EmplArt

Erasmus+ KA210-ADU · 2025–2027

Art-Based Education for Increasing Employability of Vulnerable Adults

TRAINING HANDBOOK

Second Edition — Post-ToT Revision

Activity A3.1 · Revised following the International Training of Trainers, Paris, March 2026

Partners:

Vertigo APS Livorno, Italia

APSES Ramnicu Valcea, Romania

Esprit Éducatif Paris, France

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Version	Date	Description
v1.0 — First Draft	February 2026	Initial handbook produced as Activity A3.1 deliverable. Sections 1–3 complete. Section 4 placeholder only. Section 5 absent. Distributed to ToT participants prior to Paris meeting.
v2.0 — Post-ToT Edition	March 2026	Full revision following International Training of Trainers, Paris (March 2026). Sections 4–9 added. Three national exercise sets (Italy, Romania, France) integrated. Three Theatre Scenarios added (Section 5). Participant recommendations incorporated. Facilitator tools, glossary, and bibliography added.

About This Document

This handbook is the principal training output of Activity A3.1 (EmplArt Handbook draft) and has been revised following Activity A3.2 (International Training of Trainers). It is intended for use by the 72 adult educators trained across the three partner countries (24 per country) during Activities A4.1 (Local ToTs) and A4.2 (non-formal theatre activities with vulnerable adults).

The exercises in Section 4 are bilingual: English with Italian (Section 4.1), Romanian (Section 4.2), and French (Section 4.3). They may be used independently or as a complete twelve-exercise progression.

Section 5 contains three full Theatre Scenarios designed for use after participants have completed at least four exercises from Section 4.

Section 1 — Introduction and Project Context

1.1 The EmplArt Project

EmplArt — Art-Based Education for Increasing Employability of Vulnerable Adults — is an Erasmus+ Small-Scale Partnership (KA210-ADU) running from September 2025 to February 2027. The project is coordinated by Vertigo APS (Livorno, Italy) in partnership with APSES (Râmnicu Vâlcea, Romania) and Esprit Éducatif (Paris, France), with support from the Italian National Agency IT02 INDIRE.

The project targets 72 adult educators (24 per partner country) and, through them, 120 vulnerable adults (40 per country). In Italy, the primary beneficiary group consists of adults with disabilities; in Romania, adults with low levels of formal education and Ukrainian refugees; in France, ethnic minority adults and Ukrainian refugees. In each country, Ukrainian refugees represent 50% of the adult beneficiaries, reflecting the acute displacement crisis that contextualised the project design.

1.2 The Three Partners

Coordinator: Vertigo APS — Italy	Partners: APSES (Romania) · Esprit Éducatif (France)
• NGO founded 30+ years ago in Livorno, Tuscany. • Owns and operates a 150-seat theatre. • Extensive track record in theatre-based education and social inclusion. • Leads project coordination, the International ToT, and the Handbook.	• APSES (Râmnicu Vâlcea): 10 years of experience in social economy and labour market integration for vulnerable groups. Leads the project website and Romanian Local ToT. • Esprit Éducatif (Paris): specialisation in ICT, digitalisation, and support for migrant communities. Hosted the International ToT. Leads the France Local ToT.

1.3 Project Objectives

The project pursues three interdependent objectives:

- OS1: Train 72 adult educators (24 per partner) in arts-based and theatre-based non-formal education methods, as documented in this handbook.
- OS2: Directly support 120 vulnerable adults (40 per partner) through theatre-based non-formal activities targeting employability competencies.
- OS3: Strengthen the organisational capacity of the three partner organisations through shared methodology development, international exchange, and documented good practice.

1.4 How to Use This Handbook

This handbook is designed to be read in order on first use and as a reference document thereafter. Section 2 provides the theoretical grounding. Section 3 summarises the Competence Framework that maps all exercises to learning outcomes. Section 4 contains twelve didactic exercises — four per country — each structured according to Kolb's Learning Cycle. Section 5 contains three full Theatre Scenarios for use after the exercises. Sections 6–9 contain the ToT outcomes, facilitator tools, glossary, and bibliography.

A Note on Language

All twelve exercises in Section 4 are bilingual. Section 4.1 exercises are in English and Italian. Section 4.2 exercises are in English and Romanian. Section 4.3 exercises are in English and French. The Theatre Scenarios in Section 5 are in English with stage directions adaptable to any of the three languages.

Facilitators are encouraged to use the bilingual format actively: the second language in each exercise is not a translation note but a participant resource — it is the language the learners are acquiring for professional use.

Section 2 — Theoretical Framework

The EmplArt methodology rests on three interconnected theoretical foundations: Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, the Theatre of the Oppressed framework developed by Augusto Boal, and the broader tradition of adult non-formal education. The International ToT in Paris (February 2026) extended and refined this framework through practice, adding two further methods — Playback Theatre and Sociodrama — to the project's documented repertoire.

2.1 Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) proposes that meaningful adult learning occurs through a four-stage cycle: Concrete Experience (doing), Reflective Observation (watching and reflecting), Abstract Conceptualisation (thinking and drawing conclusions), and Active Experimentation (planning and trying). Learning is not a linear transfer of information but a process of sense-making grounded in experience.

All twelve exercises in Section 4 are explicitly structured around Kolb's four stages. Each exercise includes a 2×2 Kolb Summary Table, stage-by-stage facilitator instructions, and bilingual content for each phase. The cycle is not simply a design framework: it is the visible architecture of each exercise, named for participants so that they understand why the sequence of activities is what it is.

Stage	Kolb's Term	What Happens in the Exercise
1	Concrete Experience	A scene is enacted — either fully scripted or through Forum Theatre substitution. Participants are physically and emotionally present in the situation.
2	Reflective Observation	Facilitated discussion: what was seen, felt, and noticed. Personal experience is invited. The scene is examined from multiple perspectives.
3	Abstract Conceptualisation	The facilitator names what happened — introducing the competency language, research evidence, and conceptual framework that make the experience generalisable.
4	Active Experimentation	Participants apply what they have learned in a new, varied practice scenario — with different roles, different pressures, different partners.

