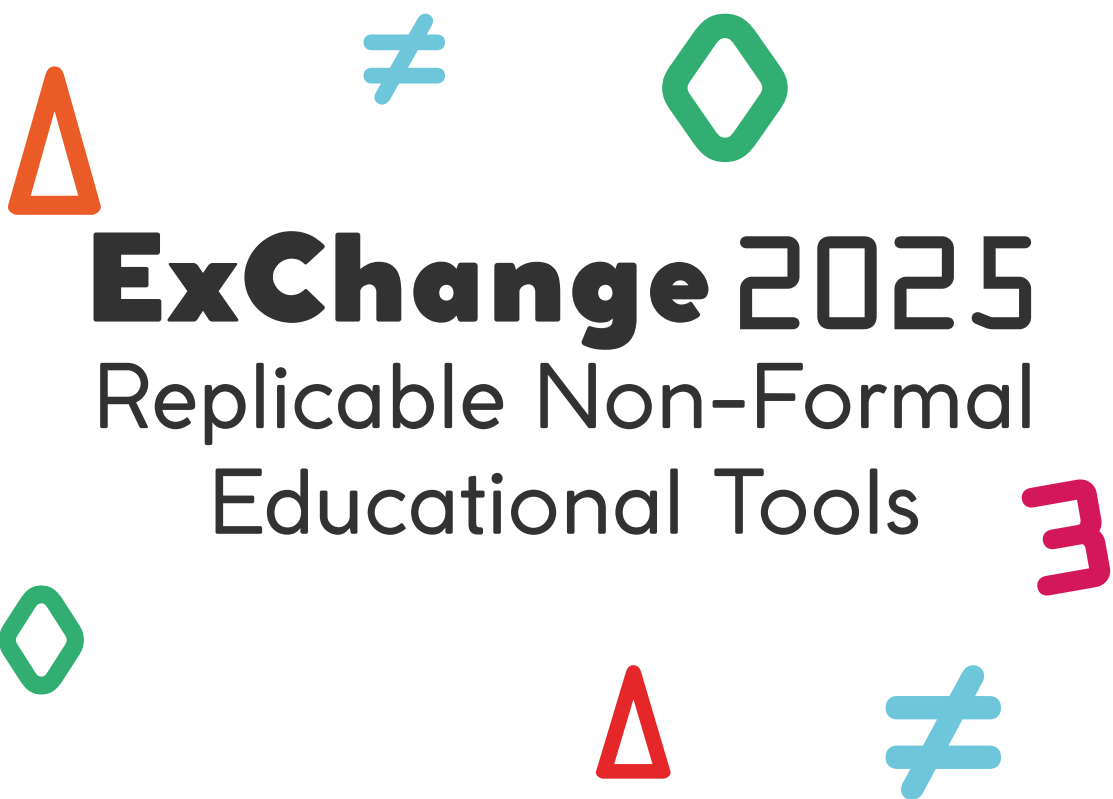


ExChange

2025

Exchange 2025 Replicable Non-Formal Educational Tools was created in the framework of Maghweb's ExChange 2025 programme and corresponding activities, funded by the Agenzia Italiana per la Gioventù thanks to the Erasmus+ Programme - Youth.

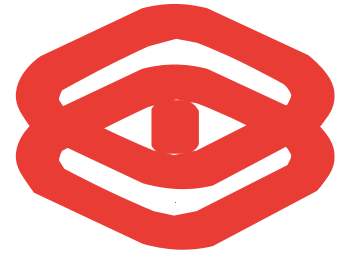
Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



ExChange 2025

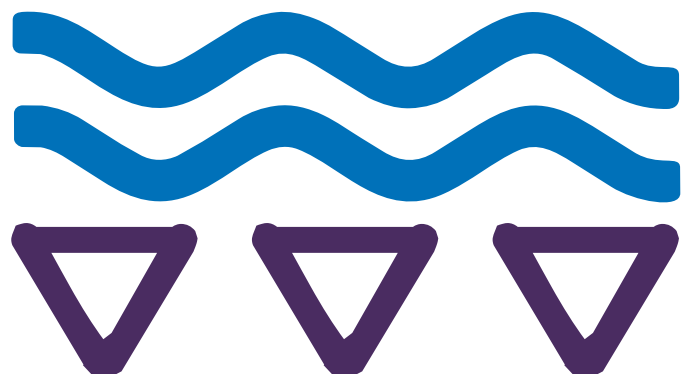
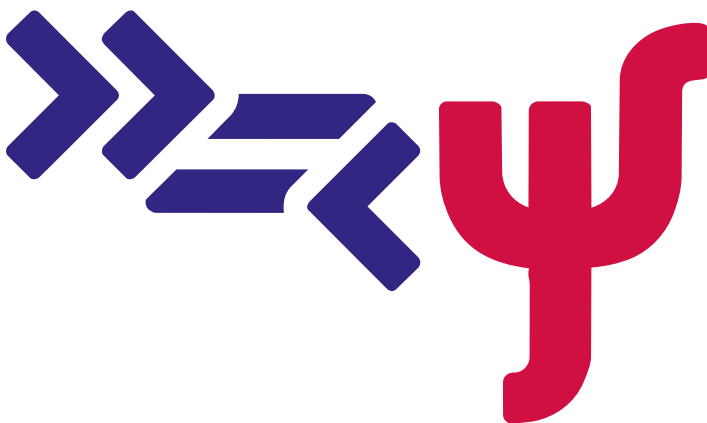
Replicable Non-Formal
Educational Tools

Non-formal Educational Tools



These non-formal educational tools were co-created by the international teams of youth workers and young people from Italy, Greece, Poland, Croatia, Spain, Portugal, Romania and the Czech Republic participating in ExChange 2025's Annual Activity Programme during the training courses Remedies (A1), Eyes (A2), Links (A3) and the youth exchanges, Waves (A4) and Folklore Futures (A5).

General Tips for Implementation: All these tools have been conceived to be implemented by facilitators, non-formal educators and youth workers with their respective groups of young learners with approaches that respect and practice the following values, co-developed by Maghweb and its groups of participants across the ExChange 2025 project: **inclusivity, active citizenship, solidarity, critical thinking and the asking of who, what, where and why questions, rights-based framing, collaboration, creativity, curiosity and the safety, ease and holistic psycho-physical-emotional wellbeing of diverse members of youth communities.**





Remedies 2025

Non-Formal Educational Tool

Background

The tool was developed in collaboration with youth workers participating in the Professional Development Activity “Remedies” in an attempt to find a practical and directly applicable way of decodifying systemic barriers to health and social services, by promoting the right to non-discrimination and equality through an intersectional approach in easy-to-access European level project cycle management.

