

CAMEROON: Rainbow Discussion that took place during the FATEJ in Cameroon

DAY ONE: FOCUS ON VISITING COUNTRIES

The meeting was chaired by Professor **Wolfgang SCHNEIDER**, President of **ASSITEJ International**

Saturday 13th of November 2010, meeting ran from 18h00 - 20h30

Main focus of conversation -

What is most NB artistic discussion or development in theatre for young audiences in your country?

What is the relationship between theatre and education in your country?

What are the highlight of your years, in terms of Theatre for Children and Young People?

TURKEY:

(The Turkish group was represented on this table by **TOMRIS** and **HASAN** amongst others.)

This has been the 60 year anniversary of the Turkish national theatre which plays in 12 cities on numerous stages. Theatre for children takes place in every town, and is taken into suburbs so that those in retreated area can experience theatre. 50 000 children have seen theatre in Turkey this year. There is now a contract between the National theatre and the Minister of Education that each school must come at least once to see performances. There are many problems in the relationship with schools.

For example, schools don't respect the age as per the performances. As a result of this you find 10 year olds watching performances for 2/3 year olds. However, there are two very important international festivals every year in turkey.

HASAN ERKEK Professor in a university in **Turkey** added that the city theatres and the private theatres have a role to play. There are more than 500 theatre companies for children but only a few of them are good enough. Most of them use *THEATRE FOR CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG* for mainly commercial purposes. There are also many theatre departments at universities and this year a department was founded for shadow and puppet theatre.

FRANCE

Cathy AULARD said that she felt that she could not represent theatre in France as a whole, but only what her company is doing. They learn a great deal through exchanges. There are many problems and one of these is that there were 6 national dramatic centres for young people in France, but today there is only one remaining (Strasbourg) and this is

now focusing on puppets only. The point of view of government does not favour theatre at the moment, and funding is very political. (There is no ministerial budget line item for theatre for children and young people.) There are a number of French festivals, but no national theatre. Theatre is seen as a showcase, and performances keep moving from festival to festival. Often this means that the same performances come to festivals all the time, and a range of performance is not being seen. Audiences are not curious to seek out new forms of theatre.

JAPAN

ASAKI SHIMOYAMA said that there is government support for traditional theatre in Japan, which makes it very strong, but very little support for contemporary arts by comparison. There is no national theatre. There is no encouragement for artists wanting to experiment with contemporary traditional Theatre. There are many private theatre companies, and artists are experimenting theatre for the very young audiences. Artistic school visits are limited because the educational system is quite complex and traditional such that it does not easily accommodate theatre.

TOGO

DANAYE, from Togo is a faithful of the FATEJ and has been attending it since 2000. The political set-up in Togo does not accept the idea of theatre for young audiences. There are about 10 theatre troupes in Togo. Amongst these ten troupes there are two troupes that comprise only women which work in this domain of specialisation children. Puppetry is quite very popular in Togo. They work with children, orphans, the handicapped, street children and oppressed children. As far as he is concerned, ASSITEJ is very important for Africa – we need our children to experience theatre. Danaye is keen to start a national centre for ASSITEJ in Togo.

SWEDEN

Niclas MALMCRONA. He personally has been very involved in enhancing the African network in his capacity as Secretary General of ASSITEJ International. Also, Sweden also funded the process of building centres in Africa. Over the last three or four years, in Sweden, independent companies have lost their importance. National theatres and city theatres have taken over and are now taking care of the artistic development of the sector. Government has invested in putting culture in schools, but this does not necessarily mean that theatre is supported. Schools can apply for funds, but pedagogues receive the funding for artistic activity with children, rather than theatre. Companies in Sweden are working with much less money than before. UNGA KLARA, a leading theatre in Sweden had to close, and now it is only partially funded, and there was very little reaction from theatre in Sweden to these events.