2.2 The Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal)

Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (1974) rejects the traditional distinction between actor and spectator. In Boal's framework, the "spect-actor" is simultaneously witness and protagonist — able to intervene in a scene, change its outcome, and practise alternatives to oppressive situations. The theatre becomes a "rehearsal for reality."

Three Boal-derived methods are used across the EmplArt exercises and scenarios:

Forum Theatre

A scene is performed in which the protagonist faces a problem and fails to resolve it. The audience is then invited to replace the protagonist at any moment, try a different approach, and see what changes. Forum Theatre is the dominant method across the twelve exercises (used explicitly in Exercises 5, 9, 12) and all three Theatre Scenarios. It is particularly effective for workplace situations in which the learner faces institutional or interpersonal barriers, because it allows repeated practice of strategies in a safe environment.

Image Theatre

Participants sculpt each other's bodies — or their own — into frozen images representing feelings, relationships, or power dynamics. No words are used. The group reads the images together. Image Theatre is used in Exercise 11 (domestic work, France) to make visible the dynamics of invisibility and presence. It is also used in the opening of Theatre Scenario B. Its power lies in making embodied knowledge available before language is ready.

Legislative Theatre

An extension of Forum Theatre in which the interventions made by participants are not only practised as individual strategies but collectively refined into proposals for policy or institutional change. Legislative Theatre is not used in individual exercises but is introduced as the closing reflection of Theatre Scenario C (institutional navigation), giving the group a framework for thinking collectively about structural as well as individual responses.

2.3 Playback Theatre

Developed by Jonathan Fox and Jo Salas in the 1970s, Playback Theatre is a form of improvisational theatre in which audience members tell personal stories and a group of actors performs them back immediately, in an improvised theatrical form. Unlike Forum Theatre, which focuses on problem-solving, Playback focuses on recognition and dignity: the story is honoured as it is. Playback was introduced to the EmplArt methodology through the French exercises (Exercise 10, café/restaurant) and through ToT Day 2 practice.

Playback is particularly powerful for groups whose stories have been systematically unheard — migrants, refugees, people in marginalised employment situations. The act of seeing one's own experience enacted by others is not primarily therapeutic (and facilitators are not therapists); it is relational and political. It says: your experience is real, it is shared, and it is worth attention.

2.4 Sociodrama (Moreno)

Jacob Moreno's Sociodrama (1943) differs from Psychodrama in that it works with social roles and collective situations rather than individual psychology. In Sociodrama, participants are assigned roles — not characters — and enact social systems, institutions, and group dynamics. The insight produced is structural rather than personal.

In the EmplArt exercises, Sociodrama is used in Exercise 12 (France Travail) and in Theatre Scenario C (institutional navigation). Participants play the institution itself — its reception desk, its online form, its referral system — and observe from the inside how the system produces access or exclusion. This structural perspective is essential for groups who face institutional barriers, because it helps distinguish between what is personally within reach and what requires collective or political response.

2.5 Post-ToT Additions to the Framework

Recommendations from Paris ToT — Theoretical Framework

The ToT confirmed that the four Kolb stages need to be made visible to participants from the very first exercise. Trainers reported that when the cycle was named explicitly, participants engaged more deeply

with Stage 2 (reflection) and Stage 3 (conceptualisation) — the stages most often skipped in favour of doing more activities.

The ToT group recommended adding a brief "warm-up" protocol before each exercise — a 5-minute embodiment activity that prepares the group physically and emotionally for theatrical work. Suggested warm-ups are included in the Facilitator Tools (Section 7).

Several trainers noted that the theoretical framework, as presented in v1, was too abstract for direct use with participants. A simplified one-page visual of the Kolb cycle and the theatre methods has been added to the Facilitator Tools (Section 7.2).

Trainers from all three countries noted that the distinction between Forum Theatre and Legislative Theatre was not clear enough for facilitators new to Boal. The Glossary (Section 8) has been expanded with examples from each method as practised during the ToT.

Section 3 — The EmplArt Competence Framework

The EmplArt Competence Framework (Activity A2.4) was developed through a three-country comparative analysis of the focus group findings (Romania, December 2025; France, January 2026; Italy, documented through the comparative report). It identifies twelve competency areas organised in two dimensions.

3.1 Dimension A — Transversal Competencies

Transversal competencies are those that apply across employment contexts and sectors. They are "horizontal" — present in every exercise in Section 4 to varying degrees.

Code	Competency Area	Core Description
A1	Communication & Language Skills	Using language effectively in professional contexts, including institutional registers, key phrase strategies, communicative courage, and bilingual professional communication.
A2	Collaboration & Teamwork	Working with others across cultural, linguistic, and hierarchical differences; understanding team roles; contributing to shared goals.
A3	Problem-Solving & Critical Thinking	Identifying and navigating practical obstacles; distinguishing structural from individual barriers; generating strategies under pressure.
A4	Creativity & Adaptability	Reframing existing skills as professional assets; adjusting to fast-changing environments; improvising solutions within constraints.
A5	Self-Confidence & Emotional Resilience	Maintaining professional presence under pressure; recovering from mistakes; naming one's own competence without apologising for it.
A6	Digital Literacy	Navigating online employment systems, registration platforms, and digital communication in professional contexts.
A7	Learning to Learn	Recognising one's own learning process; using feedback constructively; building transferable skills from each experience.

3.2 Dimension B — Professional and Functional Competencies

Professional competencies are more context-specific and relate to particular labour market situations or institutional environments.

Code	Competency Area	Core Description
B1	Job Search & Career Planning	Navigating employment systems, interviews, and labour market entry points; articulating professional identity; understanding formal and informal career pathways.
B2	Workplace Conduct & Professional Norms	Understanding the implicit and explicit codes of professional behaviour; error recovery; asking for help; navigating hierarchy and workplace culture.
B3	Intercultural Competence	Operating effectively across cultural differences; recognising cultural dimensions of professional communication; solidarity across difference.
B4	Gender Awareness & Inclusive Participation	Recognising gendered patterns in the labour market; self-advocacy in domestic and care work contexts; understanding rights regardless of gender or migration status.
B5	Civic Participation & Social Integration	Using public institutions and services effectively; understanding rights as a resident, worker, or refugee; belonging as a civic practice.

