

AITA/IATA Poland: Mission and report

General Assembly Martin 2014

Fundacja Graji! is a Polish start-up non-governmental organization with its headquarter in Warsaw. The foundation has been created in 2012 with the aim to support Polish amateur theatre. After years of preparation and international support, especially by Bund Deutscher Amateurtheater e.V., Fundacja Graji! asked to become a Polish representative of AITA/IATA. Since AITA/IATA's General Assembly in Monaco 2013, where Fundacja Graji! has been elected as affiliate, the initiative has been strengthened.

In August 2014 Fundacja Graji! received a positive answer about a 15 months funding by the Erasmus+ program, to establish a Polish service-center for amateur theatre. Fundacja Graji!'s application has been marked with 95 of 100 points and got the first place among likely over hundred other applicants. The project partners are: Bund Deutscher Amateurtheater e.V., DATS - landsforeningen for dramatisk virksomhed, Fédération Nationale des Compagnies de Théâtre et d'Animation, Instytut Teatralny im. Zbigniewa Raszewskiego Polish Ministry of Culture and a local strategy NGO Stowarzyszenie Pozytywnych Zmian.

While the CEC GA in Martin 2014 lasts Fundacja Graji! is waiting till October to sign the contract with the Polish National Agency of Erasmus+. From that moment on the idea will have the financial support to grow. The aim for 2015 is to become a deserved AITA/IATA National Center for Poland.

Here are some informative quotes from the project's description:

"The Fundacja Graji!'s initiative to establish an amateur theatre platform is a response to real needs of the Polish theatre community. The project 'Teatramat – Factual Backstage of Amateur Theatre' has the character of lasting service center, which will facilitate participation in the local, nationwide and international theatre life, by providing substantive, organizational and financial support.

As part of the project, Fundacja Graji! is going to establish a stable, but constantly updated, network of theatres and artists, which will complete the picture of Polish theatre life. The network will include, among others, provincial theatres, alternative and experimental theatres, amateur theatres (at schools, universities, culture centers, etc.), companies without their own stage, stand-alone artists – that is all those, who seek possibilities of development and who want their work to reach a wider audience.

An innovative and digital database will include every theatre artist willing to join the project: instructors, directors, actors, and above all theatre groups. An absolute priority in all our ventures is the preservation of the participants' autonomy and the greatest possible variety and colorfulness of theatre life.

After the fifteen-month financing by the Erasmus+ program, the initiative will be continued for an indefinite period in cooperation with the worldwide organization Association International du Théâtre Amateur, with Instytut Teatralny (the [ministry] Theatre Institute, organization subsidized out of the state budget) and with large number of Polish theatres.

[...]

We are grateful to our predecessors who supported the amateur theatre: Związek Teatrów Ludowych (the People's Theatre Association, 1919), Instytut Teatrów Ludowych (the People's Theatre Institute, 1929), Towarzystwo Teatru i Muzyki Ludowej R.P. (the People's Theatre and Music Society, 1946), Związek Teatrów i Chórów Ludowych (the People's Theatre and Choir Association, 1957), Związek Teatrów Amatorskich (the Amateur Theatre Association, 1962) and Towarzystwo Kultury Teatralnej (the Theatrical Culture Society, 1971), which has functioned to this day. We appreciate their contribution to Polish cultural identity and we benefit from their experiences, although in our ventures we take into consideration above all the real picture of today's theatre life, which was lately reshaped by dynamic social, artistic and technological growth.

Theatre is a diverse phenomenon, but it has always the potential of involving people in collaborative creation, mutual education and growing. We consider this to be of huge value to the Polish society. We want to bring to light the works of theatre enthusiasts. They are all welcome to the project Teatramat."

The EFAT steering committee decided in Lingen in July 2014 to accept our invitation to carry out the European Forum of Amateur Theatre (EFAT) in Warsaw. The meeting will take place from 24th to 26th October 2014 at our headquarter Strych na Wróble. You are very welcome to join and enjoy a hopefully fruitful discussion to construct an european network for amateur theatre.

Simon Blaschko

Vice President of Fundacja Graj!