GERMANY

(Professor **Wolfgang SCHNEIDER** President of ASSITEJ International, also representing ASSITEJ GERMANY)

There is a very big variety and interesting landscape of theatre for young audiences in Germany. The theatre is very contemporary and is linked to the generation of today. There is a plethora of Young Opera, Contemporary Music Theatre and Dance Theatre. A new innovation is the inclusion of young people in professional shows. There is a political strategy of more theatres going into schools, and working together with the educational policy to make theatre a part of the curriculum. Extra-curricular activity has been supported in the past, but not as part of the curriculum. The crisis of economics in municipalities put theatre in a struggle more than it was in the past. Dramatic literature is in a very good position, however, and the International director's seminar is a great innovation and is held every year in Germany.

SOUTH AFRICA

Yvette HARDIE was delighted to be in Cameroon and said it is a pleasant coincidence for South Africa "the rainbow nation" to be present in the "rainbow discussion"- a very appropriate and just situation. Well this is due to the fact that South Africa harbours people coming from a very divided past, many different language and cultural backgrounds. Despite 16 years of democracy there are still many divisions, which have serious impact at the economic, geographic & socio-cultural stance of events and issues in South Africa etc.

South Africa has 12 official languages. Amongst the many theatre activities TYA features as an active organ of theatre for children. Given that there are several regions and ethnic groups it makes theatre difficult to cross the fourth wall because of the language barrier. TYA raises questions like should each ethnic group perform only for their regions to ensure that the audience will be able to comprehend the performance - Zulu theatre for Zulu children in KwaZulu Natal for example (which is important to reflect cultural heritage and traditions)

if not what should be done to break this ethnic barrier that is a major obstacle to theatre for children in SA?

- Or should theatre be finding new ways to speak to audiences that transcend divides (goes beyond divisions)

- relying on visual theatre or theatre that mixes languages and is accessible to all.

How does one create mixed audiences, when people are still geographically divided? Often there is funding for theatre which celebrates culture and heritage in a non-critical way, but there is little funding for work that is more experimental, contemporary or breaking boundaries. How does one create a paying audience who appreciates theatre, when theatre has been in the past, fulfilling political imperatives, and often free...?

In South Africa, theatre companies do travel to schools, but this is often fraught with problems. Getting schools to pay or getting transport for children to attend the theatre can be difficult. Children learn drama as part of Arts and Culture, but their teachers are usually

unskilled and uninterested, and have themselves seldom if ever been in a theatre. ASSITEJ SA is striving to change this through various projects.

Highlights have been the fact that many festivals are now beginning to focus on young audiences, there is more awareness of what is possible, and the "Inspiring a Generation" programme of ASSITEJ is beginning to bear fruit, with young theatre makers writing work for children, and starting festivals of theatre for children/young people.

DAY TWO: FOCUS ON CAMEROON

**Chaired by WOLFGANG SCHNEIDER, President of ASSITEJ International
Sunday 18h00 - 20h30**

ETOUNDI ZEYANG spoke about how the problems of Cameroon are also the problems of Africa. A big problem is mobility - as a result we have some troupes only arriving on Thursday (the second to the last day of the festival) because of visa problems and other things. Theatre for children in Cameroon is quite young. It started around 1980. Before that there were adult companies doing work for adults, but seen by children. It is only in 1980/81 that "theatre for children" as a concept started. There were five troupes created, including **Theatre du Chocolat** (Etoundi's troupe).

Each worked in different ways, with some going to schools, others based in theatre institutions etc. Most schools wanted to impose their own systems on the theatre, for example, not wanting to comply with age limitations. This created tension. And it is difficult to survive as a theatre company if there is no audience.

There is no national theatre for children, but today there are about 25 troupes in ASSITEJ Cameroon. These are all private theatres, with a passion for the arts. The corporate sectors monopolise funding and give money to the arts out of pity as there is no tax deduction available. They usually want a lot back - marketing for themselves etc. Theatre can only charge 700 francs or 1 euro per ticket which makes theatre a suicide mission!

There was a time when theatre for children was presented at a fancy hotel - but this was stopped as it was only benefiting the children of the rich. It is very difficult to maintain a troupe for a long time. Troupes go out of the country where they are more accepted. As a result, they become adaptable and have other experiences.