3.3 Competency Map — All 12 Exercises

Exercise	Title	Primary Competencies
Ex. 1 (IT)	I Know How to Work	A1 A5 B1 B2
Ex. 2 (IT)	I Don't Understand — Can You Help Me?	A1 A5 B2 B3
Ex. 3 (IT)	We Are a Team	A2 A1 A4 B2
Ex. 4 (IT)	Can I Say What I Think?	A1 A5 B2 B3 B4
Ex. 5 (RO)	I Don't Know This Machine Yet	A1 A5 B2 B3
Ex. 6 (RO)	This Is My Work Too	A5 B1 B2 B4
Ex. 7 (RO)	I Made This	A1 A4 A5 B1
Ex. 8 (RO)	I Am Here to Find Work	A1 A3 B1 B5
Ex. 9 (FR)	My Accent Is Not My Limit	A1 A5 B1 B3
Ex. 10 (FR)	Service, S'il Vous Plaît	A1 A2 A4 B2
Ex. 11 (FR)	I Am Not Invisible	A5 B1 B2 B4
Ex. 12 (FR)	I Am Here and I Have Rights	A1 A3 B1 B5

Post-ToT Note on the Competence Framework

The Paris ToT confirmed that the competency map is most useful when introduced to participants at the start of a session — not at the end. The badge strip format used in Sections 4.2 and 4.3 (showing competency codes visually at the top of each exercise) was developed in response to feedback from Romanian and French trainers and is recommended for all exercises.

ToT participants proposed one addition to the framework: a competency area addressing "Navigating Informal Work and Precarious Employment" (tentatively coded B6). This area was not included in the original framework but emerged strongly in the Romanian and French national contexts. It is flagged here as a potential addition for the third edition of the handbook, following Activity A4.2 delivery.

Section 4 — Didactic Units

Section 4 contains twelve theatre-based didactic exercises developed by the three EmplArt partners. Each exercise is structured according to Kolb's four-stage learning cycle and presented in bilingual format (English plus the partner's national language). The exercises are grouped by partner and national context.

How to use Section 4

Each exercise is designed as a standalone unit of 45–70 minutes. They can be delivered individually (selecting the most relevant exercise for a given group) or as a complete 12-exercise progression over multiple sessions.

The exercises within each national set (4.1, 4.2, 4.3) build progressively in theatrical complexity and emotional depth. If delivering a full national set, the recommended sequence is: Exercise 1 (or 5, or 9) first — as it establishes the Kolb cycle and the key phrase format — followed by the remaining exercises in any order.

For mixed-nationality groups, exercises from different national sets can be combined. Exercises 5 (Romania) and 9 (France) work well together as they both address communicative confidence. Exercises 8 (Romania) and 12 (France) are natural companions as both address institutional navigation.

The full exercise documents for Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 are available as separate companion files to this handbook.

4.1 Vertigo APS — Italian Context (Exercises 1–4)

The four Italian exercises were developed by Vertigo APS, drawing on their thirty years of theatre practice and on the Vertigo APS activity sketches documented in the EmplArt preparatory work. They are bilingual in English and Italian and address workplace communication, asking for help, teamwork, and expressing opinions — with particular relevance for adults with disabilities entering the labour market.

Exercise	Title (EN / IT)	Theatre Method · Key Competencies
1	"I Know How to Work" / "Io So Lavorare"	Forum Theatre · A1 A5 B1 B2Job interview, skills-first communication, professional self-presentation.
2	"I Don't Understand — Can You Help Me?" / "Non Capisco... Mi Aiuta?"	Forum Theatre · A1 A5 B2 B3Asking for help at work without shame. The courage to interrupt.
3	"We Are a Team" / "Siamo una Squadra"	Forum Theatre · A2 A1 A4 B2Taskdivision in a mixed team. Naming your contribution clearly.
4	"Can I Say What I Think?" / "Posso Dire la Mia Opinione?"	Forum Theatre · A1 A5 B2 B3 B4Expressing disagreement respectfully in a professional context.

4.2 APSES — Romanian Context (Exercises 5–8)

The four Romanian exercises were developed by APSES, drawing directly on findings from the EmplArt Romania Focus Group (16 December 2025, Bucharest) and on APSES's decade of experience supporting vulnerable adults — including Ukrainian refugees and low-education workers — in the Vâlcea region.

Exercise	Title (EN / RO)	Theatre Method · Key Competencies
5	"I Don't Know This Machine Yet" / "Nu Știu Încă Această Maşină"	Forum Theatre · A1 A5 B2 B3Factory/manufacturing first day. Safety, silence, and asking. Grounded in the Faurecia România case.
6	"This Is My Work Too" / "Și Aceasta Este Munca Mea"	Forum Theatre + Psychodrama · A5 B1 B2 B4Domestic work, verbal agreements, labour rights. Naming conditions calmly.
7	"I Made This" / "Eu Am Făcut Asta"	Forum Theatre · A1 A4 A5 B1Small business, market trade. Product + Story = Value. Explaining ≠ discounting.
8	"I Am Here to Find Work" / "Sunt Aici să Găsesc de Lucru"	Forum Theatre + Sociodrama · A1 A3 B1 B5Navigating ANOFM and Romanian public employment institutions. Peer knowledge as resource.

4.3 Esprit Éducatif — French Context (Exercises 9–12)

The four French exercises were developed by Esprit Éducatif, grounded in the EmplArt France Focus Group (15 January 2026, Paris) and in the documented outcomes of the France terre d'asile theatre programme in Seine-Saint-Denis — which produced a 68% job placement rate, the strongest quantitative evidence for arts-based employment support in the project.

Exercise	Title (EN / FR)	Theatre Method · Key Competencies
9	"My Accent Is Not My Limit" / "Mon Accent N'est Pas Ma Limite"	Forum Theatre (Boal) · A1 A5 B1 B3Job interview with accent-based bias. Communicative confidence ≠ perfect French.
10	"Service, S'il Vous Plaît" / "Service, S'il Vous Plaît"	Playback Theatre (Fox/Salas) · A1 A2 A4 B2Café/restaurant first day. Error recovery = professionalism. Playback coda.
11	"I Am Not Invisible" / "Je Ne Suis Pas Invisible"	Image Theatre (Boal) · A5 B1 B2 B4Domestic/care work Paris. CESU rights. Body sculpt: invisibility → presence.
12	"I Am Here and I Have Rights" / "Je Suis Là et J'ai des Droits"	Forum Theatre + Sociodrama · A1 A3 B1 B5France Travail navigation. Participants play the institution itself.

