



CDAI Methodological Guide

A pedagogical methodology for the social inclusion of vulnerable adults through
Commedia dell'Arte

Commedia dell'Arte e Integrazione — an Erasmus+ adult-education project
Partners: Asociación Cultural La Sala de Sevilla (coordinator, Spain) and UBO Teatro APS (Italy)

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Part I – Foundations

1. Introduction and purpose of the methodology

The CDAI methodology – *Commedia dell'Arte e Integrazione* – was born from the collaboration between UBO Teatro, an Italian organisation with experience in the field of Commedia dell'Arte, theatre training and work with people in situations of vulnerability, and La Sala de Sevilla, a Spanish organisation active in cultural production, training and the promotion of the performing arts.

The methodology stems from the conviction that theatre should not be regarded exclusively as an artistic discipline, but can represent a powerful educational, relational and social tool.

In particular, Commedia dell'Arte possesses characteristics that make it especially suitable for work with adults living in situations of vulnerability or at risk of social exclusion: the body, movement, rhythm, improvisation, the relationship with the partner and with the group, the construction of the character and the use of the mask make it possible to work simultaneously on the individual, emotional, relational and cultural dimensions.

The aim of the CDAI methodology is not necessarily to train professional actors. The main aim is **to use the actor's tools to develop competences that are useful for personal, social and professional life**.

Through a progressive journey, participants are accompanied from knowledge of themselves to relationship with others, from discovery of their own body to the ability to communicate, from the expression of emotions to the management of unforeseen situations.

The methodology therefore uses Commedia dell'Arte as a **pedagogical tool and not as mere artistic content**.

The journey progressively leads participants to:

- increase awareness of their own body;
- improve their communicative ability;
- recognise and express their own emotions;
- develop listening and empathy;
- increase confidence in themselves and in others;
- develop creativity and the ability to improvise;
- improve their ability to work in a group;
- face unforeseen situations;
- develop problem-solving skills;
- experience different points of view;
- strengthen their sense of belonging to the community;
- become acquainted with a significant element of European cultural heritage.

The CDAI methodology is conceived as a **flexible and replicable** tool. It can be used by cultural associations, social organisations, educational bodies, theatre professionals and people who work with vulnerable adults.

The method does not require participants to have previous theatre experience. On the contrary, the absence of previous artistic competences represents an important characteristic of the journey: each participant starts from their own level and is accompanied through progressive exercises.

2. Target groups and contexts of application

The CDAI methodology is addressed primarily to **vulnerable adults or adults at risk of social exclusion**, with particular attention to people who may encounter obstacles in access to training, culture, socialisation or the labour market.

Priority target groups include:

- people with physical or cognitive disabilities;
- migrants and people with an intercultural background;
- the long-term unemployed;
- adult women in situations of vulnerability;
- people with limited opportunities for social participation;
- adults with relational or communicative fragilities;
- people who have had limited access to cultural and educational opportunities.

The methodology can, however, be adapted to other groups of adults, including those not formally classified as vulnerable.

2.1 A person-centred approach

CDAI does not regard vulnerability as a label that defines the person. Each participant is considered to be the bearer of competences, experiences, abilities and potential. The trainer therefore does not start from what the participant "cannot do", but from what they are already able to do, progressively building new competences.

This principle profoundly changes the educational relationship. The participant is not a passive subject who receives training, but becomes **the protagonist of their own learning process**.

2.2 Contexts of application

The methodology can be used through:

- theatre workshops;
- adult training courses;
- social inclusion pathways;
- non-formal education activities;
- intercultural workshops;
- social theatre activities;
- guidance and competence-development pathways;
- cultural activities addressed to local communities;
- European projects;
- continuing training activities for educators and social workers.

The methodology can be applied both in short pathways and in more structured programmes.

3. Theoretical foundations

The CDAI methodology arises from the meeting of different fields: **Commedia dell'Arte, theatre pedagogy, experiential learning, emotional education and social theatre**. It is therefore not a simple transfer of theatrical practice to a social context, but the construction of a journey in which artistic tools are intentionally oriented towards the development of competences.

3.1 Commedia dell'Arte

Commedia dell'Arte represents the artistic foundation of the methodology. Born in Italy in the sixteenth century, it constitutes one of the fundamental experiences in the history of European theatre and represents a cultural heritage capable of connecting art, the actor's work, improvisation, mask, movement and relationship with the audience.

The CDAI methodology does not aim simply to reproduce a traditional Commedia dell'Arte performance. Instead, it uses its most pedagogically significant tools:

- typification of the character;
- the character's body;
- rhythm;
- relationship;
- improvisation;
- listening;
- construction of the scene;
- relationship with the audience;
- use of the mask;
- the ability to react to the unexpected.

