giving them costumes and face paint if they wanted. Then we practiced the song of Happy Town that was written and composed by Holly of the stories about Happy Town the children shared on Thursday (Appendix 5). We practiced the order of the acts with the music that was chosen.

The circus show itself: So many people came to watch the show, friends and family of the young people and the Invisible Youth team. The Queen of Happy Town welcomed them in and addressed the crowd from the high playground structure, during her speech she "sneezed" and everybody laughed. She told them not to, but this made them laugh more. So she said if anyone else laughs, she will send them to prison! And then the show

began. The queen walked with the audience passed several places where her inhabitants preformed for her a show to make her laugh.

When the show ended everybody sat together in our final circle with the young people. Everybody said something they enjoyed this week. The children themselves came up with how we could finish this adventure:

- We made an acrobatic tower
- Those who wanted one had a group hug
- We had a feast of little oranges and talked in small groups about what the juicy bits of the week were for us
- We stood in a circle, holding hands with our hands up high. We brought down the “curtain” together and that was the end.

Back in All Hallows we filled out the evaluation forms and did The Reflexion Treasure Box. This was an imaginary box in the centre of the circle, full of all the treasures of the week. One person at the time can come into the centre and ‘pick up’ some treasure, while telling the group what it is they will be taking with them from this week. If anyone else wants to take that type of treasure, they can come and grab a bit for themselves (ie. eye contact exercise, smiles of the children, a girl daring to perform, etc)

We ended the week for ourselves with a tower, a group photo, and holding hands until the final curtains drops.



### 11) Reflections on the week

#### During the week:

Many people came with the expectation that it would be a very clown-oriented workshop, like the previous edition. But the focus on this edition was more on Nonviolent communication and less on clowning. We had on Wednesday an open group discussion so the group could express their needs. Holly then adapted her workshop a little by putting more clowning exercises in it. The group felt more satisfied with the arrangement and we had some good creative clown exercises. We succeeded in creating a safe space for the young people. We derived that conclusion of many cases, for example a 9-year old boy who never did anything without his mum, did circus with us all by himself. It was also necessary to keep the children challenged but not with too difficult steps, just with constructive steps adapted at their particular level. Setting boundaries is really important with the children of different ethnicities.

### **The official evaluation:**

The data of the evaluation of the participants you can find in Appendix 6 and 7.

In Appendix 6 you can see in the graphic the satisfaction of the participants on different items.

Overall most of the participants were extremely satisfied, except on the item 'quality of teaching'. Maybe that had something to do with the conflicted expectations or that Holly's way of teaching didn't match some of the participants?

In Appendix 7 you can find the answers of the feedback forms. We will try to make a rough summary on 3 (part) questions that were asked.

#### **1. What did you learn?**

The techniques that were used in the workshop were new for some participants, so they learned some things they didn't know before so they can use them in their own projects, like Nonviolent communication. Learning how to work in groups, communicate and making connections with the other participants and the children was also something that was learned by some of the participants.

#### **2. How can the workshop be improved?**

An item that came back was to have more focus on using clowning skills to work with the children. The workshop could also have been improved with more concrete techniques for our specific target group. So in other words some of the participants wanted more concrete tools you can use in real life situations (i.e. for challenging behaviours). It would have been better if the participants could get clearer information about the workshop (like the aims) and the opportunity to get to know the backgrounds of all the other participants. Some wanted a more open discussion on what the group needs, so the participants could have more say. Others were more practical minded like it would have been nicer if the hall was warmer. For others it was ok the way it was.

#### **3. What impact on the children?**

We all agreed that our sessions and the show had a good impact on the children. They enjoyed doing circus and they could really shine on stage and show the best of themselves. According to some of the participants the children felt empowered by being listened to, so they had responsibilities and could make decisions. They also learned some new skills in working together in a group.



