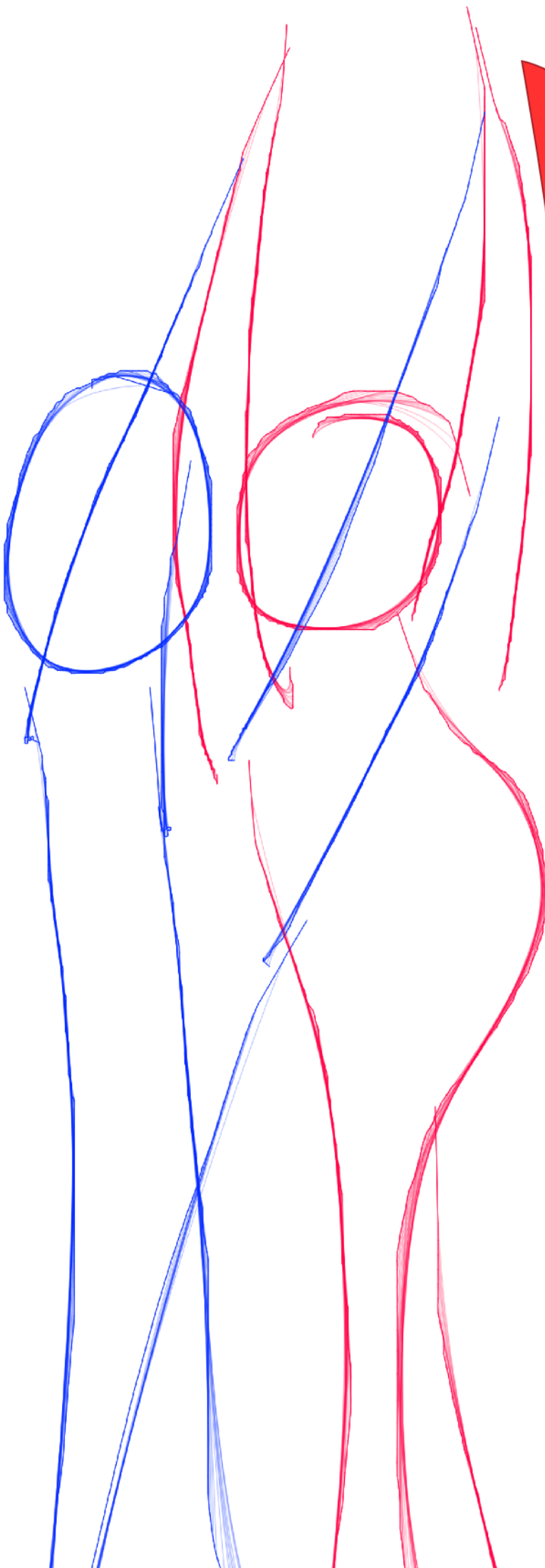


# BODY EXPRESSIVITY



CREATIVE  
WORKSHOP  
FOR THE BLIND,  
PARTIALLY  
SIGHTED,  
SPORTS  
ANIMATORS  
AND DANCERS





## **BODY EXPRESSIVITY: CREATIVE WORKSHOP FOR THE BLIND, PARTIALLY SIGHTED, SPORTS ANIMATORS AND DANCERS**

The starting point of the body expressivity workshop is the desire of deepening the awareness of our own body, creating a “movement alphabet” made of gesture construction, sequences, and contact movements with the aim of enriching the expressive life of blind and partially sighted participants.

Besides helping blind people, the aim of the workshop is also providing training for sports animators and dancers, training that will enable in them a better communication with blind people in order to relive the latter from their obscurity and “physical suffering” coming from the effort of expressing themselves without having experimented these means.

These objectives are accomplished by expanding perception of our body, of space and everybody else, and by working on the concept of expanding movement and on the perception of the body projected in the space.

Hypo vision is a severe impairment of visual abilities that limits a person’s autonomy. This disability condition strongly undermines the individual identity of the affected people, as they are forced to reconsider their identity and their affective and social relations. For the visually impaired, working closely with a partner, moving in safety and experimenting their perception, is a concrete assistance at relieving the darkness where the blind person lives. Making possible for the blind people to dance alone, autonomously, in a larger space, constitutes the second part of the training.