Participatory Planning and Transnational Networking for Gender Equality and the Right to Health

Methodology

The tool applies the key principles of non-formal education through learning-by-doing, simulation and peer-to-peer education. Participants do not attend a theoretical lecture on project design, but are immediately immersed in a simulated experience of international cooperation. Divided into multicultural working groups, the young people discuss local challenges relating to health and non-discrimination, before translating their ideas into concrete and sustainable project proposals. The tool ends with a structured pitching session, in which the teams present the feasibility of their ideas to the audience, who, for the occasion, take on the formal role of an evaluation committee.

Definitions

Project Cycle Management (PCM): The set of management methodologies that guide the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of a project, ensuring consistency between the objectives and the expected results.

Pitch / Pitching Session: A strategic and brief presentation, ruled by a strict timing aimed at presenting strengths, social impact and sustainability of a project idea in front of potential partners and evaluators.

Peer Assessment: Educational process in which participants evaluate the work of their peers, using in this case predefined technical frameworks, whilst developing critical thinking, analytical skills and methodological transparency.

Tool Summary

The activity is developed through an intensive peer-led session about project design. In the first phase, participants put together their skills to think about civic solutions to the common problem, such as discriminatory experiences of healthcare by women and other marginalised groups, to be inserted in a project draft (e.g the development of local social and healthcare guidance platforms or school-based campaigns on gender equality). In the second part, the room transforms into an international forum of networking: each team has 10 minutes to present their project and to respond to the critical analysis of their peers and board of experts, who control the feasibility of the proposals through specific evaluation sheets.

Objective

The activity's objective is to develop practical skills in structuring international project proposals devoted to gender equality, characterized by logic and sustainability, stimulating at the same time strategic communication, public speaking skills and advocacy through the pitch technique, as well as critical analysis through peer evaluation.

Time needed >> 3 hours

Part 1 >> 30 min

Part 2 >> 60 min

Part 3 >> 20 min

Part 4 >> 70 min

Age >> 18+

Materials

Posters, markers, pens, post-its, evaluation sheets (containing evaluation criteria such as innovation, impact, sustainability), timer, expired calls and documents useful for ideation.

PART 1 >> Alignment, Framing and Methodological Input

The activity opens with the broader group. Facilitators explain the goal of the tool and introduce basic concepts of PCM, clarifying that a project proposal has to answer to community needs and to anchor to a human-rights-based framework (e.g equity of treatment as granted by articles 21 and 35 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights). All phases of the activity are explained, focusing in particular on the pitch session and the use of the technical sheets. Participants are then divided in groups (a maximum of 5 people per group is suggested), ensuring a diverse mix of nationalities, backgrounds and genders to encourage intercultural exchange and prevent feelings of isolation and exclusion.

Tip for facilitators

During the explanation of the evaluation criteria, it is important to highlight that the evaluation sheets used in the final phase are not a “game”, but technical exercises that foster a sense of civic responsibility.

PART 2 >> Co-design session

Each group is now free to work autonomously. Using posters and other materials, participants start the operative phase: each team has to identify a specific need and propose a solution through a project idea, aimed at promoting inclusion, active citizenship and equal access to rights and services. The poster is divided in logical areas: title, general and specific objectives, target group, activities, impact.

Tip for facilitators

It is important to leave the group working in autonomy, but facilitators must be there to help! Move around the workstations constantly, keeping an eye on the dynamics within the group without being intrusive. If you notice that a group is focusing too much on the visuals of the poster at the expense of the coherence of the activities, step in by asking thought-provoking questions: “Who will actually benefit from this specific action?”, “What skills are you promoting?”. Make sure everyone is speaking the common language of the exchange and that no national micro-clusters form.

PART 3 » Preparation of the Pitch Session

In the third phase, the groups finalize the proposal on the poster and start to focus on the communication strategy. They have to decide who is going to present the work (co-presentation is encouraged) and to plan how to use the 10 minutes to present all the different features of the project. During this phase, teams must also critically analyse their work, in order to anticipate questions or critiques of the biggest group.

Tip for facilitators

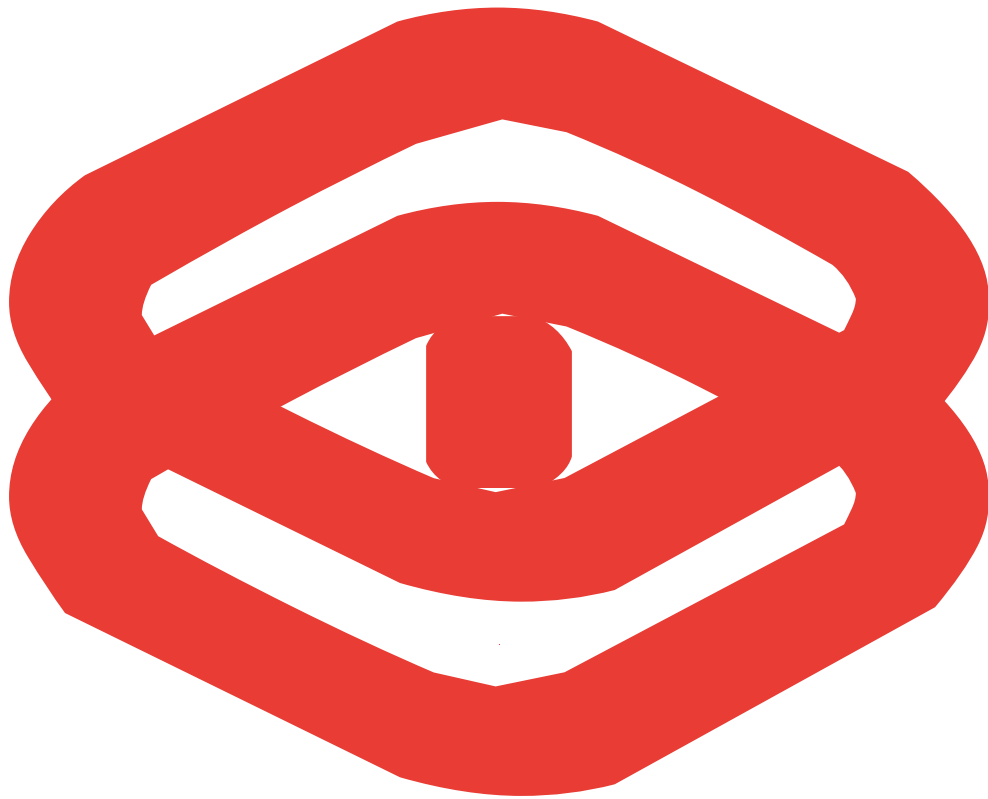
Advise each group not to spend most of their time describing the problem, but to get straight to the solution and its impact within the first minutes of the presentation. Encourage them to do a timed run-through in-house before the time runs out.