### Few photo's

- The Adventure Playground



- Workshop



- Circus sessions with young people and show



Social Educircation

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2016, Bristol

## Appendix 1:

### **Group Brainstorm - How could we describe violent communication?**

- Force
- Criticism
- Assumption
- Closed Body Language
- Defamation Of Character
- Torture
- Shame
- Humiliation
- Avoiding Eye Contact
- Bullying
- Labeling
- Passive Aggression
- Shouting
- Hitting
- Belittling
- Generalising
- Undermining
- Blame
- Judging
- Ignoring
- Interrupting
- Abuse
- Blocking
- Excluding
- Coersion

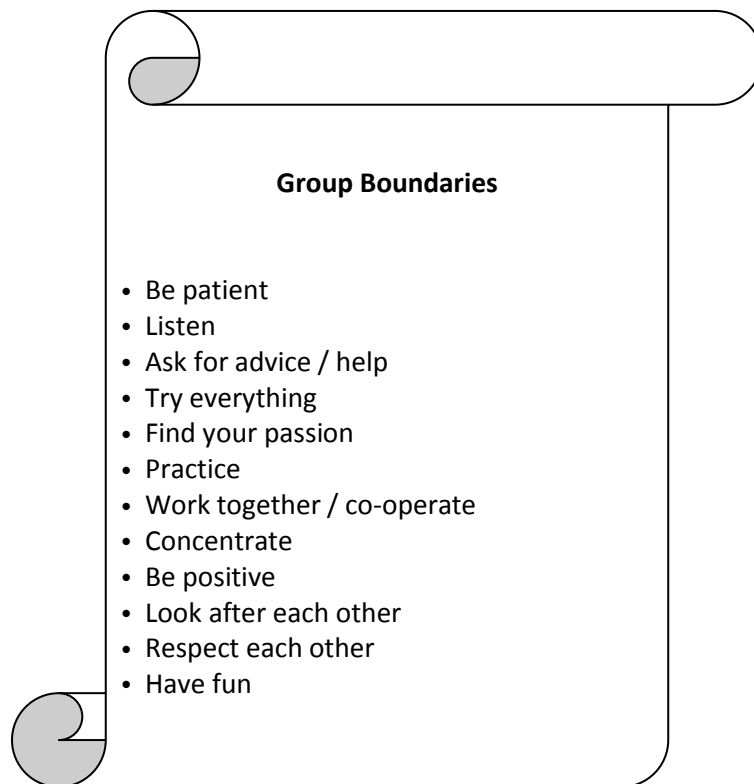
### **Group Brainstorm- why do you think people do these things? What might they really be needing?**

- To Defend Themselves
- To Gain Security
- To Gain Power
- To Make Themselves Look Better
- As An Attempt To Meet Their Needs
- To Hide Their Feelings
- As A Means Of Survival

Appendix 2**How To Connect With People- group manifesto**

- Stay playful
- Have an awareness of the dynamics in the space
- You can choose to step back and give space
- Physically match people's levels
- Match the energy of the person
- Do your own thing and let people come to you
- Create the space to let connection happen
- Use non-verbal skills to let people know they are welcome
- Present the equipment so it's usable and attractive
- Be prepared to drop your plans
- Listen for the play cues
- Be clear about what the game is
- Slow down
- Let go and trust that they will come back
- Be honest
- Breathe a bit deeper
- Be as you are and connect from there
- Accept that sometimes connection can't happen



Appendix 3:

#### Appendix 4:

##### The Laughing Queen

Queen of Happy Town welcomed them in and addressed the crowd from the high playground structure, during her speech she “sneezed” and everybody laughed. She told them not to, but this made them laugh more. So she said if anyone else laughs, she will send them to prison!