In 1996 the festival was started as a means of using exchange to develop the art form. The repertoire of plays usually comes from tales or is written by an in-house person to the troupe. There are very few playwrights for children in Cameroon. University training for theatre makers/actors is still very young.

ASSITEJ Cameroon has approached them to do research about theatre for young audiences. It would be desirable for them to insert it into the campus programme both practically and in theory, this focus, which would be good for TYA in the future.

Dr Emelda SAMBA from the university is sympathetic and will be hosting a symposium between the theatre practitioners at **FATEJ** and the university's theatre department. There will also be acting workshops run by **Cathy AULARD** for the acting students during this week.

The repertoire of Theatre for Young People tends to come from personal experience and is often very dominated by Forum theatre and theatre forms that allow for discussion of issues. Forum theatre is often the only way to access funding for theatre as one can access it through social development grants.

There is little funding from government for the arts. The president set aside 1 billion francs (1.5 million euros) per year for theatre, and established criteria for receiving this funding. However in reality there is no evidence of how this money is spent, and 70% of the people receiving the funding are not in fact artists. This is a major problem. When there are visa problems for the artists, the Ministry does not respond. The ministry does a kind of divide and rule system where artist a made to log horns such that they would never come round to request their benefits. This makes the funding situation very challenging. Amateurs most often have their activities is funded and this creates tension & divisions. Some are funded and get good publicity and others are seen as rebels or revolutionaries and these two different worlds clash. Within the 14 years of the festival there has not been a problem of audiences – the schools want to see the productions, and the relationship with the schools is good. However many shows have had to be cancelled because of no funding.

The festival has attracted less and less funding over the years. Initially it got 18 000 euros, now only 5000 euros, and the festival management has to go to government to insist that they pay, often even during the festival. The French cultural centre is seen as being very important to TYA. It is the only theatre which is equipped in Cameroon. Why has the Cameroon government put nothing into building Cameroonian theatres in the country? Still after 50 years of independence, the only proper theatre is at the French Cultural Centre. The centre does not support French artists who come here for cultural exchange – they are very much against the notion of the French being in the teacher role, and do not support French performances at the theatre. The festival is funded and supported by the French, but the French artists are not welcome in Cameroon (by the French Cultural Centre – very ironic).

What is the role of ASSITEJ in Cameroon?

ASSITEJ unites all theatre artists in a common cause. It gives the artists reasons for continuing, sustaining and encouraging them. The fact that international and African artists visit the festival because of the ASSITEJ connection makes the artists feel warm as they feel encouraged in their journey.

It would be important to create a mechanism, tools, guides that can further enhance what is already in place. Africa needs both ASSITEJ and Arterial Network. ASSITEJ is bridging zones in Africa through the common focus on theatre for children. We need to find ways to start to build the festival circuit in Africa (Yvette noted that Arterial has launched a festival network, which ASSITEJ must tap into) to find ways to engage with one another. There are positive signs. Art Moves Africa did not exist when Niclas first started working in Africa, and now it is possible to get funding for mobility. This has helped the festival.

Also, we need ASSITEJ International to give support to companies and to festivals, through letters of support and through the designation of ASSITEJ International Festival.

**DIRECTOR'S FORUM:
Sunday 18h00 - 19h00**

In this forum, three of the African directors presented their work, and were questioned by theatre practitioners from elsewhere.

"The Gift":

This play was extracted from a tale. The director was a storyteller who wanted to find new ways to exploit his story in different dimensions. He rewrote it as a drama.

"Zando":

In Togo puppets are used for initiation and there are sacred and profane puppets. There is a ritual about going into the forest and being initiated, using herbs, puppets, music. The story of Zando is about this. T shows the "night that is not yet dawn". The story takes place in three stages: the primary stage is where Zando loses everything, in the 2nd stage, he gains knowledge, and in the 3rd stage he uses the knowledge in contemporary times.