PART 4 » Pitching and evaluation session

The group comes back together as a whole and the facilitators start the networking forum and activate the timer. Each group has its own moment to present their idea and defend its validity and impact within the established timing. During the presentation, the rest of the participants become a simulated evaluation board, filling the evaluation sheets (**Annex 1**). At the end of each presentation, there is a session dedicated to specific questions from the audience and technical feedback from the facilitators and experts, focusing on the strengths and areas for improvement in the project.

Tip for facilitators

Manage the time very strictly to maintain the adrenaline, pace and realism of the session: once the tenth minute is up, the presentation must be stopped. When encouraging feedback from the audience, immediately cut short any superficial comments (e.g 'Well done, I like it') and steer the discussion towards objective criteria ("Why do you believe their digital platform is, or is not, sustainable in the long term based on what has been presented?"). Furthermore, the panel of experts must "fill in the logical gaps": it is important that the expert allows the participants to speak first and only then adds further insights or advice if necessary.



Eyes 2025

Non-Formal Educational Tool

Background

The tool responds to the necessity—identified by youth workers participating in the Professional Development Activity “Eyes”—of stimulating active citizenship among young Europeans, by providing methodological ways of critically analysing territorial changes, obstacles to public space access and systemic inequalities within contemporary urban contexts and placemaking processes.

Urban Critical Mapping & Citizenship

Methodology

The tool applies a participatory action research (PAR) approach (Snijder et al 2024): Participants don't analyse the city through abstract statistical data, but rather experiment directly with the city, through their bodies and field observation. By using the public space like an interpretable text, youth workers explore the territory in order to visually identify dynamics of exclusion, urban voids and marginality. The collected data is then collectively elaborated, in a process based on peer-to-peer learning and experience-to-transformation translation, whereby geographical analysis is transmitted into proposals for grassroots social regeneration and policy amendments.

Definitions

Critical Citizen Mapping (Ellis et al. 2004; Dodds): a cartographic practice that challenges the supposed neutrality of traditional maps, using them as political and social tools to highlight inequalities, barriers to access and the needs of marginalised communities.

Urban Void: Physical spaces within the urban fabric that have lost their original function (e.g derelict industrial sites, abandoned squares, disused public buildings) and which hold latent potential for social, cultural and inclusive regeneration.

PAR (Participatory Action Research): A methodological, research approach in which the process of knowledge-building and social intervention proceed simultaneously. The fundamental aim is not merely to understand a phenomenon or map a context, but to take active steps to bring about democratic and inclusive change in the context under study, directly involving the stakeholders as co-researchers and agents of change.

Tool Summary

The activity is developed across three macro phases. In Phase 1, the group defines the research question, establishing what must be investigated within the space in question (e.g accessibility, sense of safety, gentrification). In the second phase, the team starts an "urban safari" in a delimited area of the city, collecting qualitative data through an observation grid prepared on the basis of the research question. Finally, the data is reported into a graphic map in order to identify the criticism. The map is later converted into a set of recommendations for urban micro regeneration.

Objective

The goal of this tool is to develop participants' critical thinking in analysing urban spaces from a social and civic perspective, improving their abilities to autonomously formulate live research questions and collect data that can answer them. The tool culminates in concrete proposals for regeneration and policy guidelines for local decision-makers.

Time needed >> 3 hours

Part 1 >> 30 min

Part 2 >> 60 min

Part 3 >> 40 min

Part 4 >> 35 min

Part 5 >> 15 min

Age >> 18+

Materials

Flipchart and markers, city/neighborhood map, post it, camera, GPS

PART 1 >> Co-definition of the research question

In a plenary session, facilitators introduce the concepts of right to the city and PAR. The group has to decide what to investigate in the public space through a guided brainstorming. Participants develop their research question (e.g 'How accessible is this neighbourhood for disabled people?', 'Which spaces encourage young people to meet informally, and which are designed for commercial purposes?' or 'How is one's sense of safety perceived in the different areas?'). Once each research question is defined, participants are divided into research groups and establish the perimeters of urban exploration.

Tip for facilitators:

During the brainstorming session, pay attention not to over-influence the choice of the research question. Your role is to help participants refine questions that are too vague (e.g from 'Is the neighbourhood nice?' to 'Which aspects of the neighbourhood contribute to the residents' physical and mental wellbeing?').

PART 2 >> Urban Safari

Groups start their exploration, aiming at answering the research question. Each group defines some indicators, collects qualitative data, takes photos and geolocalizes key points. This part is characterized by the direct observation of urban dynamics, by mapping both critical elements and potential hubs of inclusivity, as well as urban voids capable of answering community needs.

PART 3 >> Data Processing and Co-Design of the Community Map

Once back, participants compare the data they have collected with the map of the neighbourhood. Each group analyses the collected data and selects the relevant ones in order to answer the research question, writing key words on post-its and attaching them together with the photos in the map. This process transforms fragments of individual observation into a visual and collective diagnostic picture of the dynamics and tensions present in the neighbourhood.

Tip for facilitators

Guide the youth to group the post-its into spatial and thematic clusters. If the research question concerned accessibility and two groups have mapped the same square with contrasting assessments (e.g. one saw a spacious area, whilst the other noted the absence of ramps on the adjacent pavements), encourage an immediate discussion to highlight how the perception of space changes depending on the indicator chosen and personal experience.

PART 4 >> Drafting Policy Recommendations

Starting from the framework that emerges through the map, groups now focus on the “action” phase. Each team has to think and write about two or three policy recommendations, ideally intended for local government.

The aim is to translate spatial challenges into a concrete civic proposal, structuring it as follows:

- the critical issue that has been identified;
- the negative impact on the local community;
- the proposed corrective action or micro-regeneration (e.g. strategic pedestrianisation, installation of inclusive street furniture, revitalisation of a derelict building as a community centre).

Tip for facilitators

Ensure that the proposals are not utopian or vague (e.g. ‘Rebuild the entire neighbourhood’), but are measurable, sustainable and formulated in appropriate institutional language to engage with policy-makers.