The codified structure of Commedia dell'Arte in fact makes it possible to create a situation that is particularly interesting from an educational point of view: the participant has **clear rules within which they can experiment freely**. This combination of structure and freedom represents one of the central principles of the methodology.

3.2 Theatre pedagogy

Theatre is used as a space for learning. The participant learns through direct experience and not exclusively through theoretical explanations. A theatre exercise can simultaneously develop: **artistic competence + personal competence + social competence**.

For example, an improvisation exercise may require the participant to listen to their partner, make a decision quickly, modify their behaviour according to the situation and communicate effectively. The theatrical activity thus becomes a context in which to experience competences that are also transferable outside the workshop.

3.3 Experiential learning

The CDAI method is based on the principle of *learning by doing*. The participant does not first learn the theory and then apply it. **They act, experiment, observe, reflect and try again.**

The process can be represented by the following cycle:

EXPERIENCE → OBSERVATION → REFLECTION → RE-ELABORATION → NEW EXPERIENCE

The cycle is repeated throughout the entire journey. Error is not regarded as a failure, but as a natural part of the learning process.

3.4 Emotional education

The theatrical stage offers a protected space in which to experience emotions and behaviours. The work does not seek to "act well" an emotion, but to develop the ability to: recognise it, distinguish it, communicate it, observe the reactions of others, modify one's own response, understand different points of view.

Emotional education is thus closely linked to social relationship.

3.5 Social theatre

The social dimension is present throughout the entire journey. The theatre group becomes a small community in which it is necessary to: listen, respect, collaborate, negotiate, wait, support others, take on responsibilities, manage conflicts.

The workshop thus becomes a space in which social competences are **practised concretely**.

4. The principles of the CDAI methodology

The CDAI methodology is based on ten fundamental principles.

- 1 **Centrality of the person** — Each participant is considered in their uniqueness. The journey is adapted to the abilities, timings and needs of the group.
- 2 **Inclusion** — Every person must be able to participate. Exercises are modified when necessary without losing their pedagogical aim.
- 3 **Safety** — The workshop must be perceived as a physically and emotionally safe space. No judgements on individual performance are admitted.
- 4 **Learning through experience** — The participant learns by doing. Concrete experience precedes theoretical explanation.
- 5 **The body as a tool of communication** — The body is not only a technical tool of the actor. It is one of the main instruments through which the individual communicates with the world.
- 6 **Structured improvisation** — Improvisation does not mean an absence of rules. The participant enters simple structures that allow them to experience freedom and creativity while maintaining a sense of safety.
- 7 **Relationship** — No activity is considered exclusively individual. Even when the exercise starts from one person alone, its final aim is to develop a greater capacity for relationship with the other.
- 8 **Valuing error** — Error is transformed into a possibility of learning. The participant must be able to make mistakes without feeling judged.
- 9 **Progressiveness** — Exercises follow a progression: simple → complex; individual → pair → group; controlled → improvised; workshop → performance.
- 10 **Transferability** — Every competence developed during the workshop must be connectable with everyday life. The trainer helps the participant to recognise the relationship between what happens on stage and what can be used outside it.

5. The competences the methodology aims to develop

The main result of the CDAI methodology is not the production of the final performance. The performance represents, rather, **the context in which competences are put to the test and made visible**.

The competences are organised into five areas.

5.1 Personal competences: self-awareness, confidence in one's own abilities, autonomy, ability to take initiatives, management of error, ability to face new situations.

5.2 Communicative competences: verbal communication, non-verbal communication, active listening, use of the voice, expressive clarity, ability to read the bodily signals of others, ability to adapt communication to the context.

5.3 Emotional competences: recognition of emotions, expression of emotions, awareness of one's own reactions, management of tension, empathy, ability to understand the emotions of others.

5.4 Social competences: cooperation, trust, respect, ability to negotiate, conflict management, assumption of responsibilities, belonging to the group.

5.5 Creative and cognitive competences: creativity, imagination, cognitive flexibility, ability to adapt, problem solving, decision-making ability, concentration, management of the unexpected.

Competence as a transferable result

A central element of the CDAI method is **transferability**. At the end of an exercise, the trainer does not limit themselves to asking: *"How did the scene go?"*. They may instead ask: *"What have you learned from this experience that can also be useful to you outside the theatre?"*

This question makes it possible to transform the artistic experience into awareness. The final aim is therefore that the participant can recognise: **"This ability that I have used on stage is an ability that I also possess in my life."**

It is at this step that Commedia dell'Arte truly becomes a **tool of social integration**.