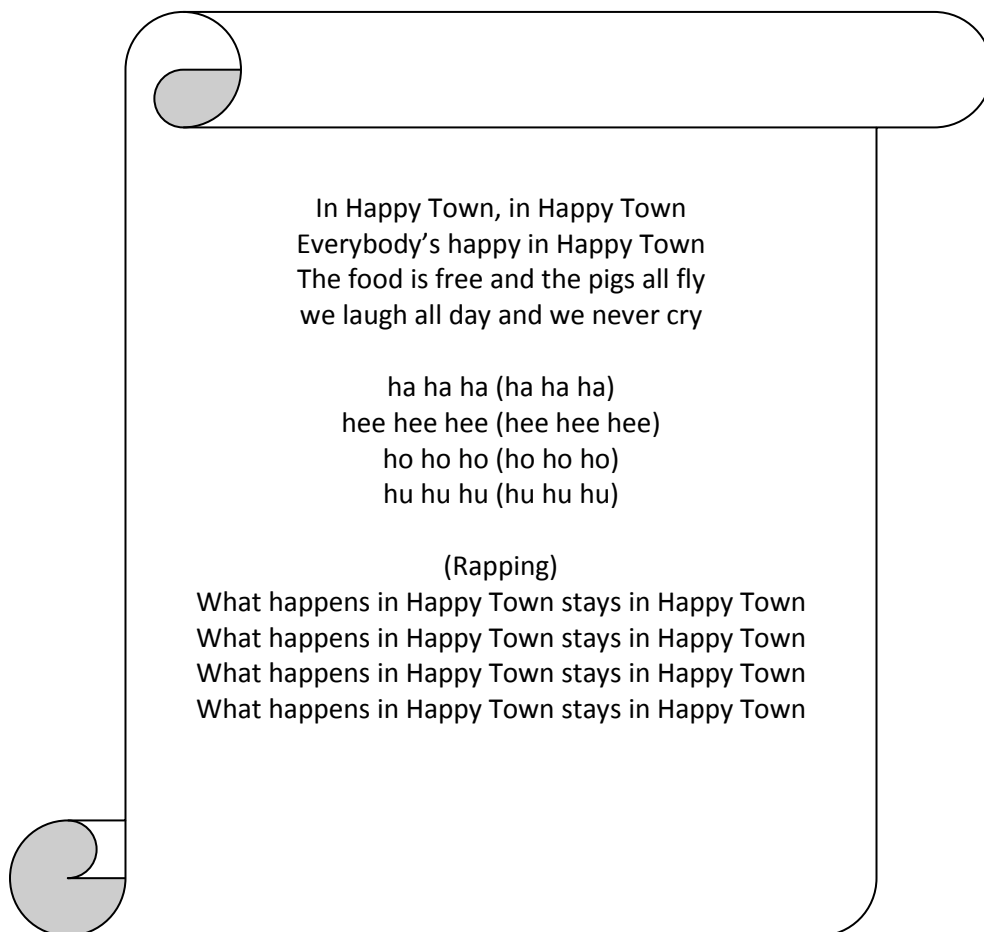
The people of Happy Town came up with a plan and led the queen and the crowd around the playground, making various attempts in various places to make the queen laugh again. They dangled delightfully on silks and aerial hoop, they offered synchronized mayhem with flowersticks, tenderly twirled ribbon sticks, pumped out high octane acrobatics including dangerous jumping through hoops, gave a sensational stilt tango and a lyrical fan dance. Even though the acts were all astounding, each time, the queen got her ninja guards to throw all the performers in prison.

By the time they’d all had a go, there was on-one left in Happy Town but the Queen and her Guards. Everyone else was in prison (a see-through wire mesh sport court), looking on at the queen as she played with her poi all by herself while the ninja guards stood guard.

As the queen looked at the people in the prison, she noticed they were having a much better time than she was, in fact they were having a party. The queen took a deep breath and called out to them “can I play with you?”