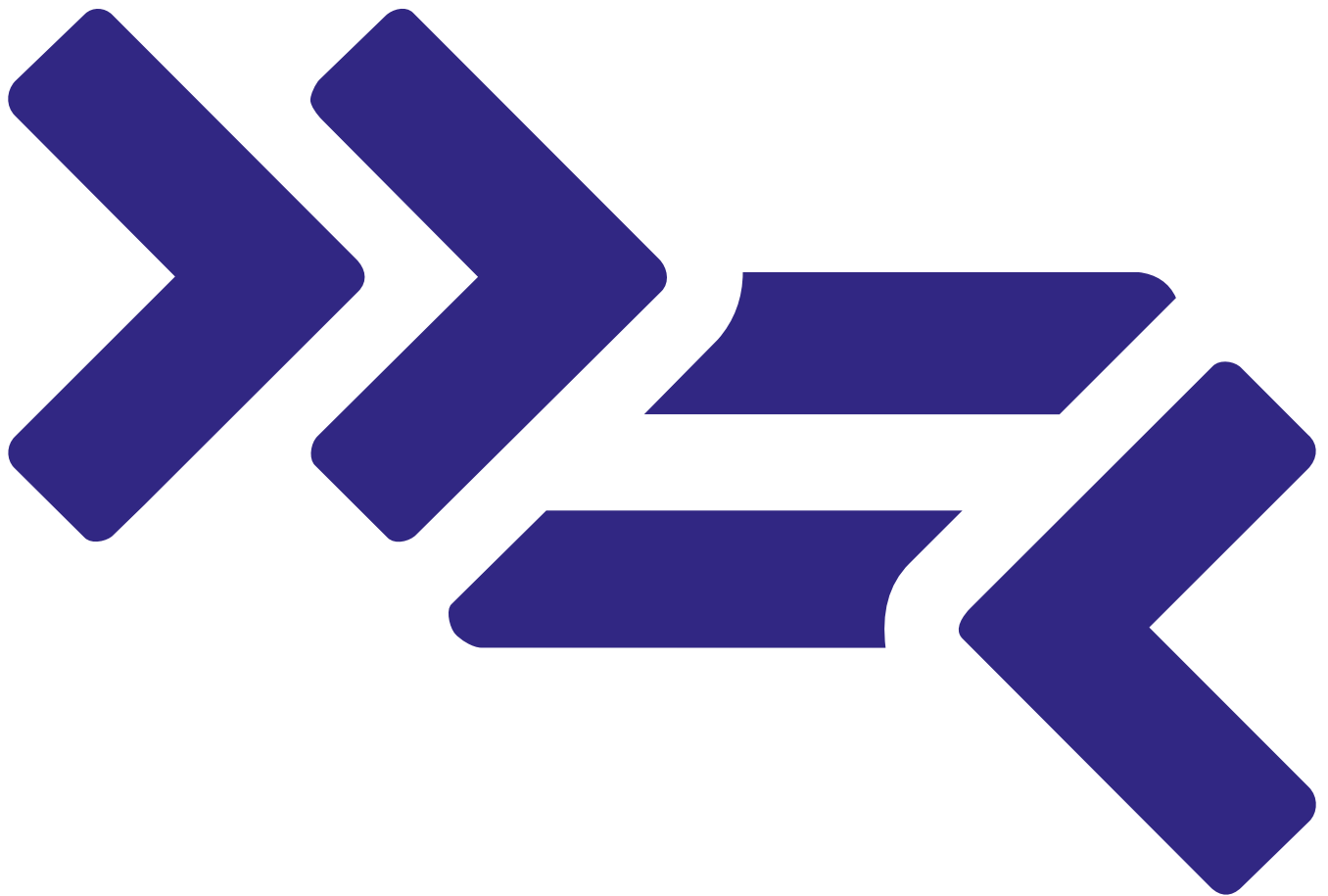
PART 5 >> Debriefing and Circle Time

The activity closes with a reflection circle, focusing on the awareness of the action and its research process. The facilitators lead the plenary session by posing three questions:

1. How has your perception of urban space changed when walking with a specific research question in mind, compared to a normal stroll?
2. How difficult was it to translate a physical observation (e.g. ‘there are no pavements’) into a written policy recommendation for the institutions?
3. How can you adapt the Critical Mapping methodology to investigate the unseen needs of your home communities?

Tip for facilitators

Conclude the session by emphasising that the map produced and the recommendations drawn up are not merely an exercise, but form the basis for ongoing civic monitoring, reinforcing the idea that urban planning must be an open, continuous process involving grassroots participation.



LINKS 2025

Non-Formal Educational Tool

Background

The tool was developed in collaboration with youth workers participating in the Professional Development Activity “Links” with the aim of exploring and countering the latent dynamics of vulnerability, exclusion and power asymmetry manifest in formal education systems in Europe. The programme is firmly anchored in the recommendations of the European Education Area regarding student wellbeing, equity in education systems and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The programme provides participants with non-formal tools to identify bureaucratic or relational mechanisms that create barriers within schools and universities, encouraging the co-design of collective, educational community solutions led by young people.

Deconstructing Power Imbalances in School and University Settings

Methodology

The methodology is based entirely on techniques from the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) developed by the director and educator Augusto Boal who was in turn inspired by pedagogue and writer Paulo Freire (1968). Non-formal education is combined with physical expression and role-play to analyse real-life conflicts in a safe environment. Through the use of Image Theatre and Forum Theatre, participants move away from being passive spectators of injustice to become 'spect-actors'. The methodology enables participants to re-enact real situations of institutional oppression (e.g intimidating language, bureaucratic obstacles) and to physically test, on stage, solutions involving assertive dialogue and community alliances, thereby promoting peer-to-peer learning and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Definitions

Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1974): a theatre and educational method practised worldwide that uses the language of the stage as a tool for social analysis, raising awareness and overcoming collective and individual forms of oppression.

Forum Theatre: A specific performance technique within Theatre of the Oppressed in which a short scene depicting social injustice is performed without a happy ending. The audience is invited to interrupt the action, go straight onto the stage, take the place of the oppressed protagonist, and try out alternative practical strategies to change the outcome of the conflict.

Image Theatre: A technique in which participants use only their bodies (without speaking) to create 'human statues' or three-dimensional tableaux that visually represent oppression, a feeling or a complex power dynamic, thereby facilitating their objective interpretation.