Section 5 — Three Theatre Scenarios

The three Theatre Scenarios in this section are designed for use after participants have completed at least four exercises from Section 4. Where the exercises are structured training units (45–70 minutes each, with explicit Kolb stages and key phrases), the scenarios are extended theatrical productions: fuller in duration (90–120 minutes), richer in character and narrative, and designed to bring together multiple competency areas in a single arc.

Each scenario exists in three national versions (Italy, Romania, France) — the core narrative is the same, but the workplace, the language, the institutions, and the cultural codes are adapted to each context. Facilitators are encouraged to deliver the scenario version that matches their participants' primary context, and then run a cross-national comparison in the debrief.

How to use the Theatre Scenarios

Duration: 90–120 minutes per scenario including debrief. Do not rush the debrief — the Stage 3 naming moment is where the deepest learning occurs.

Recommended sequence: Scenario A first (most concrete), then Scenario B (adds discrimination layer), then Scenario C (most abstract — institutional). All three can be delivered in a single full-day session with breaks.

The scenarios can be run with the same group that completed the exercises (as an integration session) or with a new group (as a standalone experience). With a new group, introduce the Kolb cycle before starting.

Forum Theatre interventions: for each scenario, a minimum of three participant interventions is recommended. After each intervention, a 60-second group reading ("What changed? What did not?") grounds the next attempt.

Scenario A — "The First Day"

The first day at a new job. Fear, confusion, a small crisis, and the people who help.

Method: Forum Theatre (Boal)
Duration: 90–100 minutes including debrief
Competencies: A1 A2 A4 A5 B2 B3
National contexts: Factory floor (Italy/Romania) · Café/kitchen (France) · Care home (all three)

Narrative Overview

A new worker — a woman who has recently arrived in the country — begins her first shift. The workplace is busy. Instructions are given fast. She does not understand everything but is afraid to ask. In the first arc, she makes a mistake — small but visible — and the consequence is humiliation, not help. She considers not returning the next day.

In the second arc, a colleague intervenes. Not with pity — with solidarity. She shares information the new worker did not have: a phrase, a norm, a map of who to ask and what to say. In the Forum Theatre section, participants explore both arcs — what could the new worker have done differently? What could the colleague have done? What could the workplace itself have done?

Scene Breakdown

Scene	Action	Forum Theatre Entry Point
Scene 1 — Arrival	New worker arrives. Team leader gives rapid instructions. She nods	Participant can replace the new worker at the moment she nods instead of asking.

	but does not understand. She is shown her station.	
Scene 2 — The Mistake	She makes a procedural error. Team leader reacts with frustration. Colleagues watch. She freezes.	Participant can replace her at the moment of freezing — or replace the team leader.
Scene 3 — The Colleague	A colleague takes her aside. Explains the unwritten rules. Gives her two key phrases.	Participant can replace the colleague — what would they have said differently?
Scene 4 — The Return	Next morning. She returns. Uses the phrases. The interaction with the team leader is different.	Forum: how different? What made the difference — her language, her posture, or something else?

National Adaptation Notes

Italy / Romania — Factory floor	France — Café or care home
• Safety instruction context (parallel to Exercise 5). The "mistake" involves a machine or production process. • Team leader is a caposquadra (IT) or responsabil de echipă (RO). • Key phrase: "Non ho capito — mi può ripetere?" / "Nu am înțeles — puteți repeta?"	• Service or care context (parallel to Exercises 10–11). The "mistake" involves a customer order or a care routine. • Team leader is a maître d'hôtel or chef de service. • Key phrase: "Je n'ai pas compris — vous pouvez répéter?" / "J'ai fait une erreur — voilà comment je la corrige."

Debrief Guide

Stage 2 reflection (15 minutes): "What was the moment of maximum discomfort? What did you feel watching the mistake — for the new worker? For the team leader? For the colleague who watched and did nothing?"

Stage 3 naming (10 minutes): "This scenario has a name in workplace research. It is called onboarding failure — and it is one of the main reasons migrant and refugee workers leave jobs in the first week, not because they cannot do the work, but because no one gave them the map. The map exists. Today you practised making it visible."

Stage 4 transfer (10 minutes): "What one thing would you change about how your workplace — or the workplace you are training educators for — receives new workers? Write it on a card. This is your Legislative Theatre proposal."

Scenario B — "The Interview"

A job interview. What is being tested is not what the interviewer says it is.

Method: Playback Theatre + Forum Theatre (Boal / Fox-Salas)
Duration: 100–120 minutes including debrief
Competencies: A1 A3 A5 B1 B3 B4
National contexts: Manufacturing HR (Italy/Romania) · French private sector (France) · All three: the subjective dimension of hiring

Narrative Overview

The scenario opens with Playback. The facilitator invites: "Has anyone in this room been to a job interview that felt unfair — where you knew the decision was made before the conversation began?" One or two participants share. The actors play them back. The group reads the images.

Then Forum Theatre. A candidate attends an interview for a position she is qualified for. The interviewer has already decided — not explicitly, but through a series of micro-behaviours: a glance at the CV before she speaks, a question about "how long she plans to stay," a request to repeat herself twice. She leaves without the job. She is better qualified than the person who gets it.

The Forum Theatre section explores three intervention points: what the candidate can do, what a fair interviewer would look like, and — in the Legislative Theatre coda — what a hiring process that is structurally fairer would require.

Scene Breakdown

Scene	Action	Forum Theatre Entry Point
Opening — Playback	One or two real interview stories told and played back. Group reads the images. Shared recognition.	No Forum intervention here — only witnessing. The Playback is the Stage 1 experience.
Scene 1 — Before the Room	Candidate prepares. Checks her appearance, practises her phrases. Arrives early. Waits.	Optional: participant replaces her in the waiting room. What does the body language tell the employer before the interview begins?
Scene 2 — The Interview	Micro-aggressions: CV glance, "how long will you stay?", double repetition request. Candidate loses thread.	Core Forum Theatre moment. Multiple replacements. Try the key phrases. Try changing posture. What works?
Scene 3 — After the Room	Candidate leaves. We see her in the street. She calls a friend. What does she tell her friend?	Participant replaces the friend. What does solidarity look like here — not false comfort, but practical support?

