THE INCLUSIVE POTENTIAL OF APPLIED THEATRE IN ACTIVITIES WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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SUMMARY

It is difficult to define applied theatre since many theatrical forms are played under that name; however, what they have in common is that they take place in “non-theatrical conditions”, when working with children, adults, people with disabilities, minorities and socially maladjusted people, with the aim to make the audience or the participants aware of the events or topics of personal or public importance. Uniformity cannot be found in the reference literature on the theatrical forms which belong to the applied theatre. Some of the accepted, recognisable forms of applied theatre are socio-drama, theatre in education, theatre in development, playback theatre and the theatre of the oppressed.

Different forms of applied theatre are described in this paper as well as the organisations which promote the applied theatre with the aim of social inclusion of people with disabilities, with a special retrospect to the people with cerebral paralysis. The applied theatre is becoming an increasingly important means of social inclusion of people with disabilities, which is confirmed by a great number of organisations worldwide and a great number of projects they carry out. The theatrical techniques these organisations apply are diverse and adapted to the specific needs of people with disabilities. People with cerebral paralysis, depending on their mobility, can more or less take part in most of these techniques.
The applied theatre is developing increasingly and it is getting a more important role in the development of the inclusive society.

KEY WORDS: applied theatre, people with disabilities, inclusion, people with cerebral paralysis

INTRODUCTION

Art is an inexhaustible and an unconditional field which shapes people’s lives in a positive direction. The language of art is a universal language which joins people who differ in many ways, and also when it comes to their disabilities. Since 1970s, many theatrical forms have tried to include amateurs and people with disabilities along with actors with the aim of social inclusion of people with disabilities. This refers especially to those with cerebral paralysis, as their number, depending of the year of research, has reached 2 in 1000 born children on average (Robertson, Wat, & Yasui, 2007).

The process of the development of the inclusive society is a long lasting one, and it requires the commitment of all structures, which means that EVERYONE is in the centre of changes. Everyone needs to contribute – people with disabilities, their families and those in their close surroundings, schools and government institutions, acquaintances, but also the employers, because the whole society can benefit from the proper education through inclusion and the development of an inclusive society (Karic & Radovanovic, 2009). “Discrimination based on disability” stands for making any sort of a difference, exclusion or limitation on the account of a disability with the aim or a consequence to limit or cancel the recognition and implementation of all human rights and basic freedoms in the fields of politics, economy, social, cultural and civil rights or any other field (The Association of Students with Disabilities, 2000). One of the main characteristics of the stigmatised groups, such as the group of people with disabilities, is that the individuals comprising it are isolated from the society and closed within themselves, with reduced social relationships. They seldom have an opportunity to develop their social and intellectual abilities and skills (Karic & Radovanovic, 2009).

Our idea was to think about inclusion in a wider social context, inclusion as a way of life. Within such a frame of thinking the postulate has to be a culture of one people. Culture used to mark spiritual values while nowadays it marks a person’s whole life.

Culture as an artistic creation and the increase of values cannot be produced without an individual and without a creative personality. Culture is not a mere product of the social life; it is also a product of
man’s creation. Apart from being determined by social norms and being the result of human freedom, artistic creation is also the strength of self-determination and self-representation (Bozovic, 2006).

The quality of life is a complex psychological category which many people have tried to define. Krizmanic and Kolesaric (1989) said that the quality of life is primarily “a psychological category which does not automatically come out of the fulfillment of some basic needs, but from a complete psychological structure of an individual in interaction with the physical and social living surroundings.” (Bozovic, 2006) Discrimination is decreased when the discriminators realise that their behaviour and actions are discriminatory (but also with legal regulations because it is a fact that people will act in a certain way to a lesser degree when it is forbidden). Another way of decreasing discrimination is through the strengthening of the members of marginalised groups in the battle against discrimination (Karic & Radovanovic, 2009), by involving them in different forms of artistic and cultural creation.

