

# EFAT Meeting, aita/iata Affiliate Poland, Warsaw 24 – 26 October 2014

The following notes were taken by Anne Gilmour, GB National Centre and are supported by other documents.

## Apologies:

Apologies and greetings to meeting participants were received from aita/iata President Merja Laaksovirta and aita/iata President Elect Rob Van Genechten. During the meeting apologies for non attendance were also received from Rita Poutachidou of Theatre Poupoulo in Thessaloniki, Greece. They have extended an invitation to hold the next meeting in Greece.

## Attendees:

Blaschko Simon	Fundacja Graj!	Poland	kontakt@fundacjagraj.pl
Bruns Vera	European Theatre House	Germany	info@european-theatrehouse.org
Dall Villy	AITA/IATA	Denmark	villydall@webspeed.dk
Garcia Philippe	CIFTA	Belgium	presidence@fncd-theatre.be
Gilmour Anne	ITE	Great Britain	secretariat@aitaiata.org
Hanraets Nils	European Theatre House	Germany	info@european-theatrehouse.org
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## Day 1 of the EFAT meeting 24 October 2014

Each person introduced themselves to each other.

Presentation by Stephan Schnell and Josefine Jochum, BDAT, *Wouldn't it be Nice* (sent 24 Oct: EFAT-1)

Goal – by Sunday morning to have an idea of how the ideas of amateur theatre could fit to the conditions of the EU and to apply for money for 2016. You need a minimum of 10 countries and we have ten countries in the room.

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Josefine had sent a questionnaire about networks to participants and read out the responses she had received. There were differences but much commonality. Stephan noted the differences and suggested that the diversity would help to get funds.

The Culture Sub-programme and what it does was discussed. Stephan stressed that the long term goal was to help fight the financial downturn.

Objectives and Priorities: In the field of theatre the EU want us to understand that we live in a digital age and that we accept the help of the internet and need to use new tools. They stress innovation and use of new tools and there is a wish for the network to last longer than the funding.

**Procedure** – to look at the four factors on Saturday.

## **Saturday**

To hold a *World Cafe* – Slide of 'what is a world cafe' – divided into 3 – 4 tables, 5 per table, 3 - 4 slots, each slot 45 mins: No single host so there is a need to summarise the discussion. After 35 mins each table will need to summarise their discussion.

Discussion of each topic and then each group formed and discussed and took notes.

### **Lunch**

Feedback

Group 1 – *How should the network be structured and organised*

- Structure depends on the goals
- Democratic way of making decisions
- Network agreement – clarified expressions
- Benefits should depend
- Make a network of ideas
- Need admin organisation to take care of and promote the idea of project
- Promote diversity
- One organisation needs to have the main responsibility to include other organisations or countries – everyone / no one's responsibility means taking everyone into the decision making
- Take less rich and less organised groups into the network
- Administration should create smaller working groups
- EFAT is an organisation within aita/iata
- Aim for a communication tool – digital forum; portal; with different interest groups; a data base for groups and professional data base
- multilingual more than just three languages
- install international working groups

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- make an App for Europe and the World
  - 4 existing networks discussed and so need to find out what exists, what existing tools do they have, what are they doing and what are their interests to enable us to co-operate with others
2. *What should be promoted according to images of amateur theatre*
- Why should Brussels pay for amateur theatre
  - The economic base for amateur theatre – tourism, economy; democracy and social themes and creates social environments and empathy and tolerance; create global minds; **audience development** audience comes with it and is the future of arts; **art** own substitute, quality, aesthetic; **history** fills up the tradition, cultural memory; **education**, children migrants demographic changes, inclusion, healthy **theatre in the countryside** trains, skills for personal reasons **NGO** and non-profit, more flexibility bigger sustainability
  - Need to be careful how we discuss how amateur theatre makes people more employable so that we don't forget about the art
  - Theatre skills are usable internationally
  - Interaction and collaboration with professionals both teachers and others brings the theatre field together including pedagogues and directors
  - Promotes understanding between groups and ages – diversity
  - What are we expecting from Brussels?
    - Money for festivals and travel costs, staff
    - Citizenship to involve people
    - Active on a local level
    - Need money for development to shape the future
    - Investment in culture values not just idealistic but also materialistic as existing is circulates money
    - Includes ...
3. *How can amateur theatre meet the main EU focuses (exchange dissemination, research)*
- Named activities that could be done and then moved to the goals that these activities we should have – pass on the 'good education'
  - There are two parts – learn techniques for acting and also education through theatre and the social aspects of amateur and the social interaction
  - with the public
  - Activities like exchanges between educators
  - Festivals and activities should be inclusive rather than just for disabled people
  - Professionals work with amateur, what is the difference between professional and amateurs
  - Support for theatre pedagogy
  - Local amateur theatre groups should think bigger and have more active marketing – think local and think global