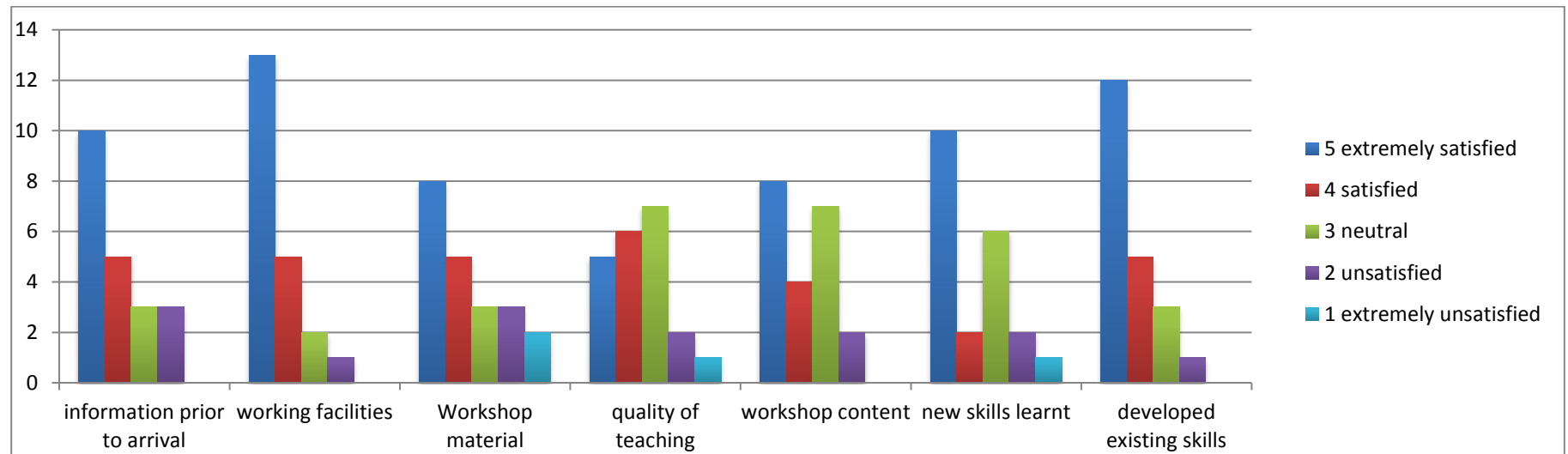
They said yes and let her into the prison, a real circus party started and they played together before bursting out into Happy Town singing.

THE END

Appendix 5:



Appendix 6:



## Appendix 7: Working with Ethnic Minority Children- Participant Feedback Forms

### **1. Open Question- What did you learn?**

- That the concept of non-violent communication exists and the language it uses
- I learned how to accept and try to support a style of teaching that was difficult to connect to. I learned a new non-verbal technique I can use with my project.
- I learned how to compromise, how to work as a team despite being divided. I learned that everyone's opinion is different and valid, and that ethnicity can be a community not a skin colour.
- Improving my communication skills. Improving my social circus skills.
- How to connect with others in a non-violent way.
- Skills and information on Non Violent Communication that are helpful to communicate with minorities and children in general. Circus methods on how to teach circus skills, story-facilitating methods, clown exercises to empower children to find their clown character. Difficulties in teaching children and how to overcome them.
- I learnt flower stick.
- I didn't really learn a lot. The methodology the trainer was using is not mine at all, and the workshop was not fitting my expectations, as we didn't really work on inclusion/ exclusion issues.
- A bit about how to communicate better with children and how much freedom to give to them, some communication games, listening to children and needs.
- Useful techniques to work with groups.
- To more often give the children what they need, but also at the same time keeping the boundaries.
- I didn't learn so much, I already use these techniques a lot. I am a kindergarten teacher. I wanted more clowning with children. I feel, I said, she is the best clowning teacher.
- How to be free-spirited with the children and respect their decisions.
- I learnt about Non Violent Communication and improved my non-verbal communication and eye contact. Also some possibilities with behavior and empathy. I improved, through my own development, about connection with children.
- I learnt how to make a five-day project with a story, I learnt a lot about how to take care of children during social circus and how to have their attention.
- I learnt how not to do many things. I learnt to be clear, to set and protect boundaries, to be clear about roles and responsibilities. I learnt the importance of working and deciding as a team. I learnt most from other participants after the workshop.
- That to perform with children in social circus does not have to be 100% organized. The performance does not have to be perfect. Important is the attitude and putting children in to power. Once they have this experience of being heard, it influences their lives forever.
- I learnt to react to different situations. And how to get attention for children and the group.
- I learnt that there are other people from around Europe with a similar mind-set when it comes to this kind of work.

### **2. How could the workshop be improved to better suit your needs?**

- More about techniques relating to challenging behavior, and more chances to share our experiences as we are almost all experienced social circus practitioners.
- The way discussion was carried out did not feel constructive for everyone. I wanted more collaboration. I wanted better communication before the workshop as I ended up being a host and did not feel consulted about my project.