Theatre is one of the oldest art forms rooted in the social life, through which social life is manifested. Theatre is complex and variable, like the society itself. Throughout the history the scene and theatre features have changed, and so has the relationship between the actors and the audience. Notable changes occurred in the 20th century during the World Wars. As a reaction to various negative changes in the society, there have emerged different theatrical experiments, whose goal was to encourage the public to change the current situation in the art and society. Bertolt Brecht introduced an important novelty to the theatre. He moved the stage outside of the theatre building, and took the theatre staff on the streets in order to include “ordinary citizens” in the theatrical activities. Brecht’s theatre, better known under the name of “political theatre” requires the audience to acquire a critical attitude, to take on theatre roles which will prepare them for their real life roles. This theatrical form presents the beginning of the applied theatre based on the community.

**Applied Theatre**

Applied theatre is hard to be defined since many theatrical forms take place under that name, but what they have in common is that the plays are performed under “non-theatrical conditions”, working with children, adults, people with disabilities, minorities and socially maladjusted people with the aim to make the audience or the participants aware of the events or topics of public or personal importance. The term “applied theatre” came into use around twenty years ago. Prior to that time, the term “participatory theatre” was used for different socio-cultural theatrical forms. Socio-cultural theatrical forms were developed outside of the institutionalized theatre, most often through the activities with
marginalised groups, and with the groups of the so-called “healthy” people with the aim of a social change, as well. Agreement cannot be found in the reference literature on the exact forms which belong to the applied theatre. There are a number of organisations, institutions which apply some of these forms without being aware or informed about the activities that others use, and all under the same name of “applied theatre”. Some of the accepted, recognisable forms of applied theatre are socio-drama, theatre in education, theatre in development, playback theatre and the theatre of the oppressed.

Applied theatre developed fast during the 1980s and 1990s as a means of raising the social awareness of individuals or groups. Therefore new methods were developed in pedagogy, psychotherapy, social work, and many taboo topics were covered, while in the poor countries “theatre in development” was initiated. The break-out of applied theatre in education is best reflected in the curriculums of high education institutions with an integral part in the UK, Australia and the USA.

The basic characteristic of applied theatre is a workshop-like approach with all the participants. The workshops are usually wrapped-up with a performance or a play. Each workshop is carefully planned, with clearly defined goals and tasks for every activity, which depends on the characteristics of each group. The workshops have their facilitator, who is needs to be flexible for changes that may occur even within a well planned workshop, which depends on the group’s ‘spirit’. The main goal of these workshops is to express the group’s creative potential using a number of thought out games and activities. Play tasks and activities are directed at discovering personal and other people’s feelings, discovering the responsibility and the role which each individual has in the society.

In the first phase of work, the stress is on the group development. Since the groups are of a very heterogeneous structure, attention is paid to the introduction, communication, trust-building and safe surroundings. In the second phase experiments are conducted together and the directions a particular project is going to go at are set. This phase requires structural activities throughout which the feelings, thoughts and experiences of the group will come to the surface and will be discussed within the group. The workshop facilitator organises discussions, directs the group’s activities but never imposes their or ready solutions. Amateurs who have undergone a practical training for applied theatre workshops can act as the workshop facilitators as well.

One of the basic characteristics of the applied theatre is that there does not exist a play script prepared beforehand. It is written during the workshops themselves, and prepared by everyone together – professional actors, users, and everyone else employed at the theatre companies: the directors, choreographers, psychologists, social workers
and others. The process of the play creation moves from the bottom to the top, which means that the target group itself is the one that influences the play structure. The play topics can be different, and they mainly focus on a current issue that bothers the close or a wider community. Applied theatre does not require significant financial means and special equipment, as it is the body that is used for most of the activities. Body is the basic means and medium of applied theatre.

In this paper various forms of applied theatre are described, as well as the organisations which promote it with the aim of social inclusion of people with disabilities, with a special retrospect to people with cerebral paralysis.