Part II – Tools, techniques and pedagogical journey

6. The body as the first tool of integration

In the CDAI methodology, the body is the first tool of communication. Even before words, every person communicates through posture, movement, distance, rhythm, direction of gaze and presence in the space.

For this reason, body work is the starting point of the journey. The aim is not to achieve a physical performance or a specific theatrical skill. The body is used to increase self-awareness and the ability to relate to others.

The participant is gradually accompanied to: perceive their own body, recognise tensions and rigidity, occupy the space with greater confidence, modify posture and rhythm, observe the bodies of others, use movement as a form of communication, adapt their bodily behaviour to situations.

6.1 Space as a social tool

The theatrical space is regarded as a social laboratory. Walking in the same space necessarily means coming face to face with others. The participant must learn to: avoid others, respect distances, share the space, modify their trajectory, perceive the presence of others, coordinate with the group.

A simple walking exercise can thus become an exercise in listening and cooperation.

7. Voice and communication

The voice is the second major tool of the methodology. Vocal work is not aimed exclusively at performance, but at the ability to communicate with greater awareness.

Work proceeds progressively on: breathing, emission, volume, articulation, rhythm, pauses, intention, listening.

Particular attention is paid to the relationship between voice and emotion. The participant experiences how the same sentence can take on different meanings by changing rhythm, volume, intention and posture. This makes it possible to understand that communication does not depend exclusively on words.

8. Emotion and emotional awareness

The CDAI methodology introduces work on emotions gradually. The participant is first invited to recognise their own bodily reactions and then to recognise and perform different emotional states.

Emotions are not presented as rigid categories, but as dynamic experiences. The work can start from a simple question: **"How does my body change when I feel this emotion?"**

The participant then experiences: **emotion → body → voice → movement → relationship**.

This process makes it possible to understand that emotion can be communicated through different channels. Theatrical work also makes it possible to experience an important distinction: **feeling an emotion does not necessarily mean being dominated by it**. Through the character and the scene, the participant can observe the emotion, modify its intensity and experience different responses.

9. The mask as a pedagogical tool

The mask is one of the distinctive elements of the CDAI methodology. In the tradition of the Commedia dell'Arte, the mask identifies the character and determines its bodily, vocal and behavioural characteristics.

In the CDAI method, the mask also takes on a pedagogical function. Putting on a mask allows the participant to experience a particular condition: **"I can be another person in order to discover something about myself."**

The mask creates a distance between the person and the behaviour they are experiencing. This distance can reduce the fear of judgement and facilitate experimentation. The participant can thus try out: greater confidence, aggression, shyness, authority, comic quality, fear, desire, curiosity, relationship, conflict.

The mask thus becomes a **device of mediation between personal identity and social behaviour**.

10. The characters of the Commedia dell'Arte

The traditional characters of the Commedia dell'Arte are used as pedagogical archetypes. Among those most usable in the CDAI journey: Harlequin, Pantalone, Il Capitano, Il Dottore, Brighella, Pedrolino, the Lovers, and other characters that may be introduced depending on the journey.

The character is not studied only from a historical point of view. Each character is analysed through four elements:

- **Body** — How does he walk? Where does he carry his weight? What is his rhythm?
- **Voice** — How does he speak? What is his volume? What is his rhythm?
- **Desire** — What does he want to obtain?
- **Relationship** — How does he regard others?

This structure makes it possible to turn the character into a tool for observing human behaviour.

11. Structured improvisation

Improvisation is the operational core of the CDAI methodology. It is not used as a casual activity, but through progressive structures. The participant must learn to react to what happens without always having a prepared answer. This competence is especially important in everyday life as well.

Improvisation makes it possible to work on: flexibility, listening skills, speed of decision-making, creativity, handling mistakes, problem solving, adaptation, trust in the group.

11.1 The principle of acceptance

One of the fundamental principles of improvisation used in the method is: **"Accept before modifying."** The participant learns not to block the other's initiative immediately. On stage, this means accepting the partner's offer and building on it. At a social level it means developing a greater ability to listen and to consider the other's point of view.

12. Conflict as an educational tool

Conflict is a natural element of the Commedia dell'Arte. The characters have different desires and seek to achieve goals that are often incompatible. Stage conflict therefore makes it possible to work on managing real conflicts.

The participant learns to distinguish: **person ≠ problem ≠ behaviour**.

A scene can be built from two characters who want different things. The trainer observes: how the conflict arises, how it is communicated, what reactions it produces, how it can be transformed, what strategies make it possible to reach a solution.