- Structure it around the needs of our group, not to meet the agenda of the tutor/ organizer. Use experts who can meet our needs and help our project in the long term, and who have an interest in what we do and what we ask for.
- Connect the skills/ techniques more to children with a difficult social background. To know more about the others/ their skills etc before the workshop.
- If the participants had a say. That was a bit problematic.
- More clown exercises, better application between theory and reality.
- How to actually work with drop-in kids. To have known about the participant's individual work from the beginning and use these skills and have them more involved in decision-making.
- The description of the workshop was not really fitting with its actual content. It had really nothing to do with working with Ethnic minorities and I felt more like attending to a therapy than working on the topic. It's not that the workshop was bad, but it had to be "sold" another way, really explaining the methodology, and addressed to people who feel like attending to a therapy session.
- Would have been better to know all of the welcomed organisations, people and how things work in their country.
- To keep more structure. Follow group dynamics.
- I liked how it was.
- More practice exercises and tools we really could use with the children. More focus on possible problems with children of Ethnic minority like for example if they would bring a gesture of love.
- New skills about clowning with children. Higher level skills. Workshop facilitator is a great teacher, there are so many things I wanted to learn. But this is NOT her cup of tea. Next time more clowning with this target group.
- Being clearer about the content and goals and activities of the workshop before someone applies to it. Focus on less things/ topics.
- I think everything worked really well, very impressed.
- To have clearer information about the week, the pedagogy and methodology of teaching. To have some time every day to express myself in an easy and smooth way for me. To feel part of and involved with the workshop and the week's happenings, and the children's workshop warm ups. To feel more connection with the teacher. To feel and know about early connections between the locals who were doing the workshop and with Felix Road Adventure Playground. It was a wobbly week emotionally speaking. As well as I said so many things could be improved, I can also say so many good things I think that were amazing. I got experience, really awesome connections, and I think Invisible Youth Crew are superheroes- the way they stand strong has astonished me. Rada did huge and brilliant effort for the workshop and Holly was there all the time for us, for our needs, with open soul and a smile. Thank you all lovelies, you all rock it!!
- It was cold. The circus session was great- the exercises with the adult group, and the children's group and we had enough circus equipment to play with.
- Actually be about the subject. Listen to and consider the participants needs. Be more flexible. Let the participants choose their form of communication, feedback, and expression and not restrain them through rigid communication "system". Let them freely and in their own manner express emotions and thoughts.
- If the accommodation is closer to where the training was. If it was a bit warmer in the training room.
- Would have been could in the beginning to get to know the social intelligence of the group.
- I found the course very internal which made me think in more of a personal way., which I was 100% prepared for. More detail on lesson plan before starting the course.

### 3. According to you, what impact did Social Circus have on the clients? And their organization?

- I think the young people enjoyed having an opportunity to create and perform a show at the place where they play regularly.
- I felt the children benefited from the project as a whole but some of the youth did not respond well to the boundaries and abandoned the project, which is a shame.
- It gave them a brilliant opportunity to work with amazing tutors on a great project. It allowed friends and family and community to see what we do and how the youth can shine. It was great publicity for the playground.
- I think it had a good impact on the children.
- Social Circus gives another meaning to their lives. It also helped, hopefully, to prevent the Felix Rd Adventure Playground from being closed down.
- Empowerment, self-expression, having fun, team spirit, social skills, cooperation, patience.
- Some kids had the chance to play and learn new skills. Get on stage and have fun. But a few kids were upset by the methods.
- I think the kids really enjoyed the workshop and they got to focus and bring the best of themselves to the show, they really got to work together. In my opinion it would have helped if the trainer who led it had asked about the methodology that "Invisible Youth" is using with the children because she completely changed it and some kids may have felt confused because of that.
- They really enjoyed their time, and the trust from the adults. They had responsibility and used their imaginations.
- They had a chance to learn new social skills through experience of role-playing. For the organization it brings inspiration.
- Positive impact on both.
- They felt heard and listened to, so they would say more about what they needed.
- They had a nice week and learnt a little bit.
- Being with other people in a creative, unusual way. Having the chance to discover new ways of expressing themselves. The organization felt inspired by the project.
- I think that this week has had a huge impact on the clients, and on the children and parents in the community to have such amazing and professional people take time out to invest in others.
- I feel two different impacts. I felt some impact with new boundaries that I think wasn't too positive but at the end of the workshop I realized that it was positive to set them in another space. The impact on the clients after the show was great and empowering and giving them strength on their choices. I think organization is going to get stronger as a team after this.
- They were more open-minded, satisfied with themselves. They learnt to work together.
- Positive on many. Hopefully they are more interested in circus/ working with Invisible Youth. Negative on some (mostly the ones with challenging behaviour).
- Amazing experience of being heard and put into their power. The playground will have many more circus enthusiasts after this show I guess.
- They became more creative.
- They all appeared to really enjoy it. Several clients thanked the instructors for their work, which was positive feedback.

