



## PROCESS TO VALUE-DRIVEN SOCIALY ENGAGED STORYTELLING

### How can a training or community project support the creation of engaging stories?

Value-driven and socially engaged storytelling doesn't happen by simply selecting a theme connected to (European) values. Instead, it emerges organically from the creative process itself. When this process is built on democratic principles, ethical engagement, and artistic craftsmanship, it naturally leads to narratives that embody empathy, participation, and social responsibility.

#### Finding the Right Participants

The first step is to recruit participants whose interest in storytelling goes beyond being on stage but are also active members of their community. Look for individuals who may already be volunteering, involved in activism, or have a strong desire to make a difference. These candidates should be eager to share their experiences and be part of change.

#### Embracing Self-Reflection

Next, the storytellers engage in self-reflection; this step anchors their creative path. The storytellers explore their own identities, values, ambitions, challenges and lived experiences, bringing authenticity into the process. This personal exploration can be challenged or complemented by democratic community engagement: dialogue with peers, conversations with family members and community members, helping to connect personal stories to broader social contexts.

#### Respecting Communities

Whether engaging with community members, gathering stories, or preparing public performances, sensitivity, respect, and responsibility are central. Storytellers must learn to listen deeply, honor ethical boundaries, and recognise the trust people place in them. This respect is essential to build a positive relationship with the community.

The research phase offers a solid cultural basis. Storytellers can investigate local heritage, cultural roots, and community narratives, uncover voices, experiences and traditional stories that enrich their creative work.

#### Democratic Mentorship

Throughout the process, democratic mentorship - supportive, interactive, and structured -empowers emerging artists to develop their ideas while retaining ownership of their stories. Mentors guide rather than dictate, creating a safe space for experimentation and growth.

### **Crafting Stories**

Finally, through rehearsals, peer and mentor guidance and audience testing, the storytellers learn to shape their material with artistry and craftsmanship, integrating narrative structure, performance techniques, and aesthetic choices.



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