"Abok":

This is a play about day to day life. It shows how some have, and others have nothing. How do we answer questions about inequality? How do we make harmony in the world? How do we reconcile solidarity in the face of injustice? It is an original story.

Question: Why are you using fables which are meant for adults, for children?

Answer: In Africa, fables are an essential part of a child's education. Evenings are about tales told to children to give moral and other life lessons.

Discussion:

The notion of childhood is a modern concept. In the feudal system, children worked with adults and their only education was the telling of tales, tales carry the baggage of the past and often carry old traditional values which are not in harmony with the contemporary values of human rights. Some fables are not appropriate therefore. Fables and tales were a medium through which tradition, values and customs was passed down

generation to generation so as to ensure that the cultural heritage and hegemony remain undefiled and unbroken.

The content of fables is determined by the setting and culture. In Korea, the notion of the dragon is very well-known and would not be as frightening to children in Korean culture as it might be to children from another culture. (Ref to Korean play with frightening dragon).

Different mediums will create different impressions and experience of content. Was it appropriate for a character's head to be cut off (in *The Gift*) in a children's play? There was discussion around whether seeing the action (as was the case with *The Gift*), made it worse or better than just hearing about it. What about the imagination of a susceptible child? Will hearing about it be as distressing for them?

Children need to be given positive messages and hope. (This statement was questioned by some of those present.)

What about the attitude of the characters in conveying the message? In "*Abok*", there was a political message and yet the characters were clown-like (almost commedia dell'arte like). Is it possible to have childish playing, jokes etc. with a serious message?

Etoundi's response: It is delicate to deal with politics (in Cameroon), therefore we need people to laugh into the problem. "*Eat All*", one of the characters, creates an accessible humour that raises questions in the minds of children. We are exploring serious situations, but not hammering on the heavy side of life.

Zando: In this play we see conflicts between nature and humans, humans and themselves, humans and situations – the quest for power is explored. Again, it is a serious situation, but the way it is handled is lighter and more delicate.

SYMPOSIUM SESSION ONE:

**Challenges in Theatre for Youth in Africa – moderated by Dr Emelda Samba
Monday 16h00 – 18h00**

Dr Samba described the basic purpose behind the symposium – to start a process of reflection within the university of what theatre for young audiences means. Professor **BOLE BUTAKE** joined the session with a group of students after about 30 minutes.

She invited **Yvette HARDIE** (SA) and **Wolfgang SCHNEIDER** (Germany) to comment on the topic as an introduction.

Yvette HARDIE: SOUTH AFRICA

What are the challenges for theatre for youth?

I - Funding Issues:

There are few good models around measuring success and impact of theatre, which makes it harder to attract funding to the field. Also, funding opportunities are usually linked to a very particular subject matter and approach and may dictate to the theatre maker what they can make, and what content the piece should contain. There is little understanding of theatre for its own sake. Other priorities often take precedence over theatre for young people - poverty, unemployment, social development concerns etc. Often it is very difficult if not impossible for theatre to find funding.

II - Commercialisation and Marketing

A problem of commercialisation on the one-hand, which attracts a certain kind of (paying) audience, and of non-professional, community work being the norm on the other hand, where the general public is not a paying theatre audience, and does not understand the importance or power of theatre.

III - Language:

Language can be an element of division in Africa. Looking at the semiotics of language the colonial languages ought to come with relief. However since some ethnic groups are working to "re-acculturate" their children it is difficult to communicate because some tribes do not understand or speak the language of the other. Colonial languages can be problematic because they carry a baggage of its own. So any child that is used to entertainment or who loves theatre finds it difficult to evolve in this domain. Comprehension of a play becomes very difficult for them. On the other hand, home languages can also be an element of potentially division depending on where you are (in Cameroon, 247 local languages spoken, so French is default language).

