BEYOND CURIOSITY AND DESIRE

Towards fairer international collaborations in the arts

IETM TOOLKIT

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Beyond Curiosity and Desire: Towards Fairer International Collaborations in the Arts

IETM Toolkit

by Mike van Graan

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Summary

Foreword by IETM, On the Move and DutchCulture

Many contemporary arts professionals and organisations increasingly engage in international activities. Joint projects, exchanges, residencies, co-productions and other forms of collaboration respond to a genuine desire to learn from fellow professionals in other countries, to bridge different cultures and art forms and thus embark on an enriching professional and human journey - while, more prosaically, offering an opportunity to bypass practical or political restrictions in one's home country. However, best intentions aside, learning comes with friction. Misunderstandings and false assumptions are very common, and can complicate the process, if not undermine the results.

While the most obvious issue in international collaborations is money - economic disparity between partners inevitably determines power relations - other elements deserve to be carefully considered, including historical links between countries, different political contexts, technical infrastructure and skills, freedom to travel, living and working conditions, aesthetics, traditions... All of these issues influence expectations and engagement. Arts professionals in a privileged position comparing to their international partners are particularly prone to influence power dynamics. Only honest, and at times uncomfortable, conversations can clarify such issues and build trust between partners.

International collaborations in the arts are the raison d'être of our three organisations. By joining forces to produce this toolkit, we aim to contribute to make international artistic collaborations more equal, meaningful and enriching. We have asked an arts professional with outstanding expertise, Mike van Graan, to produce a text that offers a comprehensive overview of relevant issues through a combination of practical case studies and theoretical references. The toolkit provides food for thought to artists and cultural professionals, and hopes to contribute to the discussion between policy-makers and funders.

Only when we keep discussing, working, failing and learning, we might achieve more equal understandings. Therefore we welcome your comments and further reflections on the matter at ietm@ietm.org.

The reflection on 'fair cooperation' will continue in collaboration with the NGO Culture et Développement through monthly articles on this topic to be published on their website Territoires Associés, le développement par la culture as per June 2018

About On the Move & DutchCulture

About the Author

On the Move is the cultural mobility information network active in Europe and worldwide.

On the Move (OTM) signposts on a free, regular and updated manner funding opportunities for the mobility of artists and cultural professionals – all disciplines covered – in Europe and worldwide. Thanks to its members' and partners' expertise, OTM also shares information on key challenges related to cultural mobility (eg. visas, social protection, taxation, environmental issues). Beyond this information channel, OTM facilitates training, workshop and/or makes public presentations on cultural mobility issues. It also advises on internationalisation of practices and organisations in partnership with cultural bodies, agencies, networks, foundations etc. The OTM network has recently started to work on evaluations and impacts' studies related to artists' mobility.

Born as a website in 2002 as project of IETM, OTM has evolved as a dynamic network which now counts more than 40 member-organisations. Beyond other sources of funding, OTM is supported by the French Ministry of Culture.

Marie Le Sourd, Secretary General, On the Move

DutchCulture is the strategic advice agency for international cultural cooperation, creating activities worldwide.

DutchCulture stimulates and supports international cooperation in art, culture and heritage. DutchCulture offers advice to cultural and diplomatic professionals operating in, or aspiring to operate in the international arena. It works with numerous partners to organise cross-border cultural programmes. DutchCulture is the government's partner in the implementation of international cultural policy.

Among other things, DutchCulture provides information on European grants and on artist-in-residences throughout the world, organizes work visits for embassies and foreign experts, collects information on the export of Dutch culture, stimulates collaboration and coordinates cultural programmes.

Cees de Graaff, Director, DutchCulture

Mike van Graan is an Associate Professor in the University of Cape Town's Drama Department, a member of UNESCO's Expert Facility on the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the President of the African Cultural Policy Network.
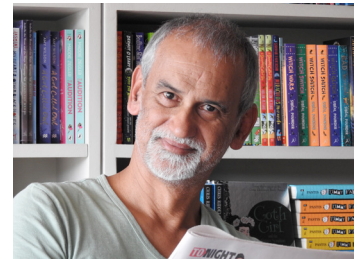
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After South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, he was appointed as a Special Adviser to the first minister responsible for arts and culture where he played an influential role in shaping post-apartheid cultural policies. He was he founding Secretary General of Arterial Network, a Pan African network of artists, cultural activists, creative enterprises and others engaged in the African creative sector and its contribution to human rights, democracy and development in Africa.