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- Raising quality
- Open yourself up to a European idea
- How can we exchange knowledge and scientific data and we came up with a similar idea that we can have an online library of knowledge
- Methodology of knowledge about amateur theatre and multimedia, media blocks in different languages.
- Few people promote the quality and the improvement of skills – train the trainer and will enhance the quality of amateur theatre
- To meet the need to disseminate, need to Expand audience and understand local base
- Cultural diversity and non-verbal communication
- Research on the way that theatre pedagogues work in other countries
- To set up a common language on theatre terms
- To choose key words that should appear and are important
  - Audience development
  - Inclusion
  - internationalisation

#### *4. Ideas for project*

- Wikipedia for AT
- Talked about concrete ideas for projects
  - Migration – many different types of citizens in a city so create a project about this – publish for policy makers
  - Borders in a number of ways – borders in yourself or for disabled people so need to find ways to include them – need to look at what can be expressed when we are free what tools do they have and need to look for new solutions. Try to find one big theme under which you have a number of topics
  - Use the process of the amateur theatre scheme to develop the art of high theatre, does not matter what we do, but need to explore what is unique in our process but need to explore where it is unique
  - Professional development for drama teachers
  - Projects involved in the cultural diversity
- Locally based amateur theatres can share over Europe – such as migration now and then and thinking about names and not move and do research and documentary theatre now and then
- One play done all over Europe by different groups to show cultural identity and at the end meet each other
- Workshops about how to do non-verbal theatre
- Do research about festivals what good and not so good and find tool for encouraging audience development and promote work for people from outside Europe to make it more important to encourage them to visit and attend festival

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- New possibilities for training
- Train people to be international
- Assessment system for amateur theatre and if attend they gain points
- What attracts audiences in different countries and regions
- How do cultural differences impact on performances
- To research / make a survey on a certain theme and get 10 difference themes

### **Break**

18:00 - the discussion by the group about the findings

Stephan S opened the forum, no moderation but will go onto 19:00. Stephan thanked everyone for their input into the days' work.

Jacques – what is the purpose of all the work? I understand that the target is to send in an application for funds, but I am afraid that a lot of the discussion was an intellectual discussion but the purpose on how we could be successful in our bid was missing. We have a large list of what Amateur Theatre is, but if we want to promote am we need to select two or three of these items to simply. We have to be very practical in what we want to do and be effective.

Harald – need to be very pragmatic and also to find one thing that combines all this and will start. Some of these things in this four year plan will come later but it should not be too long before we find this thing

Catherina – should we choose three or four people to make the application?

Stephan – we want to initiate a process in a world cafe without goals. Then the next step will be a sort of game to help emerge something that adapts to the criteria – we will do this tomorrow. The third step will be to build up a working group – I agree that you need a bunch of people who do the work.

Matjaz – what will be our mission to get money – we need a firm statement to get the money. I think we talk too much about what Europe what to hear, but we must first know what we want and then we can build the idea for Europe.

Harald – each working group to create a concrete concept tomorrow and then we can decide the direction.

Jacques – we did our speed dating yesterday – so tomorrow we organise speed dating between someone representing the euro commissioner and an applicant.

Matjaz – we first have to decide what are we going to do before we ask for money

Harald – what do we have to sell, what are the idea, but we first have to decide the common product

Franz J – we need to speak about what the common matters are from the 10 common people

Stephan S – a network is a co-operation between people with different perceptions. We are not one organisation, all are different. Harald asked what is theatre pedagogy and amateur theatre – this should be developed over the years, the differences, otherwise you never get there.

Matjaz – we have a mission we don't know what our mission is, we don't know what we want to do – we need to find out how we do things – we need five lines to show what we want to do. And then we can make a detailed plan.

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Harald – perhaps we need to convince several partners?

