

News LETTER

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The transformative potential of dialogue theatre

More about our project:
www.expectart.eu/sl/

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In Hungary, our project partners recently organized an interesting event at a local Community House, just a few hundred meters from the secondary vocational school where they had been working with students over the past months. Two classes attended, the 9th graders and the 10th graders, all boys, giving the day a unique dynamic from the start.

Although the original plan was to hold the event in a theatre hall, a last-minute change of venue meant the group had to squeeze into a smaller room with less-than-ideal technical conditions. What began somewhat chaotically soon transformed into an engaging session, thanks to the facilitators' creative approach.

To ease the atmosphere, the team began with short and playful exercises – these were not directly related to the program's topic but helped the students relax, speak up, and become increasingly confident in expressing their opinions. They began to get visibly more involved; laughter, movement, and individual contributions filled the room.

The group then revisited their previous work - preparing a forum theatre performance inspired by the story of Cain and Abel. Cultural partners led quick and dynamic decision-making activities to warm the students up for the debates that followed.





Discussing inequality through performing arts

The first discussion contemplated the scene where Eve asks Adam to be more understanding toward Cain. The statement for the discussion was: *"The older sibling has a harder time"*. The boys enthusiastically argued their points, reacted, and some even changed their opinions along the way. Although the discussion was sometimes loud and chaotic, the arguments remained serious and personal – the conversation was skilfully steered back to the main thread by the coordinator whenever it started to drift.

In the second scene, Cain demanded equal work opportunities as Abel, leading to a new statement: *"Some forms of work are more valuable than others"*. The boys debated passionately, but this time the discussion became more personal, with plenty of humour and intensity. When the atmosphere in the room became thick, the team decided to open the windows – literally and figuratively.

The day concluded with a screening of a *"news broadcast"* style video the students had created earlier in the spring, depicting the biblical story: Jesus expels the merchants from the temple. The screening calmed the atmosphere and set the stage for the final and perhaps most exciting discussion of the day: *"Violence can be acceptable in the service of a good cause"*.

The debate flared up quickly. Deep, raw, and often contradictory arguments emerged. When the topic turned to whether a parental slap could ever be justified, emotions became particularly intense and deeply personal. Two students argued that violence is never acceptable, while the others, referring to their own experiences, disagreed. One student said, *"All I learned from being slapped was not to tell the truth at home"*.

Although the discussion at times became intense, it offered a meaningful insight: the students yearn for a space where they could speak openly, challenge ideas, and reflect on the world around them. The activity demonstrated how transformative dialogue and theatre can be in educational work.



Coming soon

Our Cultural Literacy Hubs are steadily taking shape. You can already explore [policy briefs](#) prepared for each participating country, offering key insights into national, European, and international frameworks on cultural literacy along with practical policy recommendations for strengthening its implementation. Visit our website and take a look!