### 4. In what format does social circus exist with this specific target group in your country or in your home organization?

- Weekly, free, drop in 3 hour workshops at our base, Felix Road Adventure Playground.
- Social Circus with Roma children, empowerment in refugee camps on weekly basis.



- We are Invisible Youth. We work at Felix Rd Adventure Playground. Everyone is welcome, they are allowed to come in and out at any point during the workshops. We also go to Calais and Dunkirk refugee camps.
- In my home organization there are some projects working with refugees, like the one I am in. We go to the places where they live (kind of ghettos, I would say) and make some workshops with the children and teenagers.
- It is just a few with individual enterprise- working with children on a volunteer basis.
- Just as free-play workshops.
- We do some work with an organization that works with groups of children from different Ethnic backgrounds called Fabota.
- We work with Fabota (similar to Felix Rd).
- A social circus with lots of different projects ie workshops with refugees, “welcome classes” being in the circus tent for a week to have a “project week” with circus, open classes paid for by the government... a formation to become a circus teacher/ pedagog.
- It doesn’t exist in a playground and not the same diversity of Ethnic backgrounds, but I can see similarities with centres for young offenders.
- We have a new circus centre, and we organize the whole thing to include social circus.
- We are improving our social circus profile. We want to work more with children with gypsy backgrounds. I will use my new skills of NVC with them.
- There are weekly visits to the refugee camps to teach circus.
- Many formats: project weeks, after school, in school, regular classes.
- I run community club in a little village where about 10% of inhabitants are gypsies. Because I had a strong connection with them before I started to teach them circus, my course was just gypsy children and my own children at the beginning (1-3 months). After we had our first performance, lots of the majority children joined the course so now it really has the good inclusions impact.

**5. If you/ your organization does not work with this target group how can you imagine introducing it?**

- We are just about to start it. Similar format followed by every week a free class.
- We are on our way to focus our energy into a project with this target group.
- We can improve a lot now.
- We will use it in future projects.

**6. How do you expect to use and spread the knowledge of Social Circus in the future?**

- In my delivery of sessions.
- I have groups and I make new groups and teach them too.
- We will have a presentation about this training within our members of Cirkonet platform. I also plan to have performance and social circus presentation in my festival ST ART 2016- international street art festival in a town Valasske Mezirici. We also plan social circus projects with local schools.
- With organizing more open workshops.
- Teach our circus trainers the NVC skills.
- Keep working at Felix Rd. Organize exchanges with other organisations we have met this week.
- I will continue to work with the youth and grow connections we’ve made during this week.
- Make groups with schools together.
- Doing meetings with other Educircation attendants, passing the words, and doing social circus projects.
- Word of mouth, facebook fan page where people can see uploaded videos and images of the children participants etc.

- Through international workshops, connecting to other projects through social media, having exchanges and being open for new projects everywhere.
- We will give a presentation to our team.
- We are going to report it in a meeting with all of the teachers of our organization.
- Teaching in Felix Rd Playground and other workshops for kids.
- I'll teach clown therapy through my own therapeutic training of integrative therapy. Working hard in my organization so we can be seen more in public.
- By working and volunteering on different projects and organisations.
- I'm actually working quite a lot in different countries and projects and I expect to keep on doing that in order to exchange, learn, teach and grow together with the children and the staff of these projects.
- To work with a wider range of kids and get involved with other projects in the UK and other places.
- Bigger social network, cooperation between different countries getting access to more social groups, more equipment.
- To keep working as we do, at our project's base, and from there we get invited to do workshops elsewhere and from those workshops invited elsewhere again.