Matjaz – you need to be able to answer why someone should join the network.

Harald – we cannot discuss all our visions, we need to convince the partners of what our core reason is.

Matjaz – if the group is bigger than five you cannot so easily discuss.

Discussion about how we progress tomorrow. Perhaps take four people and four attract to them for four themes

Catherina – I suggest four names who would lead the discussion and four possible themes were suggested: Wikipedia, training, audience development, theatre in the local community.

Matjaz - when the four groups have discussed then we need to come together in the end. It was interesting today how the four groups worked. Realised that need to spread out the Germans so there were several in each group. So agreed that needed the time to build the groups.

Catherina – we could group by subject but it was recognised that each person would bring their own focus into the group eg inclusion. So what is important for the five people in the group and they will develop their theme.

Groups selected but both Jacques (as chair of EFAT steering committee) and Villy (because he represents aita/iata) abstained.

Group 1 Stephan Schnell

Philippe Garcia

Vera Bruns

Charly Wassberg Borbos (Sweden)

Group 2

Catherina Parment

Harald Sommer

Lilly Miguel Martinez

Franz Josef

Group 3

Matjaz Smalc

Stefan Schliephake

Naemi Keuler

Josefine Jochum

Anne Gilmour

Nils Hanraets

Christina Pertsinidi

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## Group discussion round-up

Each group presented their discussions in ten minutes. Because Jacques and Villy had observed the discussions, for this session they acted as independent arbiters with Jacques acting as an advisor and Villy acting as an EU examiner, commenting in these roles on the proposed projects.

Group 1 – Philippe Garcia presented an organogram. EFAT must represent a certain percentage of the countries. It is a resource centre which has four main goals –

- build a digital portal (for statistics) general information, several databases of contacts, provide exchanges for the forum and examples of best practice
- team of experts – experts such as in Shakespeare, consultants, provide travel costs to send experts to NC or to help organise a festival and perhaps pay their salary
- organise workshops – small international ones open to all members, work on audience development and organise festivals and events and conferences on themes such as minorities, disabled
- organise meetings with decision makers and to learn from professional organisations about how to improve and learn

All outputs of this work are sent to the digital portal.

Q & A – if pay professional consultants do we not pay amateurs? Agreed that expert is in a very wide definition and could include amateurs.

Matjaz – liked the idea of influencing decision makers

Catherina – should not call it festival, platform or event. Jacques noted the care needed for terminology – events, encounters but avoid the word 'festival'.

Villy - when an application is received in Brussels it will be checked and then sent to two external evaluators (I was one of these) there were two main tasks – does this make sense within the sphere it is in, and is it trustworthy in the language it is presented. Then the application goes back to the bureaucrats. The previous programme resulted in a recommendation that the new round of proposals more closely adhere to the rules and do not overlap with another programme. Villy felt that this presentation would raise questions about what is new – the question is why are you not already doing this?

Jacques – when I started to lobby for funds in the scientific field, I was told that I should not reinvent the wheel, I should seek new material. This proposal does not mention amateur and it is important that it does this.

Discussion about the use of language but it was felt that this was a discussion being held too soon in the process.

## Next presentation Group 2, Harald

Project idea – Borders in its widest terms as a sort of example

Phase 1 Internet portal (Wiki) and organisation structure in all languages with open source for all to access. Do it as big as possible in many languages.

Have 10 network partners two of which are the administrators, 8 are practical partners and in the first phase will meet theatre trainers (in widest sense) in a workshop and find out the 'impulses' and they would then split in their regions and work on a production with a European theme on inclusion

We work with pedagogues who will work perhaps with film documentation and companionships but a scientific theme.

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Then go into the performance phase – look at the encounter, film it and then mix up the trainers and performers – eg a Scottish trainer working with kids from Italy. Look at the outcomes in a practical and a scientific way. Perhaps get a clash and generate a new performance.

The third phase will take the production and make a tour in their regions where the network partners will meet again and then create a new theme for the next round. All results come back to the portal.

Jacques said not to forget that this is a four year project with something for each year. It was noted that this cycle would repeat and so would create a timetable so that would provide the principle of a project but it was noted that it is for 15 countries with a minimum of 10 partners. Jacques liked the proposal and that they would analyse the errors and improve.

Villy noted that it was clear that the results would be seen on the portal but what about the audience? As they would go on tour in the region, that would develop the audience and they could use existing festivals to perform.