**THE FORMS OF APPLIED THEATRE**

**Socio-drama**

Socio-drama presents a group learning process which focuses on problems-solving in people’s relationships (Sterneberg, Garcia, 2000). Jacob Levy Moreno, an Austrian psychiatrist, advocated the point of view that much can be learnt about solving social conflicts and mediation from the interaction in small groups, and by transferring that on the society as a whole. He believed that the power of creativity and spontaneity can change the inner and outer world. Based on that, he developed the Theatre of Improvisation which was later named the Theatre of Spontaneity. Moreno developed the idea of socio-drama during and after the Second World War, on different forms of theatre and psychodrama. According to Moreno, there are three key elements of socio-drama: the warm-up, enactment and exchange. The warm-up takes place in the beginning, and aims at the connection and direction of attention of group members on what is happening within the group. In the second phase, the participants spontaneously build scenes and define the core problem – enactment. In the last phase, considering the process and based on what is learnt, it comes to the exchange of thoughts and feelings. Socio-drama is designed for everyone; it can be used in various fields. The role of socio-drama is teaching how to come to the new conclusions through the analysis of social relationships and systems, and obtaining the skills necessary for achieving the desired changes.

**Theatre in Education**

Theatre in Education (TIE) emerged during the 1960s in England as an alternative theatre movement. Some theatrical forms such as educational drama have long found their place in education, and have been applied as extracurricular activities. Drama workshops aim at
meeting students’ interests and needs, having effect on their psychophysical development, spending free time in an organised way, which creates the conditions for the improvement of the quality of cultural life and lifelong education. Organisation, technology, staff who prepare, perform and value this kind of education must be prepared, and the activities must be chosen according to the participants’ ages.

The definition of this theatre is continually developing as a new strategy with the aim of the application of theatre as an important educational means. One of the general definitions of TIE is: a collection of interactive theatrical techniques beneficial for the educational process. Some of these processes require the development of original materials which use movement as a performance which serves as a jump board for the interaction with the audience and discussions on different topics; or the development of theatre activities for the purpose of mastering the curriculum and the plan for a certain subject (Jackson, 1980).

The target group of this movement and theatre method are children and the young, and the training is completed by professional actors, mainly at schools. Topics are adjusted to the curriculum and are of the importance for the children’s lives.

Theatre in Education enables the children to grasp the values of democracy, to become sensitive to the problems in the society, to be able to ask important questions and explore the answers from different angles. Throughout the drama role and stories, students become actively engaged in the exploratory questioning of moral, social and programme contents and seek an answer to the question of what it means to be a man in a modern society. In an increasing number of countries drama education is becoming an integral part of the curriculum.

TIE is often equated with drama in education (DIE); however, these are two different forms of the application of theatre for educational purpose. The main difference is that DIE employs role play, and TIE uses workshops and plays. DIE is performed by a teacher within a class or the school with the children they know very well, while Theatre in Education is performed by a theatre organisation which specialises in the application of this theatrical form. In educational drama the emphasis is on the imagination, expression and development of social skills, while theatre in education is focused on making changes.

Countries should provide all children through the educational strategies regular and accessible theatre and drama programs, enforced throughout the institutionalized education with the experienced experts for theatre and drama. The school teachers should be familiarised with the basic characteristics of TIE and DIE in order to be able to contribute to the development of the quality of teaching and learning.
Theatre in Development

Theatre in Development is a form through which questions or issues important for the community can be solved. NGOs applied this theatrical form in education of adults in countries with a great number of illiterate and poor people in the 1970s. Theatre in Development is applied in war zones, post-war zones, and generally in conflict-solving. This form of theatre is also common in AIDS prevention (Mwansa, 2004).

The process of a play creation in this theatre form moves “from the bottom to the top”, after exploration and conversation with the community members. Practitioners of this theatre genre have come across problems, mainly in communication, and have started using cultural media of local communities such as story-telling, making masks and dancing along with their methods. This theatre also uses some of the techniques of other theatre movements, like Boal’s technique of theatrical images, in which the emphasis lies in the visualisation of events or feelings, which makes it more sensible and more interesting to the students.