Sharing these activities between animator and participants enriches experience and awareness of both sides: the animator refines the carefulness that is fundamental for his/her professional, personal and artistic growth, while the participant acquires confidence on his/her sensibility, discovering the possibility of experimenting broader movements outside of his/her habits and above all, (s)he talks about him/herself with a non-daily language: the body expressivity language, a non-verbal art of communication.



## TRAINING

### "BREATHING THE BODY – DISCOVERING BODY DRAMATURGY"

#### SKIN

The skin is the border between the outside and the inside, it is a transmitting organ which is often understated and rarely listened; if trained to the poetics of a receptive body, it is capable of transforming into an osmotic organ between the outside and the body.



#### THE SPACE OF AN EXPRESSIVE BODY

From the exploration of the skin, we'll move on to understanding how to interact with the space "around and away from me", from the concept of irradiation of physical energy from the barycenter of the body (our emotional and motor container); through body expressivity techniques, it will be studied how to reach a movement

awareness in the space, and how space resides in the place in a different way when we are being mindful expressive inhabitants of ourselves. In this training, single and couple exercises (that include a brief introduction to Contact Improvisation) will be offered. Elements like ability to concentrate, silence and breathing will be studied as bonding substances of a poetical awareness of the body.



### FINAL OBJECTIVE

The final objective of this training will be movement awareness tied to perceptual and relational ability to the maximum of its possibilities and variety, stimulating body exploration in a chain reaction with the environment and the partners. In short, it will be explored the space *inside the body*, the skin as a border between the outside and the inside, the space *around and away from a person* using body



expressivity techniques through concentration, silence and breath. It will be important to grow an awareness of movement width in relation to the aforementioned aspects.



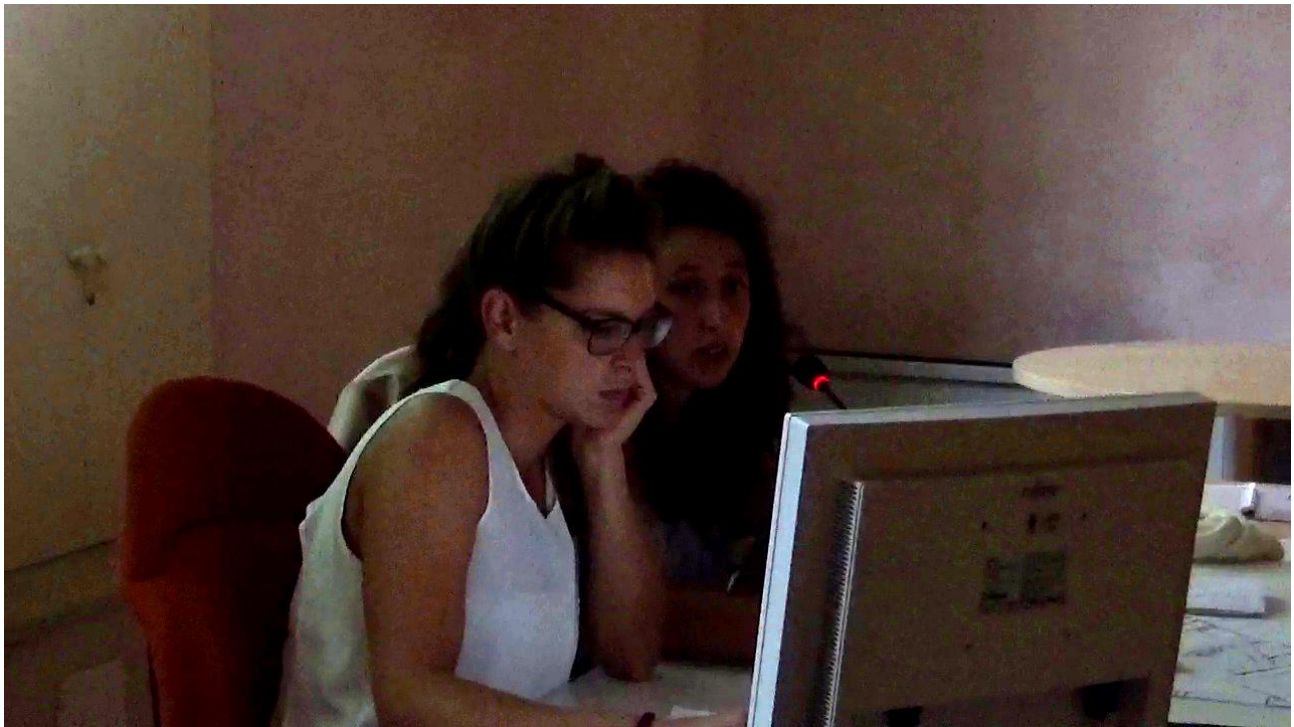
## PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE OF A PARTIALLY SIGHTED PERSON