The aim is not to eliminate conflict, but to learn to **manage it constructively**.

13. The relationship with the group

The group is an essential component of the method. The journey moves progressively through four levels:

ME → ME + THE OTHER → SMALL GROUP → COMMUNITY

At the beginning, the participant works mainly on their own awareness. Then they enter into relationship with a partner. Then they work in small groups. Finally they take part in the collective creation of a performance.

This progression makes it possible to gradually reduce the fear of exposure and increase the sense of belonging.

14. Structure of a CDAI session

A standard session can last between 90 and 120 minutes.

Phase	Duration	Content
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A – Welcome	10 min	Greeting, checking the state of the group and a brief activation activity
B – Warm-up	15–20 min	Body and vocal work
C – Technique	20–25 min	Introduction of a specific element of the Commedia dell'Arte
D – Application	25–35 min	Individual, pair or group exercises
E – Improvisation	15–20 min	Creative application of the competences acquired
F – Reflection	10–15 min	Sharing the experience and connecting it with everyday life

The final reflection is an integral part of the activity and must not be regarded as optional.

15. The CDAI cycle

Each activity follows the model:

- 1 Experience** — the participant carries out the exercise.
- 2 Observation** — the participant observes what has happened.
- 3 Reflection** — the group identifies difficulties, emotions and strategies.
- 4 Re-elaboration** — the participant modifies their behaviour.
- 5 New experience** — the exercise is repeated with a new awareness.

This cycle is one of the central methodological elements of CDAI.

16. Activity 1 – Shared space

Objective: to develop bodily awareness, attention and relationship with the group.

Duration: 15 minutes. **Number of participants:** 6–15. **Materials:** open space.

Procedure: the participants walk freely around the space. The trainer progressively introduces a number of instructions: change direction, modify speed, stop at the same time, keep a distance from others, occupy the empty spaces, avoid always walking behind the same person. The group must then try to stop simultaneously without using words or prearranged signals.

Competences developed: attention, non-verbal listening, coordination, awareness of space, cooperation, adaptability.

Debriefing: How did you know when to stop? Did you observe the others? Did you need to control everything? What happened when you began to trust the group?

17. Activity 2 – The body of the character

Objective: to develop bodily awareness and the ability to modify one's own behaviour. **Duration:** 20 minutes. **Materials:** none.

The participant walks normally. The trainer then introduces different instructions: walk like a very important person; walk like someone who is afraid; walk like someone who wants to conquer space; walk like someone who wants to go unnoticed. The participant observes how the following change: posture, step, rhythm, gaze, direction, breathing.

A character from the Commedia dell'Arte is then introduced. The participant must build its body without using words.

Competences developed: expressiveness, bodily awareness, creativity, observation, ability to take on different points of view.

18. Activity 3 – The yes of improvisation

Objective: to develop listening, acceptance and cooperation. **Duration:** 20 minutes.

One participant proposes a situation. The second must accept it and add an element. Example: A: "We have to leave right now." B: "Yes, and we also have to take the dog." A: "Yes, and the dog knows where to go." The scene continues, progressively building a situation. The trainer then introduces an element of difficulty. The participant must continue to accept the offer and transform it.

Competences developed: listening, creativity, cooperation, flexibility, adaptability, communication.

19. Activity 4 – The conflict of the characters

Objective: to work on conflict management. **Duration:** 25 minutes.

Two participants are given two characters from the Commedia dell'Arte. Each is assigned a different objective. For example: **Pantalone wants to sell. Harlequin wants to get something without paying.** The participants improvise the situation. The trainer does not interrupt the scene immediately.

At the end, the behaviour of the two characters is analysed: who listened, who imposed, who gave way, who modified their strategy, what behaviour made the situation evolve. The scene can be repeated, asking the participants to use a different strategy.

20. Activity 5 – The mask and freedom

Objective: to use the mask as a tool for personal and relational exploration. **Duration:** 30 minutes.

The participant puts on a mask. For a few minutes they simply explore the way the character moves. They then enter the space together with the other participants. The trainer introduces simple situations: encounter, rejection, surprise, fear, desire, conflict, collaboration. The participant responds using mainly the body. At the end of the session the mask is removed and a moment of reflection follows.

Questions: What did you do with the mask that you would not have done without it? Did you feel freer? Did the character allow you to experience something new? What behaviour of the character do you also recognise in yourself?

21. Adaptation and accessibility

The CDAI methodology must not be applied rigidly. The fundamental principle is: **adapt the exercise without losing the pedagogical objective.**

A person with reduced mobility, for example, can work on movement using mainly: hands, torso, gaze, voice, rhythm, breathing. The aim is not for everyone to perform the same movement, but for everyone to be able to develop the competence associated with the exercise. The same principle applies to people with cognitive, linguistic, sensory or relational difficulties.