THEATRE FOR CHILDREN DONE BY ADULT PROFESSIONALS

The notion of theatre for children by adult, professional actors can be problematic - TYA has a low status within the theatre industry as a whole (seen as the poor cousin of the industry, for the young, inexperienced or unprofessional actor), the institutions of learning do not teach or study TYA, and there are also in some places in Africa, cultural barriers to adults performing for children.

Misunderstanding

Lack of understanding of the value of a targeted theatre experience - in Africa, traditional performance is usually inclusive of the whole community, and the idea of

focusing specifically on children, and even more specifically on children of a certain age, may be considered strange and even indulgent, give the other priorities.

Realities & Realism

Reality of children's lives in Africa (child headed households, prevalence of child rape in SA, children set to work – the non-existence of childhood as a concept or reality for many) means that theatre for children again struggles to find its place. Also if theatre really addresses children where they are, often adults find the subject matter unsuitable, as they tend to deny what children are experiencing.

What are the possible answers?

I -Access to high quality theatre in schools, so that we build an audience who wants, loves and looks forward to theatre experiences; including theatre in the curriculum – not just as a tool for learning about parts of the curriculum, but also as a means of developing new perceptions of the world, and of developing the imagination and creativity.

II -Training of professionals at university level – lobbying for the inclusion of thinking, research and practice in TYA in actor/director/writer training (look for potential partnerships here)

III -Exposing the young, innovative, risk-taking theatre makers to high quality work both local and international so that they begin to understand the potential of the field (festivals have an important role to play here); creating demand through audiences experiencing high quality products; look for opportunities for collaborations, partnerships, exchanges that can enrich the field.

IV -Work with social development agencies to find children and speak to them about what they are experiencing – in clinics, schools etc.

What are the benefits of theatre for children in Africa?

Theatre calls for total engagement. It is a holistic art form that engages heart, mind, body, emotions. It explores what it is to be fully alive. As a result, it is a potent art form for allowing children to see the world in a new way. Most conflicts are caused by fixed perceptions and attitudes. Theatre allows us to transform our perceptions, and through empathy, to become one with those who seem most unlike us. This ability is central to the theatre experience and is of fundamental importance for all children. Africa needs theatre, and African children need theatre particularly.

Prof Wolfgang SCHNEIDER:

What are the duties of the artist in dealing with theatre for young audiences?

We need to have respect for this special audience. This is vital. We need to use all the professionalism of artistic work for children, not taking shortcuts or talking down to

them. There is no need to catch them with jokes or to have a low level of complexity in the art. We do not need to exclude subjects from the discussion.

Do we need the world of children to be the horizon of children's experiences as portrayed in theatre for children? Example of putting a teddy bears onstage (a toy which is commonplace for children). How does this give children a new experience through theatre?

What should the relationship between the actors and spectators be? How do we use this exchange? We need to rethink this relationship as at the moment, there are some fixed ideas about how the relationship 'should' be.

Is there a well prepared situation for the reception of theatre? What happens to children before they enter the theatre? How do we prepare children to receive a play? What do we need to know about the world of children to do this?

What do we need to know specifically about children in order to make theatre for them...?

What education and specialised information is needed?

Why do children have to understand everything in the piece of theatre? Do we as adults understand everything in every piece of theatre we watch? Surely there is importance in the asking of questions.

Prof Bole BUTAKE: Professor, Head of Department of Arts and Archaeology, Vice Dean, at University of Yaounde, (Playwright, Director& Actor)

He has done some work with school children in the field, using theatre for development and focusing specifically on issues related to HIV and Aids.

There is no question of theatre for children in Cameroon. The real question is about theatre, just theatre. In Cameroon, we have to wait a whole year before the FATEJ festival brings work to be presented. Or RETIC (the Adult international festival). The French cultural centre is used to show pieces (not the Cameroon Cultural Centre).

The 1970s-1990s were the Golden Age of Cameroon theatre with over 20 active theatre troupes performing every weekend. Many people think that Cameroon TV killed theatre, but even then, there was theatre on TV. It is no longer the same. The corporate world does not see the need of investing in theatre, or building theatre buildings. There is no belief in making money through theatre. There are more than 250 cultural groupings in Cameroon – we have a very rich patrimony, but what is our contribution to the world, if we do not emphasise our own culture? In China, they are sending people to the moon to prove

that they can do it, but in Cameroon we can't even build a small theatre house. No performance space is the main problem.