In order to provide animators and other trainees a training as comprehensive as possible, theoretical lessons about how visual impairments are diagnosed, evaluated and treated, and how said impairments affect the life and psychology of the person suffering from those, theoretical lessons have also been set up. The objectives of said lessons are informing the participants about hypo vision and further training them also on this aspect, so that they can be more aware about both the meaning and the experience of visual disability, in order to better relate and interact with people with visual impairments.



The lessons will be carried out with instruments and practices like simulations, group activities, videos and other multimedia material (these will require such hardware as PCs, multimedia projectors, interactive whiteboards, and so on).



Those who become partially sighted during their life experience a change that strongly undermines his individual identity; sight damage represents the loss of a part of a person, forcing said person to undergo a radical reorganization, not only of his everyday life, but also of his own identity and his role in the family, couple life and society in general. Accepting this illness is a process that takes a lot of time and that often doesn't happen definitively. There is in fact an uncertainty condition that makes the process of redefining and reorganizing oneself extremely delicate. The main element of this condition is already found in what defines what hypo-vision is. This condition is something that is placed in a sort of "blurred zone"

between the two well defined condition of “complete blindness” and “correct sight”.

This uncertainty also affects how the partially sighted person defines himself, and this always happens in terms of difference between the blindness and vision concepts. Often the partially sighted person depicts himself as a “non-sighted” or “non-blind” person, but these terms are extremely negative, since they focus on what the person can’t do instead of what he still can do. Furthermore, people often likens hypo vision to complete blindness. Another uncertainty factor is the fact that the residual sight capabilities don’t grant a constant quality of view.

This quality is affected by many factors, such as quantity of light, the person’s tiredness, presence of other people around him and so on. These factors can significantly hinder the capabilities of the residual sight. This in turn causes strong senses of insecurity and frustration in the partially sighted person. The aforementioned factors may also cause contrasting behaviors in the partially sighted person. For example, he may not see a transparent glass on a white towel, but he may pick up a tiny coin on the ground without a problem, if the correct conditions of lights, reflections, contrasts and so on are met. This however causes certain reactions of surprise, confusion, uneasiness or maybe even disbelief in the other people surrounding the person.

## GENERAL CLASSIFICATION OF BLINDNESS OR VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS



The World Health Organization classifies sight damage as follows:

**Complete blindness:** complete loss of sight in both eyes; perception of shadows, light or hand movement in both eyes or in the healthiest eye; residual binocular perimeter is lower than 3%.

**Partially blind:** residual vision not greater than 1/20 in both eyes or in the healthiest eye, even with correction; residual binocular perimeter is lower than 3%.

**Severe hypo-vision:** residual vision not greater than 1/10 in both eyes or in the healthiest eye, even with correction; residual binocular perimeter is lower than 30%.

**Mildly severe hypo-vision: residual vision not greater than 2/10 in both eyes or in the healthiest eye, even with correction; residual binocular perimeter is lower than 50%.**

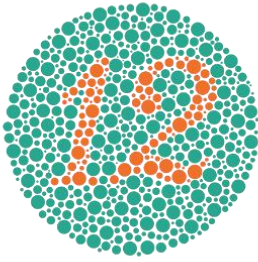
**Light hypo-vision: residual vision not greater than 3/10 in both eyes or in the healthiest eye, even with correction; residual binocular perimeter is lower than 60%.**

### **EVALUATING AND TREATING VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS**

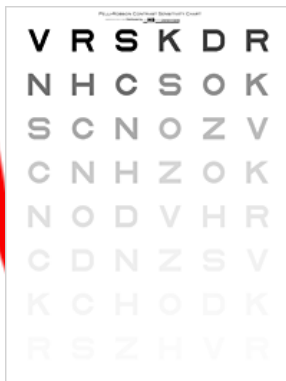
**Visual impairments may be caused by a number of factors, including being born with the impairment, degradation of the capabilities of the retina because of old age, certain diseases, like diabetes, defects in blood circulation in the eyes, and many more.**

**When treated, various parameters are evaluated in a visually impaired person: visual acuity (sharpness of vision, evaluated by making the patient read certain letters, numbers of symbols of various size), field of view, sense of color (the ability of discerning even the slightest difference in similar colors), contrast sensitivity (the ability of making out objects with very low contrast between them), glare sensitivity, stereopsis (perception of depth) and movement perception.**

## EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE TESTS

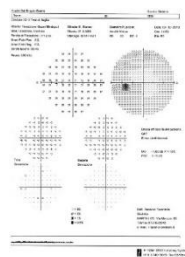


Pictures like this are used in the Ishihara test, for evaluating sense of color, particularly the ability of discerning the colors used for the dots in the picture. In the proposed example, normally sighted person should be able to clearly see the number 12.