The trainer must be able to modify: duration, complexity, mode of communication, size of the group, physical intensity, number of stimuli, use of space.

Inclusion therefore does not consist in creating a "special" exercise for one person, but in designing activities that can be **accessible through different modes of participation.**

22. The role of the trainer

The CDAI trainer is not only a teacher of theatrical techniques. They are at the same time: facilitator, observer, guide, mediator, organiser of the group, stimulator of reflection.

The trainer must not take the place of the participant. They must create the conditions in which the participant can experiment. A fundamental rule is: **less explanation, more experience.**

The trainer introduces a clear instruction, observes what happens, intervenes when necessary and then facilitates reflection. Particular attention must be paid to signs of discomfort: the methodology must not become a form of psychological pressure. The participant must always be able to communicate a limit and the trainer must respect it.

23. From workshop to performance

The final performance must not be regarded as a simple closing show. It represents the phase in which the competences developed are brought into relation with a real audience.

The journey therefore follows: **EXPERIENCE → COMPETENCE → CREATION → PERFORMANCE → REFLECTION**

The performance allows the participant to experience: responsibility, managing anxiety, collaboration, respect for timing, concentration, the ability to face the unexpected, relationship with the audience.

The Festival en Valores thus represents the public moment in which the individual journey becomes a collective experience. The participant does not present themselves as a "vulnerable person taking part in a social project", but as an **artist and protagonist of a creative process.** This change of perspective is one of the most important elements of the CDAI approach.

24. The transfer model

The CDAI methodology is designed to be transferable to other organisations. The transfer model provides for four levels:

- 1 **Training** — The future trainer learns the principles and techniques of CDAI.
- 2 **Experimentation** — The trainer applies the exercises with a group.
- 3 **Supervision** — An experienced trainer observes the journey and provides feedback.
- 4 **Autonomy** — The organisation uses the methodology autonomously, adapting it to its own context.

Transfer must keep the fundamental principles of the method unchanged, while allowing cultural and organisational adaptations.

25. The CDAI formula

BODY + EMOTION + RELATIONSHIP + IMPROVISATION + CULTURE = COMPETENCE

The Commedia dell'Arte provides the artistic language. The body provides the first tool of communication. Emotion makes it possible to develop awareness. Relationship builds the sense of belonging. Improvisation develops flexibility and the ability to face the unexpected. Culture creates a connection with European heritage.

The expected result is the development of personal, social and communicative competences that can be transferred to everyday life.

26. Final principle

The CDAI methodology does not regard theatre as a therapy and does not aim to replace specialised psychological, social or health interventions. Its purpose is educational. Through theatrical practice, the participant is placed in a position to experience new forms of communication, relationship and participation.

The fundamental principle is: **We do not use the Commedia dell'Arte to teach people to become actors. We use the actor's tools to offer people new possibilities of being, communicating and being together.**

This represents the identity core of the CDAI methodology.

Part III – Evaluation, monitoring and impact measurement

27. Purpose of the evaluation system

The evaluation of the CDAI methodology has a dual function: to verify the effectiveness of the pathway with respect to the educational and social objectives set, and to enable the partners to progressively improve the methodology through analysis of the results obtained during the experimentation phase.

Evaluation is therefore not conceived as an examination of the participant. Its aim is to observe **the change produced by the training experience**, combining: quantitative instruments, qualitative observation, self-assessment, trainer assessment, participant feedback, observation of behaviour during the activities, and comparison between the initial and final situation.

The system is structured according to the principle: **MEASURE → INTERPRET → IMPROVE.**

28. What we evaluate

The CDAI methodology identifies nine competence areas:

Area	Main competence
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1. Body awareness	Perception and control of the body
2. Communication	Ability to express oneself and to listen
3. Emotional awareness	Recognition and expression of emotions
4. Empathy	Understanding of another person's point of view
5. Relationship	Cooperation and participation in the group
6. Creativity	Ability to generate new responses
7. Adaptability	Managing the unforeseen and solving problems
8. Autonomy and confidence	Initiative and confidence in one's own abilities
9. Intercultural and European awareness	The project uses Commedia dell'Arte as European cultural heritage and as a tool for encounter between people from different backgrounds

29. Evaluation prior to the pathway

Before the activities begin, an initial evaluation is carried out with three objectives: to establish the participants' starting point, to identify possible specific needs, and to create a reference against which the final changes can be measured. It does not serve to exclude participants, only to understand the group better and adapt the pathway.