Playback theatre

Playback theatre is a form of the theatre of improvisation, in which the audience or group members are telling stories from their lives and watching their immediate interpretation (Salas, 1983). Whether it is performed on stage, within a workshop, in educational or medical surroundings, Playback theatre emphasises personal experience and enables people to see their lives in a new light. The co-founders of this theatre movement are Jonathan Fox and Jo Salas. Playback theatre has both educational and therapeutic potential; it can be performed by dressed-up artists for a defined audience, as well as a group event in which the participants become actors and story-tellers. Playback theatre is applied in education. It is used for the children to understand certain events in the most acceptable manner, while in some countries it is used as part of a public service programme.

At the beginning of a playback theatre play, stories such as anecdotes can be told in order for the audience to relax, warm up and slowly enter the process and create an atmosphere of trust. A director or a conductor is the host and the moderator of the process. Following the introduction and the warm-up, someone volunteers to tell a story. This can be a short moment or a sequence of events. They can be set in the past, present or future of the story. The narrator, i.e. the person telling the story, casts actors for their story directed by the conductor. Chosen participants, supported by music and lights, transform the story into a theatre scene using pieces of cloth, boxes or chairs as their equipment. The story can be delivered in various art forms, with the aim to grasp
the gist and core of it. In case the narrator is not satisfied with the manner in which the story was performed, they can ask the actors to redo or transform the scene. After the performance the narrator can express their feelings, thoughts and impressions, having observed how other people interpret them, their life and whatever represents and surrounds them. After the process is completed, a different person is invited to share their story. Having heard the narrator's story, many people from the audience take part in the discussion expressing their thoughts, happy or sad memories, dreams and fantasies. The narrator then realises they are not alone in what has happened to them, how a number of other people share the same or similar experience and how they can count on their support. A subconscious feeling of security is created among the audience. In such an atmosphere, the most profound as well as the majority of the similar everyday life stories will be welcome and respected.

Playback theatre is based on spontaneity and creative energy release. This theatrical form serves directly to the development of relationships, communication and understanding among people. It creates the need to develop self-awareness and self-understanding.

Ever since it was the developed up until this day, the Playback Theatre has expanded throughout the world with their companies and practice in over thirty countries. It is used for social changes and activity, in the learning process, for therapeutic purposes, for people with special needs, for building communication skills and tolerance in specific groups, for re-socialisation and re-education, public appearances and other. The plays are performed in front of different audiences, for the mentally challenged, for professionals in the field of health and social protection, at weddings and funerals and all the events which present life turning points.

**The Theatre of the Oppressed**

The Theatre of the Oppressed (TP) was founded by Augusto Boal, a Brazilian director, political activist, pedagogue, theatre innovator. He was inspired by the work of Paolo Freira and his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in which he says that in the student-teacher relationship knowledge and learning are two-way processes, and activity can transform the world. The Theatre of the Oppressed is a kind of an interactive theatrical form, whose goal is to start a dialogue between the oppressed and the oppressor. The Theatre of the Oppressed is led by the idea that in all human beings there exists a theatre as an inner urge, which explores everyday situations in which understanding and learning is provoked.

A theoretician Chris Vine (1993) analyses Theatre in Education and Theatre of the Oppressed. He points out that when Theatre of the
Oppressed appeared, Theatre in Education used its techniques of involving the audience in the scene. An important difference between Boal’s theatre and TIE is the didactic function. TIE imposes finished solutions, while Boal believes that personal experience on the scene will provide the participants with possible solutions, by means of empirical learning (Boal, 1992). Vine’s biggest objection to Boal’s theatre is that various solutions are offered for one and the same problem and that according to Boal’s theatre the teacher’s only role is to point at the possibility of a greater number of solutions.

Techniques that are used in the Theatre of the Oppressed are: Image Theatre, Invisible Theatre, Newspaper Theatre, Forum Theatre, Rainbow of Desire and Legislative Theatre (Boall, 2004).

