How do the municipal theatre groups for people with learning disabilities support their citizenship?
Knowledge develops through communities
Convention of rights for people with disabilities

- CRPD art 30 - to develop and utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, for own benefit, and also for the enrichment of society.
- CRPD art 24 - and lifelong learning directed to:
  a. The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
  b. The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
  c. Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.
- CRPD art 21 - can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion

Higher education in arts needs a focus on:
- The human rights
- The concepts of culture and citizenship
- Seeing/ realizing human right within theatre as a vehicle
- Linking higher education to already ongoing learning on site, in the theatre projects/ organisations and communities

Glørstad, V. (2020) © Arts education and citizenship
Following a series of workshops with Vancouver theatre artist Niall McNeill, a remarkable poet, playwright, actor and creator with down syndrome, I set out to discover more about disability arts practices. Specifically, I was seeking pathways toward facilitating director/creators with cognitive disabilities. In my research, the only organization I could find with practice specific to this was Zurich’s Theater HORA.
Cultural Expressions and Disenfranchisment

(…) a certain level within social life where experience is articulated, communicated and manipulated. The level, in other words where the circumstances, events and conflicts of everyday, private, political and economic life are appropriated by consciousness, given form and made available for social dialogue and initiative (Kaarsholm 1990b:38).

(M)any members of society are still relegated, both de facto and de jure to the status of passive subjects, not active citizens (…).

People with cognitive disabilities have the formal status of citizenship, yet these members of society are disenfranchised and precluded from enacting substantive citizenship, (…) denied the right to participate in democratic shared rules which defines modern ideals of citizenship (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2017, 839).
Citizenship, interdependent agency and Acts of citizenship

✓ Halvorsen (et. al. 2017) conceptualize “Active Citizenship” on three dimensions;

1. whether public policy through redistributive measures enables citizens to maintain a sense of security;
2. allows citizens pursuing autonomy and the life they value,
3. creates conditions for citizens participation and influence in deliberation and decision-making (2017, 3).

They ask if the aim to promote agency in public policies for people with disabilities, de facto enable persons to exercise agency? (CRPD art 3)

✓ Interdependent political agency
✓ Acts of citizenship
Per. Art Novi Sad, Serbia

Europe Beyond
Access: Dance, Politics,
Disability & the Body

Theatre Research International

Responding to Per.Art’s Dis_Sylphide: Six Voices from IFTR’s Performance and Disability Working Group

Margaret Ames, Dave Calvert, Vibeke Gjerstad, Kate Maguire-Rogers, ... 8

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Abstract

This submission by IFTR’s Performance and Disability working group features responses by six participants – voices projected from Canada, New Zealand, Norway, Wales, England and Australia – to Per Art’s production Dis_Sylphide, which was presented on 7 July 2018 at the Cultural Institution Vuk Karadžić as part of IFTR’s conference in Belgrade at the invitation of the Performance and Disability working group. Per Art is an independent theatre company founded in 1999 in Novi Sad, Serbia, by the internationally recognized choreographer and performer Sasa Asenotic, the
"I answered a dream"
Marthe Wexelsen
Goksøyr
Theatre Non-Stop

✓ Aim:
• To be a political arena for people with learning disabilities using the theatre as a vehicle for communication
• - Empowering people with learning through having theatre as an occupation/job (Saur & Johansen 2013)
✓ The care-regimes vs the staging of culture democracy (Gjærum 2018).
Municipal theatres within welfare programs
Theatre Egenart (Exceptionally) Theatre Unik (Unique)

The little prince - Saint-Exupéry 1942

From Klepp and 3 other municipalities - doing Revue

Multi-act popular theatrical entertainment that combines music, dance, and sketches. Though most famous for their visual spectacle, revues frequently satirized contemporary figures, news or literature.
Just being on the stage, watching the audience - then you get this “wow” feeling

✓ To describe the joy and happiness with this group – I need a lot of words - its so much positive things happening here .. And I see every time folk are here, they lighten up. ... They are so creative – and this warms my creative heart too, its spreads.

✓ When not all are fine, so are neither the group as a whole. So its important to take care of each other – that gives happiness. And the being on stage, gives so much happiness – just to stay on it, there.

✓ I enjoy the possibility of performing songs and sketches which I asked to perform.

✓ The best experience I have had with the audience has been with UNIQUE - because then I am part of a group, the rest of our gang here – and this spreads so much joy (Glørstad, V. Interview with actors in Theatre UNIQ October 2020, work in progress, not for citation).
Yes!

We could have travelled to others festivals, seeing other revues - and shown our one, – to meet other people and see other faces.

It would have been nice to get around other places, I was almost saying in the world, but at least in Norway - other bigger places in Norway – so they could hear about us .. so they know about us. (Glørstad, V. Interview with actors in Theatre UNIQ October 2020, work in progress, not for citation).
The local theatre groups as

- Area of personal development, expressions, local attention – through interdependent agency
- Creating spaces for Acts of citizenship and then active citizenship
- The importance of art in higher inclusive education
- The inclusive higher education should also reach out to local projects and organisations which do their learning through workshops and dedicated leaders on site, in the communities.
- Allowing for cultural expressions as arenas of dialog. (Glarstad, V. Interview with actors in Theatre UNIQ October 2020, work in progress, not for citation).

Glarstad, V. (2020) © Arts education and citizenship
Literature


Disability Arts2020, https://www.disabilityartsinternational.org/events/fridays-online-per-art-in-conversation/


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An edited collection of essays by Christiane Czymoch (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz), Yvonne Schmidt (Zurich University of the Arts) and Kate Maguire-Rosier (University of Sydney). Routledge

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Think College