Image Theatre Opening (optional variant)

Before the Playback, the facilitator can run a 5-minute Image Theatre warm-up: "Sculpt an image of 'being judged before you speak.'" The group reads the images. This opens the emotional space for the Playback stories and shortens the time needed to reach depth in the Forum Theatre section.

Key Research Anchor — The 68% Evidence

> "The candidates who get hired are not those with the best French. They are the ones who look me in the eye, answer even when they are uncertain, and show that they can recover when they do not understand."
>
> **— Laurent Vallet, SME employer, EmplArt France Focus Group, January 2026**

Debrief Guide

Stage 2 (15 min): "What did you notice in the Playback stories? What patterns appeared? Were the stories different across countries — or was there a common structure?" Allow the group to discover: the structure is usually the same. The specific words, the specific microaggressions, the specific defeat are different. The structure — qualified person, biased process, left without the job — is constant.

Stage 3 (10 min): "What we witnessed is called structural discrimination. It is not always intentional. It is often produced by systems that are designed for a particular kind of candidate — and in which anyone who deviates from that template starts at a deficit. The France terre d'asile programme produced a 68% placement rate by training exactly what we practised today: the communicative resilience to stay present when the system is not designed for you."

Legislative Theatre coda (10 min): "What one structural change to the hiring process would have changed the outcome? Anonymous CVs? Panel interviews? Competency-based rather than CV-based selection? Write one proposal."

Scenario C — "The Institution"

An employment office. A woman who needs help. A system that was not designed for her.

Method: Sociodrama (Moreno) + Forum Theatre + Legislative Theatre
Duration: 100–120 minutes including debrief
Competencies: A1 A3 B1 B3 B5
National contexts: ANOFM — Romania · France Travail — France · CPI / Centro per l'Impiego — Italy

Narrative Overview

This is the most structurally ambitious of the three scenarios. It begins with Sociodrama: the group enacts the employment institution itself before any individual scene is played. Participants are assigned institutional roles — not people, but systems: "You are the online registration form." "You are the appointment desk." "You are the waiting room." "You are the leaflet no one reads." A facilitator plays the role of "the person who needs help" and moves through the system. The group observes what the system produces.

Then Forum Theatre. A Ukrainian woman enters the employment office (ANOFM / France Travail / CPI depending on the national context). She is redirected three times, told her file is incomplete, and given a form she cannot read. She has been here twice before. She is close to giving up. A peer — a woman from a different migrant background who navigated the same system two years earlier — finds her in the corridor. What she gives her is not pity: it is the institutional map and four key phrases.

The Legislative Theatre coda asks: what would need to change in the institution itself — not in the woman — for this interaction to be different?

Sociodrama Setup (Stage 1, Part 1)

Assigning institutional roles

This step requires 5–8 participants playing roles. Brief them clearly: "You are not playing a person. You are playing a rule, a process, a document, or a barrier."

Suggested roles: Online registration system (glitches, asks for documents you do not have). Appointment desk (fully booked, next slot in 6 weeks). Waiting room (silent, numbered, impersonal). Document checklist (in French/Romanian only, 11 items, item 7 always missing). The referral (sends you to the wrong department). The phone line (rings but no one answers). The adviser (helpful, but only has 12 minutes).

The facilitator-as-user moves through the system. Each "institution" responds in character. After 8 minutes, freeze. Ask the group: "What did you observe? Where were the pathways? Where were the walls?"

Scene Breakdown

Scene	Action	Forum Theatre Entry Point
Scene 1 — Third Visit	The woman enters for the third time. She has the documents from last time. A new requirement has been added.	Replace her at the moment she reads the new requirement. What is her first response? What are her options?
Scene 2 — The Corridor	She sits in the corridor, close to leaving. The peer guide approaches.	Replace the peer guide. What is the most useful thing to give — information, phrase, or emotional acknowledgment first?

Scene 3 — Re-entry	Using the map and the phrases, she re-enters. Reaches the adviser. Is told about a programme.	Replace the adviser. What does a helpful adviser actually look like — in 12 minutes?
Scene 4 — Outside	She calls her daughter. Reports what happened. The daughter asks: "Will you go back?"	Replace the daughter. What does she need to hear to say yes?

National Adaptation Notes

Key institutional references by country

Italy — CPI (Centro per l'Impiego): the Italian public employment service. Key barrier documented in the project: credential non-recognition for disabled adults. Key phrase: "Ho un appuntamento con il consulente — posso aspettare?" (I have an appointment with the adviser — may I wait?)

Romania — ANOFM: the national employment agency. Key barrier: bureaucratic language inaccessible to Ukrainian refugees and low-education Romanians. Key phrase: "Nu am înțeles. Puteți explica din nou, vă rog?" (I didn't understand. Could you explain again, please?)

France — France Travail (formerly Pôle Emploi): the national employment service. Key barrier: digital-first systems inaccessible to those without French language and digital skills. Key phrase: "Je voudrais parler à un conseiller — quel est le délai?" (I would like to speak with an adviser — what is the waiting time?)

Legislative Theatre Coda

After the Forum Theatre section, the facilitator shifts register: "We have practised what the woman can do. Now we ask a different question: what would the institution need to do differently?" Participants are invited to write one concrete institutional change on a card — a change that would have made a structural difference in the scenario they just enacted.

Cards are read aloud and grouped by theme. Common themes across all three national contexts have included: dedicated first-contact advisers with language support, simplified document requirements, peer guide programmes formally integrated into the institution, and multi-language appointment systems. These proposals are not naïve — they mirror existing good practice in several European employment services. The point is for participants to see that the structural dimension is not beyond reach.

Debrief Guide

Stage 2 (15 min): "What did the Sociodrama show us that a story about an individual woman could not have shown? What was visible from inside the system that was not visible from outside?" The key insight: the system is not malicious. It is indifferent. Indifference is a structural feature, not a personal one — and it can be navigated and changed.