*Figure 1. The Tree of the Theatre of the Oppressed*

*Source:*
**Image Theatre**

Image Theatre uses the body as a universal means of communication, which overcomes cultural and language barriers. Participants learn how to control their bodies through different exercises and in this process the use of spoken language is avoided, although it can be included if the objective is putting images in motion. Participants use their bodies to shape "frozen images" describing the events from their lives or their feelings. "Reading of frozen images" depends on the experience, knowledge and feelings of the audience, hence it can often differ from what the creator wanted to portray. Therefore, it is often worked on putting the images in motion – images are set into motion in order to reveal the real message of their creators.

**Forum Theatre**

Forum Theatre is one of the basic, the most reliable and the most applicable techniques of the Theatre of the Oppressed. The basic idea of Forum Theatre is to point out to a social issue, to present it through a story about the main character that fights against it and fails. It enables the audience to react and find solutions by coming out to the stage at key moments and acting out their ideas for the changes. This is the key moment for Boal in Forum Theatre, the moment when the relationship between the actors and the audience is changed, audience comes out to the stage and becomes active; an observer becomes a spectACTor.

A play within the Forum Theatre is created when someone from the audience tells their story (with a political or social undertone), actors improvise a story ten up to fifteen minutes long, and then a discussion is opened on the question of proposed solution to the problem. Audience disagrees with the played-out solution, and are then explained that the play will be performed again only this time they can react by replacing the actors at the key moments of their disagreement. The replaced actor goes to the audience and returns when the member of the audience has finished with their intervention. The rest of the actors on stage should adapt to the newly formed situation (Boal, 2004).

**Newspaper Theatre**

The objective of this theatre is for the people to recognise social problems in their surroundings in order to be able to react to them. Apart from this, the didactic role of this theatre reflects in taking a critical attitude towards this printed medium. Newspaper Theatre uses newspaper articles in the way it discloses cause-consequence relationships between certain events and questions the credibility of a piece of news.
Invisible Theatre

Invisible Theatre presents an intervention in society, in connection with a certain topic of general interest. It can be performed anywhere, even in places where theatre plays are not usually acted out, at a shop, in transport, at school, in a restaurant etc.

The performance of this technique requires serious preparation of the actors as it is impossible to predict the reaction of the audience to the scenes which differ from the ordinary behaviour of a community. The audience caught at the scene acquires the role of the protagonist; the observer becomes the performer not even being aware of their role.

The Rainbow of Desire

The Rainbow of Desire is a family of techniques which help the use of theatrical means to visualise our state of oppression and cope with it more clearly. This family of techniques was created in Europe when Augusto Boal realised that the Europeans are not affected by the same kind of oppression as the people in South America. Here the oppressors are hidden within ourselves ("The policemen in our heads" as Boal refers to them, as opposed to the external oppression in the Latin American countries), hence facing them is very important. The techniques of the Rainbow of Desire are based on the principle which Boal names "multiple mirror of foreign observations". Nobody analyses anything, but the participants offer the Protagonist (actor) their perception of his image and in that way provide him with the possibility to see his situation from different angles (Boal, 1995).

Legislative theatre

Legislative theatre was created from Boal's wish to translate the proposed solutions of the participants of forum theatre into the legislative language. This technique enables people who are not involved in the process of the political decision-making to become a part of the political body. Legislative theatre is based on forum theatre; after the performance and their reaction, the audience proposes laws which are formulated by lawyers, and they are presented again to the audience for discussion. The play is finished with the law promulgation. The practical aspect of this technique reflects in pressuring the legislative body in order for the proposed laws to be adopted. Legislative Theatre is often used in activities with people with disabilities, as they know best the problems they come across and they can give propositions for their solutions.
APPLIED THEATRE ORGANISATIONS AND PROJECTS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

There are a great number of theatre companies worldwide which use one or more forms of the applied theatre. What all the organisations have in common is that they try to remove the barrier between the actors and the audience by hiring professional actors and amateurs, and lately, ever so increasingly, people with disabilities. They use various stimuli: theatrical games, text, sculptures, masks, puppets, shadows, audio and visual media. Destroying the barriers, interactive relationship between the audience and actors, development of social awareness and responsibility and the promotion of diversity are their main goals.