Creatively, Mike works as a playwright, and is considered as one of South Africa's leading contemporary playwrights, having garnered numerous nominations and awards for his plays that interrogate the post-apartheid South African condition.

He is the 2018 recipient of the Sweden-based Hiroshima Foundation for Peace and Culture Award in recognition of his contribution to the fight against apartheid, to building a post-apartheid society and to the study of the interface between peace and culture both in his home country and across the African continent.

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Introduction

South Africa is a former Dutch colony. But the Netherlands – both as a country and through its people - also played significant roles in the struggle against apartheid. There is a long and complex history between these two countries.

A few years ago, I was invited to spend a few weeks in the Netherlands as a playwright-in-residence with an established theatre company. My brief was to write a play as part of a Dutch-South African theatre exchange project that would have between three and six theatre pieces produced through collaboration between South African and Dutch professional theatre-makers and senior acting students from both countries.

It was a generous opportunity, one in which I would be exposed to a different theatre tradition, work with highly skilled and warm individuals, and have a new piece of theatre launch my playwriting career beyond my relatively small local pond.

My first sense of disquiet was raised when discussing the completed script with the director appointed to stage my play. He mentioned that it was quite a 'political piece' (I sought to connect the colonising history of the Netherlands with the recent influx of Moroccans into the country), which might be difficult for Dutch audiences as they did not really have politics in the same way as we did in South Africa. I pointed out that there had been two recent assassinations in the Netherlands – the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 and filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004 – which could both be regarded as symptoms of the underlying tensions fuelled by immigration from Muslim-majority countries. These, however, were – in the view of the director – anomalies in a generally comfortable and coherent society.

I was in South Africa during the rehearsal process which took place in the Netherlands, and so had little access to the development of the play (I generally do not participate in rehearsal processes anyway). At the opening of the play, I must confess that I initially did not recognise too much of what I had written. Through this experience, it became clear that while the South African theatre model was similar to that of the United Kingdom and the USA where the writer's work is treated with a degree of respect, in the Netherlands, theatre-making is pretty much about the director who has licence completely to deconstruct the work, and create something quite different in line with her or his vision.

The Dutch audience seemed to respond warmly to the play, although I thought that should it be shown in South Africa, it would be deemed to be a bit of a 'wank', all form with little substance. (Which is exactly how the work was received – particularly by theatre colleagues - when it was staged back home as part of the exchange).

I suppose the key learning for me – and hopefully, for my Dutch partners – was that different theatre traditions require sensitivity and understanding; what may work in one context, may be completely inappropriate in another. Unfortunately though, there was a kind of arrogance on the part of some of the senior, professional Dutch actors who gave a multiple award-winning South African director a hard time with their 'we can learn nothing from you' attitude; there were others who suggested they would drag us into their modern way of doing theatre.

The students from both countries loved and benefited greatly from the experience and the connections, but for some of the professional South African theatre-makers, there was a sense of being bullied or silenced by the power relations that come with the European partner providing most of the resources, the opportunities for travel and exposure, and the post-colonial cringe factor, where what is European is deemed to be superior.

All that should have been recognised is that one form or practice is not necessarily better or more advanced; they are simply different, and appropriate to their specific contexts.

This kind of experience may resonate with practitioners who engage in international collaborations. Misunderstandings lead to time-wasting, false assumptions exact unnecessary energy, and the project may be adversely impacted, even if, in the final analysis, the euphoria of the end result whitewashes the negatives within the process.

Mike van Graan

1.1. ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

Why this Toolkit?