Tool Summary

The tool consists of an intensive two-hour practical workshop focused on the school and university context. In the first phase, participants use body-awareness exercises to visually map institutional power asymmetries by creating human statues (Image Theatre). In the second phase, international teams devise a short dramatic scene (Forum Theatre) set in a university lecture theatre, in which a student is subjected to bureaucratic obstruction or discriminatory behaviour. In the third phase, the performance is opened up to interaction: the audience interrupts the action, takes to the stage and experiences first-hand physical and verbal strategies for assertive response and peer support to diffuse oppression. The module concludes with a dynamic, non-verbal evaluation.

Objective

The tool consists of an intensive two-hour practical workshop focused on the school and university context. In the first phase, participants use body-awareness exercises to visually map institutional power asymmetries by creating human statues (Image Theatre). In the second phase, international teams devise a short dramatic scene (Forum Theatre) set in a university lecture theatre, in which a student is subjected to bureaucratic obstruction or discriminatory behaviour. In the third phase, the performance is opened up to interaction: the audience interrupts the action, takes to the stage and experiences first-hand physical and verbal strategies for assertive response and peer support to diffuse oppression. The module concludes with a dynamic, non-verbal evaluation.

Time needed >> 2 hours

Part 1 >> 25 min

Part 2 >> 35 min

Part 3 >> 45 min

Part 4 >> 15 min

Age >> 18+

Materials

Sheets of paper and pens for a quick sketch of the scene, brief guidelines on the rules of Forum Theatre for the 'Joker' (the theatre facilitator).

PART 1 >> Body Awareness and Image Theatre

The facilitator introduces the rules for physical and emotional safety within the theatrical space. Participants walk freely around the room, varying the rhythm of their steps. Next, the facilitator introduces the Image Theatre technique: participants work in pairs and, in turn, one uses the other's body as 'clay' to represent the concept of 'institutional submission' in educational contexts.

Tip for facilitators:

Make sure that participants strictly respect their partners' physical consent when shaping their arms or shoulders. Avoid speaking during this phase: complete silence helps to focus analytical attention on non-verbal communication and the emotional weight of body language.

PART 2 » Structure of the Forum Stage

Participants are divided into transnational groups of 5-6 people. Their task is to develop a very short dramatic scene (lasting no more than 3 minutes) centred on a credible, non-violent form of oppression within an educational context.

Real-life example: a student approaches a teacher or a member of the administrative staff to request a fair assessment or access to a resit examination, but is met with obstructive, cold and bureaucratically intimidating language that undermines their rights and isolates them in front of their peers. The scene must end at the point of maximum tension, with the protagonist (the student) defeated and no solution having been found. The groups choose the most representative scene to present to the whole group.

PART 3 » Structure of the Forum Stage

The selected scene is performed. The facilitator takes on the institutional role of the 'Joker' (the neutral mediator between the stage and the audience). At the end of the first failed performance, the play starts again from the beginning. The Joker explains the rules: anyone in the audience who notices a moment when the protagonist is being oppressed may shout "Stop!", go up on stage, physically take the place of the actor playing the oppressed student, and try to change the course of the action. The actor playing the oppressor (the lecturer) must strictly maintain their line of bureaucratic resistance, forcing the 'spect-actor' to seek concrete alliances with the other students in the classroom or to employ assertive communication strategies to redress the balance of power.

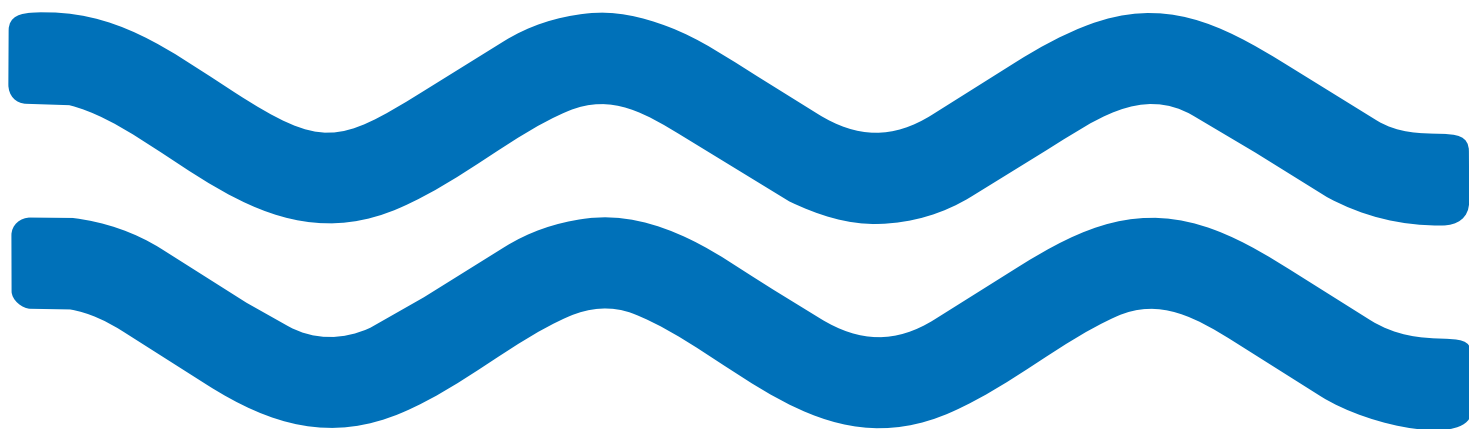
Tip for facilitators

As the Joker, maintain absolute neutrality: never judge whether a solution proposed by the spect-actor is 'right' or 'wrong'. If a proposal seems utopian or implausible, have the scene re-enacted, asking the oppressor to react realistically. Encourage them to explore the importance of collective action and solidarity amongst peers.

PART 4 » Closing and Dynamic Evaluation using the Spectrum of Bodies

After the performance, the facilitator concludes with a physical evaluation technique called 'The Spectrum of Bodies'. The facilitator draws an imaginary line across the room: one end represents 'Total mistrust/Inability to react to bureaucratic oppression' and the other 'Complete awareness and the ability to initiate collective solutions'.

Participants physically position themselves along the line according to how they feel they have changed following the Forum Theatre experience. Once positioned, the Joker simply invites the young people to look around to visualise the geometric layout of the room, asking just 2-3 people positioned at different points to explain their physical position.