This is a contrast sensitivity test. The patient must be able to read as much of the letters in the table as possible. A normally sighted person would see the following letters in the example table on the left: VRSKDR – NHCSOK – SCNOZV – CNHZOK – NODVHR – CDNZSV – KCHODK –

RSZHVR



For the measurement of the field of view, the eyes are examined by a specific machine similar to the one here on the left. A chart is then compiled with the results computed by the machine.



## REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation in partially sighted people consists in optimizing usage of the residual visual capabilities, relating to the individual needs of the patient and with the objective of maintaining autonomy and a satisfying quality of life.

Most Health Organizations provide their patients with a complete medical staff, that may include ophthalmologists, psychologists, nurses, and also other people that may be specific to certain patients, such as children psychologists, physiotherapists, otolaryngologists, and so on. However, it is of the most importance that the patient is helped, cheered and sustained by his family, friends and other people he knows, people that will help him to stay calm and serene and thus deal with his illness comfortably and without frustrations or other negative thoughts. Further motivation is provided by medical science on a regular basis, thanks to constantly new discoveries such as bionic eyes, treatments with stamina cells, and so on. Therefore, it is important to carry on and never give up.

## HOW TO BEHAVE WITH A BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED PERSON

When you meet a white cane, a strange pair of glasses, a cap lowered over the eyes, a walked bicycle, remember that behind, under, beside them there is maybe a blind or partially sighted person, that cannot see, but can hear.

**GIVE HIM AUDIBLE CLUES:** do not stop talking when he gets near: you are depriving him of fundamental audible points of reference; conversely, make yourself audible.

**INTRODUCE YOURSELF FIRST:** if you know him, greet him first - that is identify yourself: a partially sighted person's memory is more sound-based than vision-based, and he recognizes people by their voices.

**TREAT HIM WITH RESPECT:** don't be surprised if you see him moving with ease, avoiding obstacles, stepping on or off the curb with assurance and so on: frequently visited places have no secrets, they are mentally mapped manhole by manhole; lampposts, dumpsters, and parked cars, if in the right place, are no secrets. But a meter away, there are dark woods, where every direct way is lost.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

### *"IO TI VEDO COSÌ"*



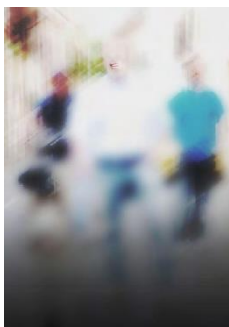
**"Io ti vedo così"**  
**("I see you like this"**  
**in Italian) is a**  
**traveling exhibition**  
**organized by the**  
**Italian Union for the**  
**Blind People, that**

**consists of various photos that has been digitally manipulated so that they show how people affected by various visual impairments see the people and the environment around them. Each photo is paired with a comment by the person suffering from the respective visual impairment that tells the viewer how he or she sees with that visual impairment.**

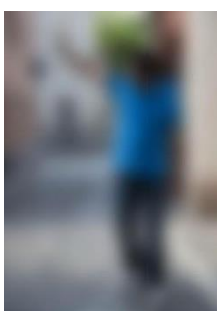
**The following is a list of the various visual impairments that has been exhibited, along with a**



**quote from the comments by the people describing their illness.**



*"Of a person, I can only see the mouth, I see brightness where there is light, where there is shadow, there are no more elements. I can see the masses by contrast, if there is no contrast, everything disappears..."*



*"...from the door of my house, six or seven meters from it, I don't recognize people, and so I greet everyone. At a distance of one and a half meter, I can't see the eyes, the mouth, the nose. if light hits them, I can deduce the profile of the nose and the contour of the head slightly; where there aren't the eyes, everything is brown, it is an out-of-focus thing. The least lit part of the face gets confounded with the background..."*