Then what about taking theatre from school to school? Theatre du Chocolat has been doing this, but there are very few who do it successfully. We need to worry about whether anyone in Cameroon will get to watch a play at all.

There are supposedly decentralised councils to take care of education, theatre and culture. And theatre can be a powerful weapon against injustice, corruption, misuse of public funds. In fact, it was the government reaction to theatre for 1992 onwards, where they panicked and thought that theatre would result in a revolution which got all theatre performances banned at the university. The performances were moved to another space, and the University director took over that hall and used the space till well past the time that the show was due to start. He only stopped because of the huge crowd that gathered.

The University of Yaounde started training in the arts in 1993. In 2009, the Ministers of Education (Basic and Secondary) introduced arts subjects in schools for the first time. It is very tragic. How do you bring up children who are not inculcated in arts and culture? Now there are more theatre departments, even a puppetry department, but we need to have both practical and theoretical work happening. The Professionals need to be engaged to work with them.

ETOUNDI ZEYANG: Director of Theatre du Chocolat, President ASSITEJ Cameroon

If there is a continent that needs theatre, that continent certainly is Africa. Theatre being an effective mirror and instrument of entertainment transmits sequences of our daily lives which ponder on issues affecting the Social, economical, politically and cultural state of our lives. TV creates a consumer culture and blocks authentic culture from being shared. We need direct engagement with the audience. Theatre touches all of life – it unrolls life for us to see it. If we want to save the world, we need to save children first. We need to bring theatre and education together. There is a social hierarchy in schools which creates problems. The social pyramid is that there are more children at the base and we can make concrete changes to society by touching children first. "Abok" speaks about laziness and how this does not pay. This is something which it is very important for children to understand.

Discussion:

Wolfgang Schneider:

Politicians need to be introduced to more directions of theatre (not just theatre for development).

Theatre has been reduced to a tool. Most often when there is a major event artists are invited to come and present a short comic strip pondering on the theme of the event e.g. a short sketch to illustrate the theme of a seminar. Short comic strips as a form of entertainment.

We need theatre of conscientization which explores notions about basic human rights.

SYMPOSIUM SESSION TWO:

Challenges in Theatre for Youth in Africa – Moderated by Dr Emelda SAMBA

Tuesday 16h00 – 18h00

Today the focus was Theatre for Development. What is the place of theatre for development in theatre for youth in Africa? Are they the same thing? What about theatre by children for children, or by children for adults? Is this theatre for children? What do we mean by the definitions?

Emelda Samba, with provocation from Wolfgang Schneider:

Theatre for development uses theatre as a tool for development. It allows children to discuss taboo subjects and get into the roles of adults to better understand the world around them. It is also a way for children to find out about their culture. They can ask questions about aspects they don't understand. Theatre for development embraces drama (using drama methodology, disorganised playing of games, levels of creativity explored) and theatre.

What kind for development are we talking about? Economic? Social? Psychological? All of these and more.

How much is process? How much is product?

Theatre is about seeing things differently, proposing alternative ways of doing things. Theatre for development embraces a broad church of practice – some theatre practitioners create a product of high artistic quality, while others do not. A performance can be for the participants only, or it can be for a wider audience.

Can the performance be worth anything to this audience? Often the issues raised in Community A will be the same as and also different to those in Community B, so yes, the performance can still be accessible and meaningful to an audience that was not involved in the process of making it.

Hassan ERKEK from Turkey offered a definition of theatre for children.

TYA must embrace: Technique; High quality aesthetics; ideology. It is made by professional artists as opposed to children's theatre, which is by children, for children. Drama in education is with children in the classroom, and children's theatre might be a continuation of this trend.