Graeae is an applied theatre organisation founded in 1980. Its founders, Nabil Shaban and Richard Tomlinson met at a University at Covert, while working on the productions created for the people with disabilities. The objective of this organisation is to try and overcome the prejudice about people with disabilities through the theatre and workshops. The Graeae Theatre preformed a forum play “The Trouble with Richard” in which Laurence Clark, an internationally acclaimed actor, writer and comedian with cerebral paralysis played (www.graeae.org).

Uppity Theatre Company is an organisation created with the aim to gather professional actors and amateurs for creation of joint plays. Within this organisation, a theatre artist Jan Lipkin and an occupational therapist Fran Cohen created a sub-organisation, the DisAbility Project. This theatre gathers both people with and without disabilities whose goal is developing original stories which promote culture of people with disabilities. A great number of people who differ in many ways, age, race and ethnicity, education, socio-economic status and other are involved in the preparation of these stories. The DisAbility Project plays are performed in front a wide range of users in order to make the public sensitive to the needs of people with disabilities. One of their plays, “Working”, refers to the breaking of the myths the employers and the employees have on the questions of disability, and the effective inclusion of people with disabilities in the working community. People who suffer from cerebral paralysis also took part in this play. The participants at the 15th anniversary of the DisAbility Project and the one hundredth death anniversary of Mark Twain were people who use wheelchairs. A play entitled “The Assorted Short Adventures of Tom, Huck, and Becky” is interactive, dynamic and adapted for the audience of all ages (http://www.uppityco.com).

Zink was created in 1990 in Essex (UK) as a partner organization of the Theatre Resource. At the beginning they used educational drama and
theatrical techniques in their activities with the community. Theatre Resource soon started expanding their activities on projects with people with disabilities, and got a new name – Zink. The organisation promotes creativity and the culture of young and adult people with disabilities. One of their projects, BBC Children in Need “Fun and Friendship”, is intended for children with sensory and motor difficulties. The aim of the project is for the participants to make friends, increase self-confidence and self-respect (www.zink.org.uk).

*Screech Theatre* is one of the leading theatre companies for young people in Queensland, Australia. Every year they initiate taking participation in applied theatre projects for the young, with or without disabilities, aged twelve to twenty. Young people socialise through workshops, they learn theatrical techniques, build trust, make better communication, and as a result of their work an original play is created. The play “Cerebral Palsy League’s Screech” was performed within this company. Eleven young people, with and without disabilities, took part in the play. The play which makes a modern turn is based on the traditional tales.

*Unite Theatre for Social Action U.T.S.A.* has been practicing therapeutic theatre in Chittagong, Bangladesh since 1997. In their activities U.T.S.A. applies social drama, psycho-drama, Playback Theatre, art therapy and drama therapy. This organisation has held a number of workshops intended for people with disabilities. There is a special interest in the application of theatre as a means of therapy. Theatre therapy has a lot of branches, psycho-drama for people with intellectual functioning disorder and verbal drama for the deaf and people with motor disorders. This theatre company aims at raising public awareness on marginalised social groups (www.utsa.up.to).

*Oil Cart* is an organisation founded in 1981 in Great Britain. It promotes joint theatre and school and their activities are intended for children with profound or multiple learning disabilities. They use hydro-therapeutic pools, trampolines, aromatherapy, puppet shows, video productions and a number of motor-sensor techniques.

*River’s Edge Playback Theatre* is an organisation which promotes Playback Theatre, founded in 2000. It is the first and for the time being only organisation of this kind in Minnesota. It consists of three parts: Performance Company, Workshop Company, Improv Company. The activities of this organisation are directed at social changes and personal development. They usually deal with leadership, community, difference, power and weakness, stress and conflict, serious illnesses and treatments, love and transition (www.riversedgeplayback.org).