WAVES 2025

Non-Formal Educational Tool

Background

The tool stems from the urgent need recognised by young people participating in the Youth ExChange “Waves” to raise awareness and engage Europe’s younger generations on the issues of ecological transition, climate justice and the protection of marine biodiversity, understood as a common good and an interconnected transnational resource. The programme is fully aligned with the strategic objectives of the European Green Deal and UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life below water) and aims to transform participants’ environmental awareness into practical skills in advocacy and active citizenship, moving beyond a purely theoretical approach to stimulate youth environmental activism at both local and international levels.

Co-Design and Drafting of the Sea Manifesto for the Protection of Marine Ecosystems and Environmental Sustainability

Methodology

The tool draws on the principles of political ecology and participatory democratic design. Through the use of collaborative writing sessions, participants analyse scientific data on marine pollution and climate change and then translate this into civic and political commitments. The methodology encourages peer-to-peer dialogue between young people from different geopolitical areas (coastal and inland), promoting the practice of mediation, conceptual synthesis and environmental advocacy through the creation of policy documents developed from the bottom up.

Definitions

Environmental Manifesto: a public policy document setting out values, co-drafted by a community or an action group to openly declare principles, ethical commitments and specific demands addressed to the public and policy-makers on a particular environmental issue.

Environmental Advocacy: the range of strategic actions undertaken by individuals, groups or civil society organisations (campaigns, drafting of documents) to influence public decision-making, legislation, policies and collective behaviour in support of the protection of ecosystems.

Shared Administration (G. Arena, 1997): a model of public administration based on the principle of horizontal subsidiarity, in which active citizens, youth organisations and public authorities no longer interact on a confrontational or contractual basis, but collaborate as equals in the co-design, co-planning and participatory management of the “commons” (Monbiot) (including ecosystems and local natural spaces).

Commons (Monbiot, 2017): The commons are assets, spaces, and resources over which a community holds shared, equal rights. These encompass not just land, water, and wildlife, but also abstract resources like knowledge, scientific research, and the internet.

Tool Summary

The tool gives life to a process which aims to produce the ‘Sea Manifesto’ within a tight timeframe. In the first phase, participants analyse the key themes of pollution to identify common ecological priorities. In the second phase, the international teams come together in a round-table negotiation, taking on the roles of various stakeholders to highlight areas of common ground between the local economy and environmental protection. In the third phase, the groups join forces to physically draft the articles and commitments of the Manifesto. The activity concludes with the democratic endorsement of the document and a debriefing on how participants can use the tool in their home communities.

Objective

The tool aims to develop participants' skills in the rapid formulation of environmental advocacy strategies and the technical drafting of policy documents, fostering a gradual engagement of younger generations with the sea as a resource, raising awareness of the sea as a transnational and interconnected common good, and enhancing their ability to mediate between complex socio-economic interests in order to translate the analysis of ecological data into legislative provisions and concrete civic commitments.

Time needed >> 2 hours

Part 1 >> 20 min

Part 2 >> 40 min

Part 3 >> 40 min

Part 4 >> 20 min

Age >> 15+

Materials

Flipchart, markers, roles sheets (institutions, local fishermen, tourist operator, biologist, young activist).

PART 1 >> Mapping of Ecological Priorities

In the plenary session, the facilitators frame the value of the seas as a transnational common good and distribute scientific infographics that can be self-created by facilitators in activity preparation phases. The participants, divided into international groups, extract the most relevant data and carry out a rapid mapping of the ecological priorities they consider urgent in their respective geographical contexts (e.g plastic waste management for coastal countries, the impact of riverine agriculture for continental countries). Each group notes down on flipcharts the three fundamental pillars that must be included in any marine conservation strategy.

Tip for group leaders

Don't be too theoretical! Your role is to encourage discussion between participants from different backgrounds: ask those who live in landlocked countries how they perceive their connection to the oceans, helping the group to understand global climate interconnections in a rapidly changing world.

PART 2 » Stakeholders' Round Table

The room is transformed into a role-play-based negotiation session. Stakeholder Cards (Annex 2) are handed out within the groups. Participants must take on the roles of figures in conflict (the fisherman who fears restrictions, the tourism operator who wants clean beaches but without building restrictions, the scientist who calls for fully protected marine areas, and the young activist who is pushing for immediate action). The aim of the round-table discussion is not confrontation, but to identify sustainable compromises capable of protecting the environment without crippling the local economy, by formalising three shared principles of agreement.

Tip for group leaders

If a discussion reaches an impasse, step in by asking questions aimed at immediate conflict resolution: “Is there a temporary compromise on which the campaigner and the fisherman can agree for this year?”

PART 3 » Co-writing of the Manifesto

The participants step out of their simulation roles and return to being the transnational team of young active citizens. Combining the priorities from Phase 1 with the compromises reached in Phase 2, the groups move on to drafting the content of the ‘Sea Manifesto’. The facilitators hand out the outline. Each group works on a specific section of the document:

- Groups 1 & 2: The Preamble and Fundamental Values (why the sea must be protected);
- Groups 3 & 4: The Commitments of Young People and Citizens (good local everyday practices);
- Group 5: Calls to Institutions and Policy-Makers.

Tip for group leaders

When drafting the articles, consult with the various groups to check the style of the language. The Manifesto must be formal but also incisive and accessible. Avoid overly generic slogans and frame the text around structured commitments: ‘We are committed to promoting ongoing community-led monitoring of local beaches’ or ‘We call on the authorities to introduce incentives to reduce single-use plastics’.

PART 4 >> Review, Reading and Validation

All texts produced by the teams are shared with the whole group for the first reading of the 'Sea Manifesto' in its entirety. Participants critically analyse the work of the other teams to check the document's internal logical consistency, suggesting minor amendments or stylistic corrections on the spot. At the end of the session, the group democratically approves the jointly drafted text.

PART 5 >> Debriefing and Eco-activism

The tool ends with a reflection focused on skills transferability in everyday life. The facilitators ask three questions in order to understand how the Manifesto could be practically applied in each context, so that, by the end of the reflection, each participant makes a commitment:

- In what way has playing roles that differ from your personal beliefs enriched your ability to draft a realistic environmental manifesto?
- What are the most effective channels your youth organisations can use to disseminate this manifesto once you return to your respective countries?
- How can a document setting out values, written by young people, become a tool for exerting democratic pressure on local policy-makers?

Tip for group leaders

Bring the session to a close by reminding everyone that the Sea Manifesto is not an end in itself, but a resource for action. Encourage the young people to view the document as a living tool, ready to be presented to schools and local youth councils, or to be used as a basis for digital activism campaigns in their home areas.



