

## FEPTO Networkgroup Meeting Psychodrama with children and youth



**Trauma and Resilience**  
**in Consideration of the Refugee Problem in Europe**

**5th - 7th of February, 2016 in Berlin**

**Stefan Flegelskamp**

**“A child is very serious when playing“ is what Rousseau says in his novel “Emile”**

When we chose this topic “Trauma and Resilience”, nobody could imagine how serious the dynamics regarding our topic would be.



18 participants from 8 different European countries accepted the invitation to revive the network group “Psychodrama with children and youth”. What a great response and success for the organisers Hilde Gött and Fabian Blobel as the local hosts and Stefan Flegelskamp in the role as FEPTO-facilitator, who organised this meeting together.

The first “simple” sociometric warm up question; “where are you from?” showed, how the immigration issue arose in each person in our group. Many group members had their own history of moving from one country to another and had suffered isolation and reclusion.

Gisela Scheef-Maier from the Centre for Victims of Torture in Berlin presented her work and gave a lecture and overview about the current development in Berlin. Many refugees are totally frustrated after arriving in Germany without hope and with unrealistic future plans. Her personal point of view was pessimistic concerning the expectations in Germany.

The first evening ended in a nice Italian restaurant with engaging discussions, delicate food and wine, of course.

### **The traumatized pirates**

The Saturday morning started with Stefan Flegelskamp introducing the German approach, Psychodrama-group-therapy with children developed by Alfons Aichinger. Afterwards he explained the “Defense Cascade”



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of traumatic experience, and what it means in the daily life of children suffering from posttraumatic symptoms.

Finally he demonstrated how he played with traumatised children (pirates) under consideration of perpetrator introject and permission to defend oneself.

## Hänsel and Gretel were refugees

After the lunch break Angela Sordano from Torino explained her Jungian analysis approach connected with Morenian psychodrama and group analytical concept. She used symbolic scripts of the group and created together with the children inter-subjective connection without individual interpretations. She di-

vides the therapeutic room in three spaces; for representation, for drawing and for sharing. At the starting phase Angela used mostly fairy tales; later on in the group process self-made stories. While playing a story the director is doubling from time to time, in order to make sure certain things are done. With a ritual the children jump back to the drawing space after the playing period. The children are invited to draw or to say what touched them in the story. Thus Angela explored the relationships in the group. She demonstrated by using the fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel" some intervention possibilities with traumatised children or youth.

A long day ended with a concrete counselling on how to found a new group with refugee children in Munich and some ideas on how to work with adolescents.

## We discover Hungary

On Sunday Zsofia Tölg-Molnar and Pozsar Bea from Hungary presented the approach developed by Kende Hanna. She connects individual (Adlerian) therapy with psychodrama.

She used a lot of stories, but not real fairy tales, called focus stories, developed by the psychodrama institute for children therapists in Budapest. This information was new for many participants so we decided to visit Budapest next time and Bea and Zsofia will be our next hosts.

## Happy end

After a short discussion we decided to revive the network group Psychodrama with Children and Youth under the umbrella of FEPTO. Stefan and Hilde will be the contact persons for FEPTO and Stefan will take the role as a facilitator/ moderator of this group.



We plan to meet once a year; next time in the beginning of February in Budapest.

We have also decided to try to organize an international Psychodrama Conference for Children and Youth in Budapest 2018. We have also started to think about publishing a book on Psychodrama with Children and Youth containing all the different approaches to working with children and youth and psychodrama.

Everybody left this first networking meeting enthusiastic and full of new ideas. Every participant wants to come back and continue in this group.

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## **Echo to the meeting:**

*“On my way home to Glasgow from the FEPTO network meeting of psychodramatists working with children and young people, in Berlin, I am feeling full of enthusiasm and inspired by all the people I met who shared something of their experience, practice and self with me.*

*This meeting with European colleagues, in short, gave me a new insight into the wealth of psychodrama being offered for this client group. During the weekend I was introduced to several models of psychodrama with children and young people, from a range of highly experienced practitioners and trainers from a variety of countries including Germany, Italy and Hungary. Our local hosts provided a fantastic venue, did a wonderful job of keeping us all very well fed and watered during our work together and also organized two fabulous venues for dinner where we spent some time together socially, sharing stories and getting to know one another better.”* **Emma Hager, Scotland**

*“Thank you so much for the inspiring meeting over the weekend. It was great meeting so many passionate Psychodramatists and to be exposed to diverse methods. It was a motivating and enriching experience. Many Thanks!”* **Elinor Zalmona, Israel/Germany**

*“Joining the group meeting in Berlin was not only a great pleasure (meeting nice colleagues, widening my own horizon), but also a very enriching view on the scene: there is more in the world than the German and the Austrian approaches to psychodrama work with children and adolescents, seeing esp. the reports from Hungary and Italy. Seeing this was a good way to move the discussions out of the fields of "right" or "wrong", black and white, and it may help to unfreeze the field of possible experimental psychodrama work, facilitating very appreciative and highly professional group discussions. We collected some items for the future of the network group, for instance "special supervision techniques" or "What adult psychodrama can learn from children psychodrama".* **Manfred Jannicke, Germany**

**Stefan Flegelskamp**

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