*"... if I meet you in the street I see you only from the stomach down, I can see the sides, but I can't recognize you. Instead of your face, there is nothing... it is not white, nor black, nor gray. Your face is invisible; in its place it looks like the road just continues. If I look at my feet, I see only one..."*



*"...five years ago I could still drive and looking at the road I could see what was there: first there was a lorry, then one of the rear lights went missing, then another tiny piece, then there was nothing more there: the truck had disappeared and at its place it was like a gray indefinite road that continued. At the sides the trees were still there but at the center there was no center anymore, there was no traffic..."*



*"...my world is undefined, it is neither black nor white, it looks like there is something in front of me but I can't make it out, it is like a thin veil, it's like living in milk. I have seen colors, I remember them, but the one I see in front of my eyes it cannot be defined. It is not white, it is not black, or gray, it's something muffled, evanescent, soft..."*



*"...in my vision there is a non-uniform blotch, the center is white, surrounded by black, and it gradually fades like a steamy glass. This blotch occupies mostly the upper part of my field of view, it is widening horizontally, it looks like Saturn, a sphere with a strip around it..."*





“... it’s like I see through a frosted glass, a transparent but opaque veil. I can’t make out the expression of the mouth, I can guess the color of the hair, I see and I don’t see. I can recognize green, while violet seems black, fuchsia looks red, cyan becomes violet. I can make out contrasts, if on the road there is a gray post, it gets confounded with the road and I may hit it...”

### A DINNER IN THE DARK



A very effective experience about how a blind or partially sighted person deals with the surrounding environment is organizing a “dinner in the dark”. In this event, normally sighted people participate in a dinner staged in a

completely dark room. In order to further reduce their visual capabilities, the participants are blindfolded. Therefore, they can't see anything and are effectively reduced to complete darkness, and they will have to eat a complete dinner by adopting certain tricks that compensate their temporary blindness. Real blind people will serve the meals to the participants, who are often genuinely surprised of how swiftly and confidently these blind "butlers" move about, with little to no difficulty in recognizing each guest and serving them the correct meal.



*Remember to stay behind me  
put your hand on my shoulder  
and put your feet in the exact spot where I put mine  
don't speak, whisper  
your eyes will get used to darkness  
suddenly the sky will open  
the darkness of the sky is not the only color  
me and my body played dancing, and it was fun  
I feel relaxed, I'm moving in the space  
free to dream  
root your feet to the ground  
feel the points of contact between the ground and your  
body  
you can't hurt yourself  
share your gesture with your partner  
find your way in the space  
draw from your uniqueness  
the loss of the border as a positive condition*



## ABOUT FNASD

FNASD – “Federazione Nazionale Associazioni Scuole di Danza”, or “Dancing Schools Associations National Federation”- was born in 2001 from the merging of various associations of dance schools regularly constituted in the country of Italy.

It achieves its objectives through a networking between places (dancing schools, institutional schools and theaters) and training activities (dance, music, curricular, training).

FNASD adheres to the General Italian Association of Entertainment (AGIS) / Federdanza.

For several years FNASD witnessed a new phenomenon in the country which is socially and culturally relevant: the opening of schools and dance classes to expressions of "other cultures", ethnic dances that among young people and adults have an interesting result that often runs out of the school.

Responding to the demands of different teachers, FNASD opened a department called “Dances of the People” in order to prepare projects and cultural experiences related to schools and theaters.

"Ethnic" dance is without a doubt an important tool of knowledge and integration among different ethnic groups because they all use the same vehicle and the same instrument: the music and the body.

The establishment of cultural projects represents undoubtedly an aid to solve integration problems in our society today.



**FNASD activities are carried out by the following member associations:**

**Ass. Romagna Danza Ravenna, Ass. Labirinto Jesolo (VE), Ass. Ars Danza Grottaferrata (RM), Danza Insieme Taranto, Espressione Danza Bologna, Prospettica Milano, Il filo di Arianna Schio (VI), Ass. Progetto SuDanza Reggio Calabria, Ass. Campania Arte Danza Napoli, Ass. Progetto Danza Latina, Ass. Scuole Alto Lazio Civitavecchia, Ass. Danza Centro Italia Rieti, Terni Eventi Danza Terni, Ass. In Scena Massafra (TA), Laboratorio Danzaidea Perugia, Ass. Danza in Palcoscenico Bari, Ass. Danza in Corso Roma, Ass. ACLED Chioggia (VE). All associations will participate in the project implementation**