Curiosity and the desire to learn from and engage with other cultures have always been drivers of international collaborations. In more recent times, with the ascendancy of the 'clash of civilisations' narrative, funding and policies promoting cultural diplomacy, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion have accelerated cultural collaborations at national, regional and global levels. However, such collaborations take place within and are influenced by two key fault-lines: structural inequalities and cultural differences.

Few countries have global or regional political power, economic muscle, military strength and cultural reach via the media and audio visual industries; most countries – and their citizens – have relatively little of these types of power, which influence the way reality is perceived in different parts of the world.

Cultural or artistic collaborations and exchanges do not take place in vacuums. Particularly in contexts characterised by inequality between partners, collaborations are impacted upon in terms of skills, resources, infrastructure, opportunities, working conditions, networks, experience, etc. There may be further inequalities regarding the fees and benefits payable to artists in different contexts; the capacity for artists to live from their creative work may be negligible in some situations so that projects will be dependent on when less-resourced collaborators get off from their income-generating employment. Inequality in mobility is another key consideration: an average (Western) European passport allows an artist to travel to more than 150 countries without a visa, while an average African passport will restrict a creative to less than 75 visa-less countries. What would this mean for an international tour of a project featuring actors from these two continents?

Moreover, vastly different belief and value systems, traditions and worldviews inform how people think of themselves, how they make meaning within the world, and how they relate to others. Cultural and aesthetic differences, different artistic traditions together with the manifestations of inequality, bring pressures to bear on such collaborations.

Against this background, and particularly when one party may be providing the lion's share of the project funding, overt or unspoken power relations have the capacity to derail the artistic collaboration or to influence its aesthetic outcomes. In Global North countries, culture is used by some institutions officially to promote certain 'values', but implicitly to defend precise interests. Funding priorities decided in more resourced countries (e.g. 'intercultural dialogue', 'creative industries'...) determine the wording used by organisations in less-resourced countries in order to access funding

opportunities, aligning their priorities to fit guidelines that do not actually correspond to their own reality.

Even in situations where inequality or colonial history (as is the case in the introductory story) may not be overriding factors in international collaborations, an artistic vision that seeks to cross multiple national and artistic boundaries may be impacted upon by a range of factors such as the absence of multilateral funding and political regimes that regard freedom of creative expression differently. The rights of women and of the LGBTI community may be taken for granted in a few countries, while in others, these may be regarded as affronts to local cultures, with gay rights even outlawed with severe punishments in some societies.

The purpose of this Toolkit is to assist those who seek to engage in international artistic projects or intercultural (cross-cultural) collaborations by asserting their value, but also by highlighting possible challenges of such exchanges, and providing some tools to negotiate the pitfalls.

By doing so, the Toolkit aims to promote fairer, better-informed and more sustainable artistic collaborations across cultural, national, class, gender and other boundaries.

For whom is the Toolkit intended?

The toolkit is aimed primarily at creative practitioners who seek to engage in international or intercultural artistic projects, or projects that intersect with divides such as class, race, culture, nationality, gender, age, disability, religion, etc. All creative practitioners, arts administrators, funding agencies and policy-makers are invited to use the Toolkit, but it is especially intended to sensitise those from more privileged contexts (who have the political space to exercise freedom of expression, public resources to support artistic endeavour, respect for fundamental human rights, etc) to ways in which such privilege may impact – whether consciously or unconsciously, positively or negatively – on the project at hand.

How to use this Toolkit?

Different projects will take place in different contexts with different personalities and different balances of human, economic, artistic and educational resources. This Toolkit is not intended as a one-size-fits-all manual; rather, users should take what is appropriate and apply these to the specificities of the project and its context.

1.2. DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

International cultural collaborations are the object of several policy documents that use terms and concepts which would be useful to know, not least because they inform funding applications.

Cultural collaboration: A process of working together to reach a common goal, and that intentionally seeks to confront and overcome differences in values, traditions, worldviews, often through involvement in an artistic project.

Cultural content: the symbolic meaning, artistic dimension and cultural values that originate from or express cultural identities. (UNESCO 2005 Convention)

Cultural diplomacy: Cultural diplomacy may best be described as a course of actions which are based on and utilise the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity, whether to strengthen relationships, enhance socio-cultural cooperation, promote national interests and beyond; cultural diplomacy can be practiced by the public sector, private sector or civil society (source: Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, Berlin).