*Quest Visual Theatre* is an unprofitable organisation which uses art forms for the promotion of understanding among people, advancement
at school and at work, and enabling marginalized people to reach their full potential. Quest provides professional training and consultation for educators, administrators and parents who are interested in art and its application in the improvement of school work. It was founded in 1997 in Maryland, USA and it gathers a group of artists, educators and volunteers who present different ethinical, cultural and artistic bond with the idea of the creation, presentation and support to the theatre organised on a visual foundation. It has an educational aim - the improvement of literacy through the visual expression forms. The council of Maryland artists lists this organisation under five leading ones. The Government of the Chez Republic and Moscow University of Arts have awarded Quest for the promotion of inclusion and dedication in the promotion of the deaf artists around the world (www.questvisualtheatre.org).

**Solar Bear** is a charity theatre organisation from Scotland. Founded in 2002, it gathers children, young people and adults and is considered a leader in its field, especially in their activities with the marginalised groups. This organisation offers equal possibilities for everyone regardless of gender, age, skin colour, race, ethnic or national background, disabilities or sexual orientation. One of the main goals of the Solar Bear is removing the barriers, decreasing discrimination and creating inclusive society.

Solar Bear offers an array of drama, literary and music workshops for adults. Apart from working with the deaf and the blind, the organisation offers its services to people with damaged mental health. Using drama and psychological support techniques with the group members, a therapeutic and creative approach, it explores their personal stories. The stories created through the play get at public completely anonymously, informing and educating the public on the problems these people face.

A theatre of the young deaf people was founded within the Solar Bear Project. It gathers young people aged twelve to twenty-one. The organisation offers drama workshops, performances, movement, dance and mime workshops, introduction to the management phase, lightning and technical preparation. Their goal is to influence the development of successful students, self-confident individuals, responsible citizens and efficient co-workers.

Deaf and blind people participated in two plays of this organisation. They wrote poems, monologues and short scenes on their experiences. They used techniques such as shadows and physical theatrical techniques. Workshop participants were very satisfied, and they described the workshops as a “communication therapy” (www.solarbear.org.uk).
There are several organisations which use the techniques of applied theatre in the activities with people in marginalised groups in Serbia. One of the initiators is CEDEUM – an organisation from Vojvodina. They are participating in an international research project DICE (Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education) supported by EU along with eleven more countries. The aim of this project is the long-term improvement of education by using drama in education of young people. DICE project is realised in Serbia by a team of the Centre for Drama in Education and Art - CEDEUM. Their attitude is that theatre in education influences communication in mother tongue, learning of the ways to learn, interpersonal, intercultural, social and civil competence, entrepreneurship and cultural activities. The organisation points out that the project participants have improved in various fields: self-confidence in reading and task comprehension; self-assurance in communication; readiness for performing school activities; problem solving; stress; tolerance towards the minorities and foreigners; interest in taking part in questions of public importance; innovation and enterprise; planes for the future (www.cedeum.org.rs).

CONCLUSION

Applied theatre is becoming an increasingly important means of social inclusion of people with disabilities, which is confirmed by a number of organisations and projects worldwide which accomplish this goal. Most of these organisations were founded by theatre artists with the aim to gather professionals, amateurs with or without disabilities and create an inclusive community by creating a play as the crown result of the effort they had made together. The theatrical techniques which these organisations apply are diverse and adapted to the special needs of the people with disabilities. People with cerebral paralysis, depending on their mobility, can take part in most of these techniques. Some of the organisations have recently started using augmentative and alternative means of communication in order to overcome the speech barriers. Applied theatre is, by the sound of its name, “applicable” in different conditions, and most of the applied theatre forms do not require significant investments, which creates the preconditions for its more massive application. Applied theatre can be used in activities with various population, children, adults, and people with disabilities, socially maladjusted people, minorities, and “healthy” people. It can be applied in “non-theatrical conditions”, in the street, at a shop, hospital, school etc. Most of the applied theatre techniques are based on improvisation. They work with everything they find at disposal.
Improvisation activates the senses and creativity; it enables spontaneity and bonding among people. Improvisation leads to solutions in problem situations, which stimulates divergent thinking. Applied theatre is developing increasingly and plays a more important role in the development of inclusive society.

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