Stage 3 (10 min): "Jean Bassères, former Director-General of France Travail, told our focus group: 'The people hardest to reach are those who have stopped believing the system can work for them — because every contact with it has confirmed their invisibility.' The peer guide in this scenario carries something more valuable than a form: she carries the knowledge that the system can be navigated, because she navigated it. That knowledge, transmitted between people who have been through the same door, is one of the most powerful resources in any community."

Legislative Theatre coda (10 min): Read the proposals aloud. Group them. Ask: "Which of these could you implement today — in your own practice as a trainer or educator?" One practical commitment per participant.

Section 6 — International ToT: Outcomes and Recommendations

International Training of Trainers — Paris, February 2026

Hosted by Esprit Éducatif · 12 Trainers · 5 Days

6.1 Overview of the ToT

The International Training of Trainers (Activity A3.2) took place in Paris in February 2026, hosted by Esprit Éducatif. The event brought together twelve trainers — four from each partner country — for five days of practical methodology training, exercise piloting, and collaborative curriculum development. The ToT was originally planned for Livorno (Vertigo APS); the change of venue to Paris was agreed by all partners and documented in the project management record.

Partner	Trainers	Profiles
Vertigo APS (Italy)	4 trainers	Theatre director (project coordinator); two theatre educators with disability-sector experience; one social worker with ten years in arts-based programmes.
APSES (Romania)	4 trainers	Project manager; two adult educators specialising in employment support for vulnerable groups; one HR professional from the Faurecia România partnership network.
Esprit Éducatif (France)	4 trainers	Organisation director (host); France terre d'asile programme coordinator; one adult educator from Seine-Saint-Denis; one digital literacy specialist.

6.2 Five-Day Programme

Day	Theme	Key Activities
Day 1	Foundations — Kolb and Boal	Introduction to the Competence Framework. Kolb cycle workshop: participants map a professional experience onto the four stages. Forum Theatre introduction: facilitator-led demonstration with Exercise 1 (Italy). Reflection on the distinction between training method and theatrical method.

Day 2	The Italian Exercises in Practice	Full pilot of all four Italian exercises (Exercises 1–4). Cross-national debrief: what translated? What did not? Introduction of Playback Theatre (Fox/Salas) as a distinct method: facilitator training, practised with participant stories. Discussion of when Playback is more appropriate than Forum Theatre.
Day 3	The Romanian Exercises in Practice	Full pilot of all four Romanian exercises (Exercises 5–8). Particular focus on Exercise 5 (factory/safety) and Exercise 8 (ANOFM). Introduction of Sociodrama (Moreno): the group enacts the ANOFM system before running Exercise 8. Extended debrief on the structural vs. individual dimensions of institutional barriers.
Day 4	The French Exercises in Practice	Full pilot of all four French exercises (Exercises 9–12). Image Theatre workshop: Exercise 11 (invisibility/domestic work) piloted with full Image Theatre opening. Extended Forum Theatre on Exercise 9 (accent discrimination): eight participant interventions recorded and analysed. Theatre Scenario B (The Interview) run as an integration exercise.
Day 5	Integration and Recommendations	Theatre Scenario A (The First Day) and Scenario C (The Institution) run as full productions. Facilitator self-assessment: each trainer rates their own readiness across twelve competency indicators. Collective recommendations session: structured discussion producing the recommendations documented in Section 6.3. Closing protocol: each trainer names one thing they will do differently in their next session.

6.3 Participant Recommendations

The following recommendations were produced in the Day 5 structured discussion. They are organised by theme and reflect the collective judgment of the twelve ToT participants. They have been integrated into this second edition of the handbook where appropriate; those that require further development are flagged for the third edition.

On Exercise Design and Delivery

- Always name the Kolb stage at the transition between stages — not just at the start. Trainers found that participants who understood why the activity was changing (from doing to reflecting, from reflecting to naming) engaged more deeply. Recommended language: "We're now moving from Stage 1 to Stage 2. We stop doing and start looking at what we just did."

- Allow more time for Stage 2 (Reflective Observation) than the exercise timings suggest. Across all twelve exercises, trainers found Stage 2 was consistently rushed in favour of Stage 4 activity. The reflection is where the learning is consolidated — it is not optional.
- The key phrases should be written on a visible surface (flip chart, whiteboard, paper on each table) at the start of the session and remain visible throughout. Several trainers noted that participants who could see the phrases used them more readily in Stage 4.
- The Forum Theatre interventions work best with a minimum of three replacement attempts per exercise. With fewer than three, the group does not have time to discover which strategies actually work vs. which feel good in the moment.
- The bilingual format is a strength, not a limitation. Ukrainian participants who did not speak Romanian or French well found that having the target language on the page gave them a reference point even when they could not speak it fluently. Trainers should use the bilingual text actively — asking participants to read the Romanian or French version aloud, even imperfectly.

On Working with Mixed Groups

- Mixed Romanian/Ukrainian and French/Ukrainian groups produce qualitatively different dynamics than mono-national groups. This difference is a resource, not a problem. Romanian participants who have navigated ANOFM help Ukrainian participants develop institutional maps. Ukrainian participants who have professional qualifications unrecognised in Romania or France model A5 (self-confidence and resilience) for participants who have not had to start over.
- Role-swapping across the national/linguistic divide is one of the most powerful tools available. Romanian participants playing Ukrainian factory workers, and Ukrainian participants playing Romanian ANOFM agents, produced moments of structural empathy that no didactic explanation could have achieved.
- When working with groups that include participants with disabilities (Italy primary context), the physical embodiment elements (Image Theatre sculpts, Forum Theatre standing positions) should be adapted in advance. The embodiment is not optional — but its form can be varied. A participant who cannot stand can sculpt a partner. A participant who cannot speak can direct an actor. The principle is participation, not uniformity.
- The domestic work exercises (Exercise 6 and Exercise 11) consistently produced the most intense emotional responses. Trainers should prepare for this and ensure adequate time at the end of these sessions for individual decompression. The closing lines of both exercises are deliberately designed to end on agency rather than vulnerability — use them.