Non-Formal Educational Tool

Background

The tool stems from the need identified by the young people participating in the Youth Exchange “Folklore Futures” to explore Europe’s intangible rural cultural heritage not as a static collection of inherited traditions, but as a dynamic space for social reflection capable of promoting inclusion, equity and intercultural cohesion. The tool provides participants with the methodological and digital tools to identify, decode and dismantle gender stereotypes and patterns of victim-blaming that are historically rooted in traditional folkloristic European myths, reinterpreting them through civic action in a contemporary context.

Critical Storytelling and Traditional Cultural Deconstruction

Methodology

The tool applies the methods of critical storytelling and creative rewriting from the bottom-up: rather than passively accepting traditional hegemonic narratives, participants analyse them as social constructs. Through cross-national teamwork and the use of peer-to-peer education, young people dismantle the structure of the traditional narrative to overturn the established perspective. The tool highlights the perspective of a character who has been historically marginalised and blamed (Medusa), using the expressive potential of digital media (audio/podcasts) as a vehicle for cultural emancipation and youth empowerment.

Definitions

Critical Storytelling: A narrative approach aimed at analysing the latent power structures within traditional tales, uncovering prejudices, imposed gender roles and historical marginalisation, in order to give a voice and a central role to those who have often been silenced in traditional rural folklore.

Intersectional Rewriting: A method of textual reworking that analyses and rewrites a classic work or myth, taking into account the interplay of different identity lenses (gender, social class, power relations), redefining the power dynamics between characters and highlighting the mechanisms of asymmetric blame. The European Union's Strategy for Gender Equality (2022-2025) promotes the adoption of an intersectional approach to counter structural stereotypes in cultural and educational materials.

Counter-Narrative: A structured communication and storytelling strategy designed to deconstruct, challenge and overturn hegemonic messages or dominant narratives that fuel cultural prejudices within a community. Both the RAN (Radicalisation Awareness Network) and the European Commission's Guidelines on Counter-Narratives formalise the use of alternative stories as a non-formal educational tool to dismantle polarised and exclusionary narratives.

Dehumanisation: The cultural, political and narrative process through which a person when marginalised, victim of violence or forced into a subordinate position is stripped of their human traits and portrayed as a monstrous threat or a social deviant, thereby justifying their exclusion, punishment or elimination by the authorities or by a figure cast as a 'hero' (Council of Europe Guidelines on Combating Hate Speech and Dehumanisation in the Media, 2022).

Tool Summary

The tool takes the form of an intensive two-hour session focusing on the comparison of Ovid's texts concerning the myth of Medusa, her birth and death. In the first phase, participants analyse the classical verses to identify the dynamics of victim blaming and the impunity of the aggressor institutionalised within the narrative. In the second phase, the teams work on a critical rewriting of the text, adopting Medusa's exclusive point of view to dismantle the narrative of 'punitive monstrosity' and transform it into a manifesto asserting her dignity and integrity. In the third phase, the groups record their counter-narrative in audio format, before sharing it in a plenary session for validation and methodological debriefing.

Objective

The tool aims to develop participants' skills in the critical analysis and deconstruction of gender stereotypes and latent victim-blaming mechanisms within Europe's literary and intangible rural, folkloristic heritage, whilst enhancing their abilities in intersectional creative writing and the use of audio storytelling tools for the production and dissemination of counter-narratives applicable in local educational rural contexts.

Time needed >> 2 hours

Part 1 >> 20 min

Part 2 >> 45 min

Part 3 >> 40 min

Part 4 >> 15 min

Age >> 18+

Materials

Printed copies of the myth comparison sheet: on one side, the classical iconography of Perseus slaying Medusa; on the other, Ovid's text (*Metamorphoses*, Book IV, lines 790–803) on the rape and punishment of Minerva. Sheets of paper, post-it notes and pens. A voice recording app.

PART 1 >> From the Monster to the Origins

In the plenary session, the group leaders present a visual and textual stimulus (**Annex 3**). The classic story of Medusa's death is shown: she is the petrifying monster who must be defeated, whilst Perseus is the hero celebrated by history. Immediately afterwards, Ovid's text is distributed, revealing the origin of the story (the violence suffered in the temple and Minerva's disproportionate punishment). The participants begin a comparative analysis, tracing the radical contrast between the epilogue (what history has handed down: the monster) and the origin (what caused the trauma: victim blaming). The teams focus on the key question of the activity: "What made Medusa a monster in the eyes of the world? Her appearance, or her powerlessness to allow the true aggressor to be punished?"

Tip for group leaders:

PART 1 is a crucial moment for guiding critical thinking. Prevent the participants from getting stuck in abstract discussions. Focus the analysis on systemic dynamics.

PART 2 » Critical Rewriting and Voice Raising

The groups move on to the co-rewriting phase. Building on the analysis carried out, each team must rewrite the myth of Medusa and thus perform an act of narrative justice. The text has to be written in the first person, adopting Medusa's voice at the very moment she meets Perseus's gaze (and sword). Participants dismantle the 'dehumanisation': the snakes and the petrifying gaze are no longer symbols of her guilt or bestiality, but become a visible cry against the silence imposed on her. Medusa ceases to be the object of the hero's action and becomes the subject who questions the hero, revealing to him the truth about her own origins.

Tip for group leaders

Keep an eye on the discussions, ensuring that the groups do not slip into a passive or purely victim-centred narrative. The counter-narrative must be an act of reclaiming and re-appropriating the strength of one's own story. Help the teams to refine their wording so that the message is clear, concise and emotionally impactful.

PART 3 » Audio Production and Recording

The texts are finalised and adapted for the counter-narrative audio recordings, in the form of a monologue or micro-podcast. Participants divide the roles amongst themselves: the voice of Medusa; the hero's confused voice as the truth is revealed; and ambient sounds to lend emotional depth to the track (e.g the hissing of snakes, the clang of the sword). Each group produces a clean audio track lasting no more than 3 minutes.

Tip for group leaders

Remember that there's no need for professional studio editing: the value lies not in the form, but in the intention and the collective act of physically giving a 'voice' to those who have been silenced for centuries in traditional folklore.