30. Self-assessment questionnaire

Scale 1–5 (1 = completely disagree → 5 = completely agree).

Area A – Personal awareness: I feel comfortable when I have to take part in a new activity; I manage to recognise my strengths; I feel capable of learning new things; I manage to face a new situation without giving up straight away.

Area B – Communication: I manage to express what I think; I manage to make myself understood by others; I manage to listen to a person without interrupting them; I manage to use my body and my tone of voice to communicate as well.

Area C – Emotions: I manage to recognise what I am feeling; I manage to express my emotions; I manage to stay in control when I am in a difficult situation; I manage to recognise other people's emotions.

Area D – Relationship: I feel comfortable working with other people; I manage to collaborate with people I do not know as well; I manage to accept points of view different from my own; when a problem arises in the group, I look for a solution.

Area E – Creativity and adaptability: I manage to find alternative solutions when something does not work; I like trying new things; I manage to react when something happens that I had not foreseen; I feel free to express creative ideas.

Area F – Interculturality: I am interested in getting to know people from different cultures; I am curious to learn about different traditions and ways of life; I think cultural differences can represent a richness; I feel part of a wider European community.

31. Final evaluation

The same questionnaire is proposed again at the end of the pathway. Comparing the initial and final results makes it possible to observe the evolution perceived by the participants (average per area, e.g.

Communication: initial 2.8/5 → final 3.9/5, variation +1.1). The quantitative data must be interpreted together with the qualitative observations, not as a definitive isolated proof.

32. Trainer observation grid

Each competence is rated from 1 (marked difficulty / needs constant guidance) to 5 (full autonomy, intentionality and ability to support others as well), for: body awareness, communication, emotional management, empathy, cooperation, creativity, adaptability, autonomy. (Detailed 1–5 scales for each competence in the original UBO Teatro document.)

33. Qualitative observation

The trainer collects brief qualitative notes on: changes in behaviour, spontaneous participation, relationships with others, ability to take initiatives, handling of mistakes, ability to cope with the unforeseen, evolution of communication, significant episodes, and any difficulties — always describing observable behaviours, never personal judgements.

34. Participant's diary

Optional individual diary, after some sessions: "Today I discovered...", "Today I found it difficult to...", "Next time I would like to..." — written, voice-recorded or produced with images/symbols according to the participant's abilities.

35. Feedback after each session

At the end of each meeting: "How did I feel today?" (emoji scale 1–5) + "What was the most important thing I learnt today?".

36. Exercise – competence – indicator matrix

Activity	Primary competence	Observable indicator
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The shared space	Cooperation	Respects the space and adapts to the group
The character's body	Expressiveness	Consciously changes posture and movement
The "yes" of improvisation	Listening	Accepts and develops the partner's proposal
Conflict between characters	Problem solving	Changes strategy during the scene
The mask	Emotional expression	Tries out different behaviours
Collective improvisation	Creativity	Proposes solutions without blocking the group
Building the scene	Responsibility	Sees an assigned task through to the end
Final performance	Autonomy	—

37. Quantitative project indicators

- **Participation:** number of participants involved; % who complete the pathway; average number of sessions attended.

- **Competences:** average variation in pre/post scores; number of participants who improve in at least one competence; number of competences with average improvement.
- **Inclusion:** number of participants from vulnerable groups; activities adapted for specific needs; participation in collective activities and in the final performance.
- **International dimension:** participants in transnational activities; Italy–Spain activities; professionals involved; materials produced in the three languages.
- **Dissemination:** Festival spectators; participants in outreach events; organisations reached; downloads/accesses of the methodology; organisations interested in replicating it.

38. Qualitative indicators

Testimonies from participants and trainers, observations by social workers, audience feedback, significant episodes, examples of individual or group change — with particular attention to **stories of change**: initial situation → experience → observed change → possible transfer to everyday life.

39. Evaluation of the methodology by the trainers

At the end of the experimentation, a 1–5 rating sheet on: clarity of the instructions, ease of application, appropriateness of the exercises, accessibility, capacity to engage, appropriateness of the timing, perceived pedagogical effectiveness, adaptability to different groups, usefulness of the evaluation instruments, and possibility of replication.

40. Evaluation of replicability (Replication Test)

An external trainer, not involved in the design, receives the methodological manual, the exercise sheets, the evaluation instruments and the adaptation guidelines; after applying a selection of activities, they assess comprehensibility, autonomy in application, appropriateness of the instructions, difficulties encountered, and adaptability to their own context. The information collected serves to improve the final version of the manual.