The frame of theatre for development in Cameroon:

Women have been very present in theatre for development, from 1984 to 1997. The political system didn't allow for freedom of expression and censorship prevented theatre from speaking freely about issues. In "Beast of No Nation", the university

administrators walked out, banned the play and detained the play's writer/director – Bole Butake. Now theatre workshops are funded on condition that nothing political is said.

There are direct and indirect influences on theatre. Often the aesthetics are pushed further because of censorship. Hasan ERKEK spoke about a Turkish poet who wrote good poems in prison, but poor poems once he was free. Often bad conditions can in fact be a catalyst for good art.

Niclas MALMCRONA questioned why there needs to be a difference between children's theatre and adult theatre? If we don't like didactic theatre as adults, why would we like it as children? Institutional theatres and city theatres are now at the forefront of theatre for children in Sweden. The differences in Europe are getting smaller and smaller. There is more incorporation of children/young people into the work. They play under professional conditions and present an emotional experience of the world.

TURKEY

We need to respect the audience. Respect them as individuals. They have no economic power in the decision to come to the theatre, but we should ensure that what we give them is THEATRE first of all. It must be specially designed for them.

CONCLUSIONS:

We need to discuss the audience more. The place of the child in the society, in school, at home, and in our political set up. As social psychologist like Albert Bandura, Piaget & Erik Erikson amongst many others put it so rightly a child has three environments in which he grows the home, school and friends. And such these three settings must be taken into consideration if we have to enter their world

We need to understand this much better. We need to look at psychology, pedagogy etc. We should listen to children more. We cannot communicate with them without knowing them.

We need to believe our "lies" (the make-believe of the theatre). If we do not believe them when performing for children, then we are not being authentic or sincere.

We need to ensure that there is mystery in what is presented.

We should be introducing new horizons, new perspectives to our audiences.

AFRICAN MEETING:

Wednesday 16h00 - 18h00

DRC: There was a problem of transport to the festival.

TCHAD: They are ready with a potential board to set up ASSITEJ Tchad; Etoundi in touch with them.

TOGO: Danaye will be able to apply for membership by February of next year. (Yvette to send them the constitution and membership form in French if it exists.)

BURKINO FASO: Compagnie du Roseau - we need more experience

BENIN: were unable to get visa to travel

MOROCCO: still a possibility

OTHER PROBLEMS

We have not always found the right person to work with. The quality of professionals working in the universities is a little problematic.

FUNDING:

We end up having to do things without support. The Cameroon national ASSITEJ festival happened but Etoundi had to use his own money for it.

Some ideas for future co-operation and work in ASSITEJ in Africa:

Share interns at FATEJ and Out the Box - look at ways to exchange.

Exchange productions and establish festival circuit so that a good African production can go from place to place and have more of a life.

Really check the countries that are dynamic in Africa and bring them into ASSITEJ. Do not get fooled by people who pretend to be active, but are actually doing nothing in theatre for young audiences. Find the right people in each country – this is very important.

We need to look at the translation and publication of plays by African writers for young audiences to encourage production in Africa. This is a priority. ASSITEJ SA is doing a project in this regard.

We need to deal with our apathy and wanting others to do things for us, e.g. look for models and structures that will work for Cameroon. Artists need to become more organised. Use the structures that exist – e.g. **Arterial Network, ASSITEJ** to lobby and advocate for the arts.

ASSITEJ as a network has helped in enhancing the birth, growth and evolution of Theatre for Children and the Young. Countries need to come up with ways of assisting each other with trainings, internships and productions as mentioned. Theatre is a moment where we forget cultural norms, hierarchy, and standards and seek to find the same joys and happiness. So as sacred as it is must be funded both with energy and by means of materials. But above all just like tradition that is handed down from generation to generation theatre for children as rich as it is must transcend generations too, and why not over power other means of entertainment (because for the moment, so far parents still find it the only means of entertainment viable not to inculcate a culture of “**Hate**”, “**Aggression**” & **Immorality** to their children.)

SO LONG AS WE BELIEVE IN IT, IT MUST LIVE!