### **ABOUT LUCIA PEREGO**



**Choreographer, dancer, teacher, artistic director of the MP.Ideograms Association, director of the dancing school Compagnia Era Acquario. Born in Vicenza, she graduates in Psychology in Padua. She lives and works in Parma where she works as a performer and choreographer with Teatro Due, Lenz Rifrazioni, Teatro delle Briciole-Teatro al Parco, Natura Déi Teatri, among others.**

Her work is aimed at the study of the body as a carrier of dramaturgy, as a place where breath, gesture and voice come together in a single dialectical intersection. Apart from the directions and choreographies for Eracquariodanza Association (until 2014, when its activities were interrupted), from 1977 to present day she works with disabled people of different ages, creating workshops (held in integration with dancers, psychologists, actors and operators) and planning shows, with the purpose of exploring and spreading the thought, the richness of feeling and the truth which belongs to each individual.

She collaborates with the AUSL - Italian Health System Local Unit - of Parma, ANFFAS - National Association of Families of People with Intellectual Disabilities - and other institutions. She holds seminars of creative dance in different schools, working with children and teenagers. She collaborates on projects of socialization and integration through the techniques of dance therapy; she is a teacher at training courses and creative movement workshops for teachers in different schools (e.g.: "Animare l'educazione" ("Animating education"), Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore conference, Piacenza 18/10/11); she involves children, teenager and adults in her performances, by organizing recitals and shows in the school she directs and where she teaches. Since 1995 she collaborates in the conference "Le Mie Domande Non Solo Mie - Meeting dei giovani" ("My questions that are not only mine - Youth Meeting"), a project on adolescence promoted by the AUSL of Parma together with the Psychology Services of the University of Parma, SpazioGiovani and the Municipality of Parma.

The project has become an annual event, which presents performances born from workshops, and which are carried out with students of High Schools, students of the dance school and the dancers of the Company/Association. From 1998 to 2011 (when the course was interrupted) she is a freelance teacher of Libera Espressione Corporea (Free Body Expression) at the diploma course in Performing Arts at the I.S.A. PAOLO TOSCHI Institute of Parma, where she also directs and dramatizes the shows performed by the students of the biennium. Since 2000 she is a tutor to the interns of the Degree course in Psychology at the University of Parma, which are on an observational internship at the dance school during the special projects.

Since 2001 she is a freelance teacher of Contemporary Dance and Creative Dance for the Summer School of Royal Academy Italia.

The body expressivity training project, aimed to youngsters from 18 to 39 years old, partially sighted or not, is the second transnational training lead by FNASD, involved a group of 24 youngsters coming from Italy, Poland and Turkey, that worked in integration with six dancers, in our case conducted by Lucia Nicolussi Perego, professional dancer.

The project and its training can be replicated by other schools, associations and in other countries, by following the structure of lessons: animators will be training by three different professionals: dancers, professional orthoptists and psychologists, to have a complete picture of how to relate with the visually impaired and blind persons during these activities.

**TIP: when doing these exercises, wearing comfortable clothes (such as a gym suit) is recommended.**

## Projekt

# May I help you - sport animator for blind people.

2014-2-PL01-KA205-013229



### Project Partners:

- 1. Polski Związek Niewidomych, Okręg Opolski**  
**Polish Blind Association**  
ul. Kościuszki 25/1 / Opole / Polska



- 2. Federazione Nazionale Associazione Scuole di Danza**  
**Federation National Association of Schools of Dance**  
Ravenna / Włochy / [www.fnasd.it](http://www.fnasd.it)



- 3. ENGELSİZ TOPLUM OLUSTURMA DERNEĞİ**  
**The foundation of barrier free society**  
Ankara / Turcja / [www.etod.org.tr](http://www.etod.org.tr)

## Duration of the project: 01.02.2015-01.06.2016.

The project purpose was to prepare a group of young people – social sport animators – who would have qualifications to organise sports and recreational events for the blind.

Owing to the participation in the project, 24 young people familiarized with the specificity of work with blind people and will now be able to assist organisations supporting the blind in their work.

A group of 24 young people from Poland, Turkey and Italy took part in the project. Amongst them, there were persons who are blind, partially sighted and sighted.

The participants got to know the principles of safe organisation of canoeing, sailing, dancing and movement recreation events as well as indoor sports for the blind.



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