Stephan Schnell asked if a project like this would fit the definition of a network because there are other sources of funding that might better fit this example.

Matjaz liked it but felt that while it benefitted the 10 participants asked how would it benefit a wider user and how would a partner benefit from this project. It was felt that this project was a sort of pilot and once encountered might encourage others to join and develop.

Jacques asked how would the site be promoted? In response to Stephan's question he did not want to create a large new organisation but improve the existing one.

### **Group 3 Matjaz**

How to improve EFAT – how to raise standards was a key question. The solution was to have a main event for administration, for law, for co-ordination and for PR.

Then need to promote exchange of knowledge and take a pro-active role in the practice of project – find partners to make them work. Also to promote social inclusion and help to create networks.

How to do this and how to get solidarity? In the next four years we felt we started with the existing festivals – take 5 theatre makers from each country and take them to two festivals in different countries each year and we fund the festivals so they can bring extra groups and we organise workshops, round table talks on themes that cover good practice which help to build a strong network. Those theatre makers are taking home new knowledge and can spread the new knowledge to their own theatre groups and make new workshops and are multipliers.

So festivals are a platform for widening the network. But the main aspect is the co-ordination of artistic matters and to raise standards.

So EFAT provides knowledge and connects people to help raise standards. We are not doing this now, because we don't have the funding to make it work.

Harald – if we have a network with several partners and this defines the EFAT so is EFAT the network or will this network improve EFAT? So is this a new network or to improve EFAT?

Jacques noted that EFAT was created because there was no communication between the three aita/iata Regions, so there is a need to improve communication in the Regions – it is in



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addition to not instead of. So there are two arms –projects and research. So if more people want to take part they can.

Are those in it practical people or just theatre pedagogues?

It was confirmed that the project is for four years with overall 50 – 100 people who could be different each year.

Villy – what is the long term strategy of this? If you implement it, some people will get paid for their work, but how will it enhance things for the future?

This is the first stage, so knowledge will remain on Wiki, so if they finance it, the network will continue to exist and people will remain connected. In this 'project market' people and individual groups can find each other. EFAT will help them to find common groups for other projects.

Harald was concerned about this proposal which seemed to be developing festivals which we were told were not supported by EU. Stephan Schnell said that this was not the case

Matjaz said that this project was a multiplier and the audience would be developed

Stephan said that EFAT as an existing network can apply for this group, aita/iata has an existing network and both can exist.

Matjaz - This proposal was what we would like, not necessarily what would work for the EU – this will come next. This is the idealistic requirement.

Jacques said you needed a structure to make a proposal because that is what the EU need. We now need a synthesis of the proposals and that you need to stress that this is for the amateur theatre.

Matjaz wanted to look to see what EFAT wanted and then adjust it for the EU.

Stephan asked about next steps after lunch in a concrete way until the next meeting. And who wanted to go on with this.

Villy noted that projects 1 and 3 were the most network related and asked what it supports. Villy read out the three items required so he felt that the presentation 2 might better be for the Citizens for Europe project.

Perhaps it might be possible to combine the projects to show a concrete benefit for theatre. Stephan felt we should be proud of the work that has been achieved.

### **LUNCH**

The afternoon's sessions were confirmed. And on behalf of all, Stephan Schnell thanked hosts Simon and Philippe for their generous and warm hospitality. And he mentioned that the previous days' tour of the Warsaw Ghetto brought home to him just how important it was for personal and organisational links to be forged.

Jacques also thanked all for their contributions and the amount of work that had been done. He was gratified at the number of people who had attended, and especially that there were so many young people. It was the role of the Steering Group to pull together the threads.

Simon thanked everyone for their hard work and the amount of thoughts that had been put down. The complexity of what was being created was so great that it was important that only the right number of people worked on the discussion. He felt that the atmosphere was so good and you worked hard and also got to know each other in the non-work times.

He offered the rooms in Warsaw for any meetings in the future. Poland wanted to be in aita/iata and now they had fulfilled something concrete for aita/iata.

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Stephan said that he and Christian from Denmark and Charly from Sweden and Philippe from Belgium and Matjaz from Slovenia wanted to be part of a working group (WG). Stephan suggested that communication could also be digital. But the WG was not a closed shop and could be joined by anyone who wanted to. It would be open and feedback would be needed from all in the network.