PART 4 » Listening Gallery and Peer Feedback Session

The tool concludes by transforming the room into an interactive audio exhibition. Devices containing the recorded tracks are placed at one station per group, creating a 'Medusa's Voices Gallery'. Participants move freely and quietly around the space to experience the counter-narratives created by the other teams. A flipchart is hung next to each station, and each participant is given two coloured stickers to place on the whiteboards of the stations they wish to evaluate, based on two criteria:

- Blue Sticker: given to the track that has most clearly and powerfully deconstructed the figure of the 'monster'.
- Green Sticker: given to the piece with the greatest impact and originality in its audio communication strategy.
- The activity concludes with a moment of collective observation where the group leaders invite the whole group to observe which boards have the highest concentration of stickers, instantly revealing the effectiveness of counter-narratives without the need for verbal debate.

Tip for group leaders

During this phase, your role is to encourage silence in the classroom, so that the audio material can be enjoyed. Make sure the participants move around the gallery independently, without engaging in verbal arguments or self-assessment. Emphasise the educational value of this approach: the exclusive use of constructive stickers (blue and green) and avoid introducing a red sticker ('fail'). This prevents performance dynamics, anxiety about being judged and internal group conflicts from arising, enabling the group discussion to remain constructive.

Annexes

Project Name:

Criteria	Score (1-5)	Qualitative Feedback
Relevance & Needs Analysis Does it solve a real SRHR barrier? Alignment with call priorities?		Strengths: Gaps:
Project Design & Activities Are activities logical? Is the work plan realistic?		Feasibility: Suggestions:
EU Added Value & Partnership Why is it better to do this together?		Cooperation level: Integration:
Innovation & Impact Is the approach fresh? How will it last after the funding ends?		Wow factor: Sustainability:
Pitching & Communication Was it clear, engaging, and within the 10-minute limit?		Delivery: Visuals/Clarity:
One remedy for improvement (critical recommendation)		
Total score	/25	

Annex 2: Stakeholders Cards

Local Administrator

You are the Councillor for the Environment at the local council. Your main objective is to ensure political sustainability and balance the public budget, whilst demonstrating to the European Union that the local area complies with the Green Deal's environmental standards. However, you are terrified of losing voter support and sparking protests if your reforms were to affect the local economy or hit citizens' pockets. You have limited funds, which prevents you from financing utopian or excessively expensive projects. Despite this bureaucratic caution, you are very much in favour of the idea of a shared administration: you are definitely open to signing cooperation agreements if youth organisations and citizens offer to run information campaigns or monitor the coastline at no cost, thereby reducing the council's expenditure and providing you with a political success you can capitalise on in the next elections.

Marine Biologist

You are a scientist and the voice of academic research. The data you have speaks for itself: the local marine ecosystem is on the brink of total collapse due to microplastics and global warming. For you, protecting biodiversity is the top priority, and you are not prepared to compromise or trade off the health of the planet for the sake of short-term economic profit for hotels or fishing vessels. You demand the immediate establishment of a fully protected marine reserve. However, you are realistic enough to know that if the local community does not cooperate, the laws will remain nothing more than useless pieces of paper, gathering dust in a drawer. For this reason, you are open to adjusting the boundaries of the reserve, creating partially protected zones to safeguard small-scale artisanal fishermen, but only if the entire round table agrees to respect the closed seasons to allow marine species to reproduce.

Fisherman

You are a small-scale fisherman, and for generations your family has made a living from the products of this sea. Your primary concern is the economic survival of your business and the preservation of local traditions. You look on with anger at the large industrial fishing vessels that are devastating the seabed, but you also deeply distrust environmental laws 'imposed from above', because you fear they will ultimately only affect small-scale workers like you with bans and restrictions on navigation. You will categorically reject any total closure of fishing grounds unless the government guarantees you immediate compensation for lost working days. You know full well that fish stocks are declining due to pollution, so you would be willing to use biodegradable nets or assist scientists with their surveys, provided that the local council guarantees you a 'Certified Sustainable Fishing' label so that you can sell your catch at a protected, higher price.

Tourism Businessman

You are the owner of a major beach resort with a beachside restaurant. For you, the sea represents profit, business and the area's appeal. You desperately need the waters to be clean and free of plastic so as not to scare tourists away, but you regard building regulations and environmental restrictions as too rigid, a bureaucratic obstacle that holds back your turnover. You will firmly oppose any reduction in beach concessions and do not want public beaches to take space away from your facilities. However, you detest single-use plastic, because it forces you to pay your staff extra to clean up the shoreline every morning before customers arrive. Consequently, you'd be delighted to eliminate plastic from your beach establishment and fund innovative recycling points, but only if the local council rewards your environmental efforts with substantial tax relief on municipal waste charges.

Young Activist

You represent young people and civic movements for climate justice. Your aim is radical advocacy and the defence of intergenerational responsibility: you demand immediate action because it is you, the young people, who are experiencing first-hand the climate anxiety about the future. You are tired of politicians' vague promises and demand that the Sea Manifesto become a binding document for the local council. You are extremely critical of the 'greenwashing' practised by tourism entrepreneurs and cannot tolerate the councillor's slowness. However, you understand that small-scale local fishermen are just as much victims of industrial exploitation as the sea itself. You are therefore ready to join forces with the fishing industry and the scientific community to overcome conflicts and create a permanent civic monitoring committee that uses social media and digital campaigns to force the council to take real action.

Annex 3: Ovid's Myth of Medusa

After saving Andromeda, Perseus builds altars to honor Jupiter, Minerva, and Mercury, offering a sacrifice to each god. He then marries Andromeda without asking for a dowry, viewing her as his greatest prize. The wedding is a joyful celebration filled with music, perfumes, and flowers, followed by a grand banquet shared with the Ethiopian princes. During the feast, the guests ask Perseus to share the story of how he managed to defeat Medusa and take her head.

Perseus explains that he traveled through hidden, rocky tracks to the Gorgons' home, where the paths were lined with the stone figures of men and animals who had looked directly at Medusa. He reveals that he managed to decapitate her safely by looking only at her reflection in his polished bronze shield while she and her snakes were fast asleep, causing the winged horse Pegasus to be born from her blood. When a guest asks why only Medusa had snakes for hair, Perseus focuses deeply on her tragic origin. He explains that she was once a mortal woman of breathtaking beauty, and her most celebrated feature was her magnificent hair, which was envied by countless suitors. Her life was shattered when the sea god Neptune violated her inside Minerva's temple. Horrified by the event, the goddess turned her eyes away, but decided that the act could not go unpunished. Instead of targeting the god who attacked her, Minerva chose to blame and punish Medusa directly, transforming her famous, beautiful hair into foul, terrifying snakes that the goddess still wears on her breastplate today to terrify her enemies.

ExChange

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