41. Success criteria of the methodology

- **Individual:** participants show an improvement in the competences identified.
- **Relational:** the group shows a greater capacity for collaboration and participation.
- **Artistic:** participants acquire basic tools of Commedia dell'Arte and improvisation.
- **Social:** participants experience new opportunities for cultural and social participation.
- **Organisational:** UBO Teatro and La Sala acquire a shared and usable methodology.
- **European:** the methodology can be transferred and adapted to other organisations.

42. The CDAI evaluation system (T0–T4)

T0 (before the activity: self-assessment + initial observation + needs assessment) → T1 (during the pathway: observation + feedback + diary + monitoring of participation) → T2 (end of the pathway: final questionnaire + final observation + feedback) → T3 (Performance/Festival: observation of public participation + feedback) → T4 (follow-up at a distance of weeks/months on the use of the competences and the continuity of participation).

43. Subsequent monitoring (follow-up)

After an agreed period (e.g. three months), a short questionnaire: Have you used anything you learnt during the workshop? Have you maintained relationships with other participants? Have you taken part in other cultural activities? Do you feel more willing to try new activities? Have you used communication or

emotion management techniques you learnt? Have you gained greater confidence in your abilities? Would you like to continue practising theatre activities?

44. From data to improvement

APPLICATION → MEASUREMENT → ANALYSIS → MODIFICATION → NEW APPLICATION. If an exercise proves too complex, the trainer can: simplify it, reduce its duration, introduce a preparatory phase, change the number of participants, use visual support, or create an accessible variant.

45. The final result

The project produces: methodology, exercises, evaluation instruments, experimentation data, qualitative evidence, guidelines for replication — a pedagogical model that has been tested, evaluated and is transferable, not just a theatrical performance.

46. Concluding principle

CDAI evaluation does not seek to demonstrate that theatre "solves" vulnerability. It seeks to document what opportunities for learning and development can be created through the practice of Commedia dell'Arte: **DOING → EXPERIENCING → REFLECTING → CHANGING → TRANSFERRING.**

Part IV – Experimental training pathway (40-hour operational programme)

47. Overall structure of the pathway

Pathway for a group of approximately **8–10 vulnerable adults**, **40 indicative hours** in total, organised into **10 modules of 4 hours**. The duration may be modified according to the context and the participants, while maintaining the pedagogical progression.

Phase	Modules	Focus
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1. Joining the group	1–2	Trust, body, space
2. Discovering the character	3–4	Commedia dell'Arte, body, voice
3. Entering into relationship	5–6	Mask, emotions, improvisation
4. Creating together	7–8	Conflict, scenes, dramaturgy
5. Sharing	9–10	Performance, audience, Festival

Progression: **I → I IN THE SPACE → I WITH THE OTHER → I IN THE GROUP → I BEFORE THE AUDIENCE**

48. Module 1 – Creating a safe space (4h)

Objective: to create a cohesive group and to establish the physical and emotional conditions required for the pathway (getting to know the other participants, reducing the fear of judgement, developing trust, becoming at ease with the space, introducing body work, establishing the rules of the workshop).

Activities: Introduction through movement; Walking around the space (variations of speed/direction/rhythm/level/distance); Mirror (in pairs, one leads and one follows, then without a leader); The name and the gesture.

Debriefing: "What does it mean to feel part of a group?"

Competences: listening, trust, body awareness, memory, participation.

49. Module 2 – Body, space and rhythm (4h)

Objective: to develop body awareness and the ability to adapt to others.

Activities: The traffic light (instructions → coordination without instructions); The rhythm of the group; The heavy body / the light body; The body that tells (communicating without words).

Competences: non-verbal communication, coordination, concentration, adaptability, observation.

50. Module 3 – Entering the world of Commedia dell'Arte (4h)

Objective: to introduce the historical and artistic heritage (birth, troupes, actors, mask, scenario (canovaccio), improvisation, characters, relationship with the audience — brief theoretical part, with images/demonstrations/exercises).

Activities: The character through the body (Harlequin, Pantalone, the Captain, the Doctor, Brighella, Pedrolino).

Pedagogical question: "What changes inside me when my way of walking changes?"

Competences: cultural awareness, expressiveness, creativity, observation, flexibility.

51. Module 4 – Building the character (4h)

Each participant progressively chooses a character (not necessarily fixed throughout the whole pathway), built through: **BODY → VOICE → DESIRE → RELATIONSHIP**.

Exercise: the participant enters the space as their character; the others observe and describe what they perceive; the participant does not explain the character until the end (in order to verify how much is communicated through the body alone).