On Theatre Methods

- Playback Theatre is most effective when facilitators have practised it themselves before delivering it. The two-hour Playback workshop on Day 2 was insufficient preparation for first-time Playback facilitators. Recommendation: include an additional half-day of Playback practice in Local ToT programmes (Activity A4.1), or pair first-time Playback facilitators with an experienced co-facilitator for the first two sessions.
- Sociodrama is the method most likely to produce unexpected participant responses — including resistance. Several trainers reported that participants initially refused to play "a rule" rather than a person. Brief the instruction clearly: "You are not playing a character. You are playing a process." If resistance continues, offer the alternative of playing a real person inside the institution (a tired receptionist, an overloaded adviser) — this often achieves the same structural insight through a character entry point.
- Image Theatre is underused in the Italian and Romanian exercise sets (it appears only in Exercise 11, French context). Trainers from Italy and Romania reported discovering Image Theatre for the first time during the ToT and recommended it be included as an optional warm-up for all exercises, not only Exercise 11. A brief Image Theatre warm-up protocol has been added to Section 7.1.
- Legislative Theatre should be used with care. It is powerful and appropriate when the group has the energy and collective trust to move from individual strategy to systemic proposal. When time

is short or the group is emotionally depleted, it can feel coercive. Always offer it as an invitation, not a requirement: "If you have energy for one more question..."

On the Competence Framework

- The badge strip format (competency codes displayed at the top of each exercise) was consistently praised and should be applied retroactively to the Italian exercise set (Section 4.1), which was developed before this format was introduced.
- The proposed B6 competency area (Navigating Informal Work and Precarious Employment) was discussed at length. Consensus: add it as a formal area in the third edition of the handbook, once Activity A4.2 delivery has generated evidence about whether existing exercises address it sufficiently or whether new exercises are needed.
- The Competence Framework should be made available as a standalone one-page visual for participant use — not only as a reference document for facilitators. A visual version is included in Section 7.2.

On Evaluation and Evidence

- The project currently lacks a standardised pre/post evaluation instrument for measuring competency development across the twelve exercises. The Facilitator Self-Assessment Tool in Section 7.3 addresses trainer readiness, but participant progress is not yet tracked systematically. Recommendation: develop a brief (8–10 item) participant self-assessment aligned to the Competence Framework, for use before and after each national exercise set.
- Document Forum Theatre interventions systematically. The specific strategies that participants generated during the ToT (particularly in Exercise 9, where eight interventions were recorded) represent valuable data about what works. A structured observation sheet for Forum Theatre interventions has been added to Section 7.4.
- The France terre d'asile 68% placement rate is the strongest quantitative evidence in the project, but it predates EmplArt. Collect comparable outcome data from Activity A4.2 delivery to build the project's own evidence base for arts-based employment support.

Section 7 — Facilitator Tools

This section provides four practical tools for facilitators delivering EmplArt exercises and scenarios. They are designed to be reproduced, adapted, and used directly in sessions.

7.1 Warm-Up Protocol

The following five-minute warm-up is recommended before any EmplArt exercise or scenario. It prepares the group physically and emotionally for theatrical work and reduces the time needed to reach depth in Stage 1.

The Five-Minute Body Warm-Up

Step 1 (1 minute): participants walk around the room at their own pace. The facilitator calls changes: "Walk as if the floor is hot." / "Walk as if you are late." / "Walk as if you have just received good news."

Step 2 (1 minute): freeze. The facilitator says: "Stay in the body you arrived in. Look at your posture. Is this the posture of someone confident?" Participants adjust — or choose not to.

Step 3 (1 minute): pairs. Each person looks at their partner for 10 seconds without speaking. Then answers: "One word for what you see."

Step 4 (1 minute): whole group circle. Each person says their name and makes one gesture that expresses how they are feeling right now. The group mirrors the gesture.

Step 5 (1 minute): the facilitator names the Kolb cycle and the method for today's session. "Today we will work through four stages: doing, watching, naming, and trying. The method is Forum Theatre / Playback / Image Theatre. Let's begin."

Image Theatre Warm-Up (alternative)

Ask each participant to sculpt — in their own body — an image of "how I feel about work right now." Hold for 30 seconds. The group reads the images: "What do you see? What is the relationship to work — is it close or far? Open or closed?" This warm-up is particularly effective before Exercises 6, 11 (domestic work) and Scenarios B and C.

7.2 Competence Framework — One-Page Visual Reference

Reproduce and distribute this table to participants at the start of a session. It serves as both a planning tool (facilitators can mark which competencies will be addressed) and a reflection tool (participants can self-assess at the end).

Dimension A — Transversal	Dimension B — Professional	Notes
A1 Communication & Language	B1 Job Search & Career Planning	
A2 Collaboration & Teamwork	B2 Workplace Conduct & Norms	
A3 Problem-Solving	B3 Intercultural Competence	
A4 Creativity & Adaptability	B4 Gender Awareness	
A5 Self-Confidence & Resilience	B5 Civic Participation	
A6 Digital Literacy	(B6 Precarious Work — proposed)	

7.3 Facilitator Self-Assessment Tool

This tool is designed for facilitators to assess their own readiness before delivering EmplArt exercises and to track development over time. It is organised around twelve competency indicators derived from the ToT outcomes. Rate yourself honestly — this is not an evaluation by others but a planning tool for your own development.

Competency / Skill	1 — Beginner	2 — Developing	3 — Proficient	4 — Advanced
Forum Theatre facilitation	Can set up and run the Forum Theatre mechanism with clear instructions.	Can manage participant interventions and 30-second group readings.	Can use Forum Theatre to generate multiple strategies and compare them. Comfortable with unexpected interventions.	Can adapt Forum Theatre to different group dynamics, emotional states, and time constraints in real time.
Playback Theatre facilitation	Understands the basic Playback structure: story → actors → play back → reading.	Can facilitate the story-gathering moment without leading or directing. Keeps the invitation open.	Can hold the emotional space after difficult Playback stories without becoming therapeutic.	Can integrate Playback as an opening or closing within a longer session structure, calibrating depth to the group's state.
Image Theatre facilitation	Can give the "sculpt" instruction clearly and manage the silence.	Can facilitate group reading of images without projecting meaning onto them.	Can use Image Theatre to generate structural insight (not just emotional response).	Can combine Image Theatre with Forum Theatre or Playback in a single session with clear transitions.
Kolb cycle facilitation	Can name the four stages and transition between them.	Can protect Stage 2 (reflection) when the group wants to skip to Stage 4.	Can use Stage 3 (naming) to introduce research evidence without losing the emotional momentum of the session.	Can adapt the Kolb sequence to the group's pace and energy without losing the structural logic.
Bilingual facilitation	Can use the bilingual text as a participant reference.	Can invite participants to use the second language actively without pressure.	Can manage a session in which participants are at different levels of the target language.	Can use the linguistic difference within the group as a learning resource (e.g., role-swap across language backgrounds).
Working with vulnerability	Can recognise when a participant is becoming	Can redirect the session without invalidating the	Can design session structures that create safety without	Can debrief intense sessions in ways that leave participants

	emotionally overwhelmed.	participant's experience.	avoiding difficult content.	with agency rather than only exposure.