### *Speakers corner*

Simon spoken about *Teatramat* – by Erasmus + with 6 orgs – 3 Polish and 3 non-Polish, BDAT, DATS and FNCTA. Supported by the Poland Minister of Culture. Used the network of aita/iata to get partners. We asked who wanted to support us as a National Centre as there had not been one for 30 years. We all met and discussed concrete issues about how we could create a Polish Centre and then create international contacts. We working to get groups in Poland, then internationally and in 15 months we will have an organisation of the National Centre of Poland. Simon said that he had used the aita/iata network to create this link.

Harald – Lingen, *ETH*. A young construction with a number of partners in Lingen and want to develop a profile between theatre pedagogies and amateur theatre. Vera said that ETH had a role between these organisations to link them. She is the project manager for the ETH and aita/iata is a founder member of the ETH and it operated in close cooperation with TPZ and see ourselves as a network for theatre pedagogies and we always looking to ways to develop wider networks through aita/iata. Now our objectives are to help individuals take part in the theatre networks and exchanges in the common EU network area. Believe that theatre can become a way to overcome the language barrier. Also we think that theatre can be a tool for cultural development and want to find out more about amateur theatre, what it does and how it does it and how many. Want to give people the chance to meet, exchange within aita/iata.

Villy – *Europe's 100 years winter* was a paper that I prepared for the Lingen conference. But it was out of place and why? It has more to do with European theatre productions – I think of local groups of people coming together and performing. But do this in a context of the last 100 years of history. Now could not do a project about the Ukraine without thinking about the current history. Need to think about the background and the history against which theatre is performed. The paper was circulated to attendees 26 October 2014.

Stefan – *Inclusion* he put pictures on the floor of members of four of the groups he works with both nationally and internationally. The disability is not the problem for them, but it is for the world outside: at bus stops, in the world outside. An important part of their work is to go on stage and get the respect back from the audience. As a group they do not feel included in Germany, so you fight against many stereotypes. But for those who are disabled, the UN Convention to which all those here have signed up to – Article 1 says about freedom of rights of those with disabilities.....to participate with others in cultural life. Inclusion is legally entitled and participation is not a question of goodwill or a decorative accessory and countries have to legally manage it. And to have a dynamic learning process and needs a direct communication eye to eye and one to one. Have to answer some basic questions about working with disabled people and including them.

In life children in Germany learn not to laugh or stare at those with a disability, so in performance there is a conflict for the audience and people are confused. But in theatre you have to look at the actors, identify with the characters and laugh if you feel like it. So disabled actors cause confusion in the brains of the audience and this results in a lot of post-show discussion. Actors should have a dignified performance on stage and must not just be a prop on stage or just part of the scenery. The show should be 'theatre' and the leader/ director is responsible for a good concept and expression from the actors.

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When have mixed groups of disabled and non-disabled people and need to ensure that the production is strong and the audience may start to work out who is and who is not disabled but sometimes they say I have to give up working out who is who and now just look at the production and then they might start to think that the disability is not so important and they then just look at the person. Then have a fresh input into making amateur theatre. Actors just love it when you say that you are just such a great actor, but this is more difficult in disabled groups. So have to find new ways and to try new expressions through artistic means. Have to develop and find their own artistic integrity and find a way of saying what they want to artistically.

Amateur theatre refreshes their artistic quality and enables good discussions about inclusion in schools. Have a good chance of getting funds for disabled groups. Different countries have different views on inclusion so international events have additional needs of transport and translation etc. Disabled people have to be part of the decision making process but want to be part of events and theatre projects.

Stephan thanked Stefan for his presentation.

In summary, it was noted that there was an informal invitation from Theatre Poupoulo in Thessaloniki, Greece to hold the next EFAT meeting.

Many thanks were exchanged for all the hard work put in by everyone and for the generous hospitality and fund hosting by all at the aita/iata Poland Affiliate Fundacja Graj!

Anne Gilmour

ITE – International Theatre Exchange, aita/iata GB National Centre

Post meeting note – the **Working Group** is confirmed as:

Matjaz Smalc (Slovenia)

Charly Wassberg Borbos (Sweden)

Philippe Garcia (Belgium)

Vera Bruns

Harald Volker Sommer

Stephan Schnell

Josefine Jochum

Simon Blaschko