52. Module 5 – The mask (4h)

A central moment of the pathway. The trainer introduces the mask and its historical meaning. Before putting it on, the participant observes its shape, its features, the possible character and its expressive qualities.

Exercises: 1) walking masked in silence; 2) an encounter between two masks without speaking (movement, gaze, distance, rhythm, gestuality); 3) the situation "I want something you have" — the two characters must find a solution.

Reflection (without the mask): Did you feel different? Freer? Was it easier or harder to communicate? Did you discover something about the way you relate to others?

53. Module 6 – Emotion and improvisation (4h)

Exercise "Emotion walks": emotion → body → movement → voice (do not imitate the emotion, observe how it modifies the body).

Exercise "Change emotion": same scene, the trainer changes the dominant emotion — voice, body, rhythm and relationship change.

Objective: to understand that the same situation allows for different emotional responses.

54. Module 7 – Improvisation and conflict (4h)

Exercise "Two desires": two characters with incompatible goals (e.g. Pantalone wants to sell / Harlequin wants to get something without paying); then it is repeated with a change of strategy (persuading, listening, provoking, negotiating, cooperating, changing the goal).

Reflection: which strategies produced escalation, blockage, cooperation or resolution.

Competences: conflict management, problem solving, flexibility, listening, negotiation.

55. Module 8 – Collective creation (4h)

The group builds the material for the final performance, starting from the previous exercises/improvisations: 1) Characters; 2) Desires; 3) Obstacles; 4) Relationships (alliances/conflicts); 5) Situations (selection of the most effective improvisations); 6) Structure (order of the scenes, dramaturgy guided by the trainer without eliminating the participants' creativity).

56. Module 9 – Rehearsal and performance (4h)

Work on: entrances and exits, timing, rhythm, listening, the relationship between scenes, the relationship with the audience, managing mistakes.

Fundamental principle: during rehearsals the aim is not perfection, but the ability to **carry on even when something goes differently from what was planned** — the unforeseen as the final stage of learning about improvisation.

57. Module 10 – Performance and reflection (4h)

Public presentation (the audience is part of the educational experience, not merely a spectator). The participants experience responsibility, public exposure, managing emotion, cooperation, belonging and social recognition. It may be included in the **Festival en Valores**.

After the show, a group sharing with three questions: "Before the project I...", "During the project I have discovered...", "After the project I would like to..." (also material for the qualitative evaluation of the impact).

58. The pedagogical structure of the 40 hours (a spiral)

Getting to know one another → Trusting → Listening → Expressing oneself → Interpreting → Improvising → Cooperating → Creating → Exposing oneself → Sharing.

The point of arrival is not only the performance, but the participant's ability to recognise new possibilities of relationship and participation.

59. The CDAI "logbook"

For each session, the trainer records: date, participants, activities carried out, level of participation, difficulties, adaptations made, significant episodes, competences observed, any necessary modifications — a tool for the subsequent review of the methodology.

60. Adaptations of the pathway

The 40-hour programme is not rigid: the trainer may modify the duration of the exercises, the physical intensity, the number of participants per group, the amount of stimuli, the mode of communication, the complexity of the instructions, the use of the mask and the format of the performance. **The pedagogical objective remains stable; the path to reach it may change.**

61. Expected outcomes of the pathway

At the end of the 40 hours, to the extent consistent with each person's starting point: greater self-awareness, confidence and autonomy (personal); greater expression, listening and non-verbal awareness (communicative); greater recognition and expression of emotions (emotional); greater cooperation, openness and ability to face conflicts (social); greater flexibility, ability to improvise and to find alternative solutions (creative); knowledge of Commedia dell'Arte and of European cultural heritage and greater intercultural openness (cultural).

62. From participant to ambassador

Participants who complete the pathway can become **informal ambassadors of the methodology** — not automatically trainers, but with the possibility of telling their own experience, taking part in dissemination events, presenting the project, giving testimony of their pathway and participating in subsequent theatre activities. The beneficiary thus becomes a **carrier of the project result in their own community**.

63. Complete CDAI model (8 phases)

Safety → Awareness (body, voice, space, emotions) → Identity (characters and masks) → Relationship (listening, cooperation, conflict) → Creativity (improvisation, the unforeseen) → Creation (collective performance) → Participation (sharing with the audience) → Transfer (recognising and transferring the competences acquired to everyday life).

64. The methodology in one sentence

Through the body of Commedia dell'Arte, the participant discovers new ways of expressing themselves; through the mask they experience new identities; through improvisation they learn to manage the unforeseen; through the group they develop relationship; through the performance they experience participation and social recognition.