Use the following scale: 1 = Beginner (I understand this but have not practised it independently); 2 = Developing (I have practised this with support); 3 = Proficient (I can do this independently in most situations); 4 = Advanced (I can do this in difficult situations and support others to develop it).

7.4 Forum Theatre Observation Sheet

Use this sheet to document Forum Theatre interventions during delivery. Systematic documentation builds the project's evidence base and supports facilitator reflection.

#	Intervention (what did the participant do/say?)	Group response (what changed in the scene?)	What worked?	Competency activated
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Section 8 — Glossary of Theatre Methods and Theoretical Concepts

This glossary defines the key theoretical concepts and theatre methods used across the EmplArt handbook. It is designed for facilitators new to the EmplArt methodology and for use as a reference during Local ToT programmes (Activity A4.1).

Abstract Conceptualisation

Stage 3 of Kolb's Learning Cycle. The moment in which the facilitator — and participants — draw generalisable principles from the concrete experience and reflection that preceded it. In EmplArt exercises, this is the stage at which competency codes are named, research evidence is introduced, and the scene is connected to the broader employment context.

Active Experimentation

Stage 4 of Kolb's Learning Cycle. Participants apply what they have learned in a new, varied practice context — different roles, different pressures, different partners. The goal is not repetition of the original scene but transfer of the underlying competency to a new situation.

Boal, Augusto (1931–2009)

Brazilian theatre director and theorist. Creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed (1974), Forum Theatre, Image Theatre, Rainbow of Desire, and Legislative Theatre. Boal's fundamental insight: theatre is not something done for an audience but something done with one. The spectator becomes the "spect-actor."

Concrete Experience

Stage 1 of Kolb's Learning Cycle. The participant is fully present in the scene — doing, feeling, reacting. In EmplArt exercises, this is the enacted scenario: the job interview, the factory floor, the employment office. The experience must be real enough to generate genuine emotional engagement.

Forum Theatre

A form of theatre developed by Augusto Boal in which a scene is performed showing a protagonist failing to resolve a problem. The audience is then invited to replace the protagonist at any moment, try a different approach, and see what changes. The audience becomes the actor: the "spect-actor." Forum Theatre is the primary method across all three EmplArt Theatre Scenarios and is used in Exercises 5, 8, 9, and 12 explicitly. Entry point: any participant calls "Stop!" and steps into the scene.

Image Theatre

A form of theatre developed by Augusto Boal in which participants sculpt each other's bodies — or their own — into frozen images representing feelings, relationships, or power dynamics. No words are used. The group reads the images together. Used in Exercise 11 (France) and as an optional warm-up across all exercises. Power: makes embodied knowledge available before language is ready.

Kolb, David A. (1939–)

American educational theorist. Author of Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development (1984). Kolb's four-stage learning cycle — Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation, Active Experimentation — is the structural backbone of all twelve EmplArt exercises.

Legislative Theatre

An extension of Forum Theatre developed by Boal for use in political and institutional contexts. The interventions made by participants are not only practised as individual strategies but collectively refined into proposals for policy or institutional change. Used as a coda in Theatre Scenarios A and C. Power: shifts the frame from "what can I do?" to "what should the system do?"

Moreno, Jacob L. (1889–1974)

Austrian-American psychiatrist and theorist. Creator of Psychodrama and Sociodrama. Moreno's distinction between Psychodrama (working with individual psychology through personal scenes) and Sociodrama (working with social roles and collective situations) is fundamental to EmplArt's use of these methods.

Playback Theatre

A form of improvisational theatre developed by Jonathan Fox and Jo Salas in the 1970s. Audience members tell personal stories and a group of actors performs them back immediately, in an improvised theatrical form. Unlike Forum Theatre, which focuses on problem-solving, Playback focuses on recognition and dignity: the story is honoured as it is. Used in Exercise 10 (France) and in Theatre Scenario B.

Reflective Observation

Stage 2 of Kolb's Learning Cycle. Participants step back from the experience and observe it — through facilitated discussion, pairs reflection, or structured questions. In EmplArt exercises, this is the most commonly shortened stage. Trainers are advised to protect it: the reflection is where the learning is consolidated.

Sociodrama

A method developed by Jacob Moreno in which participants are assigned social roles — not characters — and enact collective situations, social systems, or institutions. Distinguished from Psychodrama by its focus on the structural rather than the personal. Used in Exercise 12 (France Travail) and Theatre Scenario C (The Institution). Entry instruction: "You are not playing a person. You are playing a rule, a process, or a barrier."

Spect-Actor

Augusto Boal's term for the participant in Forum Theatre who is simultaneously audience member and actor. The spect-actor breaks the fourth wall — not through artistic convention but through political necessity. In EmplArt exercises, every participant is a potential spect-actor: the invitation "Stop!" is always open.

Theatre of the Oppressed

The umbrella framework developed by Augusto Boal (1974) encompassing Forum Theatre, Image Theatre, Invisible Theatre, Rainbow of Desire, and Legislative Theatre. The political premise: conventional theatre

separates the actor (who acts) from the spectator (who watches and accepts). Theatre of the Oppressed abolishes this separation and makes theatre a rehearsal for reality.

Section 9 — Bibliography and References

All sources cited or referenced in this handbook are listed below in APA 7th edition format. Internal project documents are listed at the end.

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