Cultural diversity: the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. These expressions are passed on within and among groups and societies.

Cultural diversity is made manifest not only through the varied ways in which the cultural heritage of humanity is expressed, augmented and transmitted through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through diverse modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment, whatever the means and technologies used. (source: UNESCO 2005 Convention)

Cultural expressions: those expressions that result from the creativity of individuals, groups and societies, and that have cultural content. (source: UNESCO 2005 Convention)

Global North / Global South: For the purpose of this publication, the 'Global South' includes Africa, Asia (including China but excluding Japan, South Korea and Russia), Mexico, Central and South America, the Pacific, the Caribbean, the Arab region, indigenous communities and local minorities in global north countries, as well as diaspora communities from 'Global South' regions resident in the global north. While the term is used to bring together a number of regions of the world, these regions are not homogenous in any way. Essentially, the term 'Global South' broadly describes those countries and regions that generally do not have the economic muscle, the political and military power and the cultural/media influence to assert their interests and needs in the creative and cultural sectors.'

The terms are not geographic at all; they refer to the divides in the world, without the pejorative connotation of the terms 'First world/ Developed World' and 'Third world/Developing world' used in the past. (source: M. van Graan, 'Global South Arts and Culture Initiative' - unpublished - courtesy of the Author).

Interculturality: the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect. (source: UNESCO 2005 Convention)

Intercultural dialogue: a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or worldviews. Among its aims are to develop deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices, to foster equality and to enhance creative processes. (source: 'Adapting the Wheel: Cultural Policies for Africa')

Soft power: the means of exercising international and national power and influence often through cultural means

See chapter Five for further relevant documents.

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International artistic collaborations: why and how

2.1. WHY ENGAGE IN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS?

From the case studies in this Toolkit (see chapter 4) and broader experience, some of the reasons why creative practitioners engage in cultural/artistic collaboration include the following:

Curiosity: a desire to learn from, be exposed to and absorb elements from other cultures, for personal/human development and/or artistic growth

Experience: to gain personal/organisational experience working across cultures and/or in international contexts

Solidarity: a commitment to working with artists in less-resourced or in conflict-ridden societies as a way of supporting them

Sustainability: to build regional and international markets to ensure sustainability of creative enterprises

Funding: funding becomes available for cultural diplomacy/ intercultural dialogue projects, or funding in one's home region/ country dries up and becomes available in another region/country to promote intercultural dialogue, thus encouraging artists to seek residencies and to work in projects abroad

Historical links: relationships between the country of origin and other countries create opportunities for learning about, reflecting on and dealing with common histories, or financial opportunities that other countries may not provide

There may very well be a host of other reasons and motivations for international collaboration, as well as any combination of such reasons. You may need to stipulate particular reasons for funding purposes but be clear about what *you* would like to achieve through such a project.

2.2. WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN ENGAGING IN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS?

Before engaging in international artistic collaborations, it would be useful to reflect on the following points that may require research and influence your choice of partner/s, and could ultimately determine whether, where, and how, you would pursue such a project.

History: While a common history of language and economic and cultural integration may be advantages in international cultural collaborations, in an increasingly polarised world characterised by inequality, colonial history and practices often have residual resentments that play themselves out in international liaisons. It is important to understand the context in which you seek to do your project. What is the history of colonialism and of the relationship between your country and that of your partner/s? What is the contemporary political discourse? How could these impact on the project and the way it is received? Are there ways in which the project could help to address negative historical legacies?

Language: Language is an important signifier of identity and means of making meaning. It is also a tool for exercising power, with some languages having more international, regional and national weight than other languages. What language/s are you comfortable in? What language/s would your partner/s be comfortable in? Would a translator be necessary? What will be the lingua franca of the project and of the communication in the preparation of the project? Would the project tour, and if so, what languages will be used to communicate to different audiences? How do your partners feel about communicating in languages inherited from the colonial project? Would you combine languages? Is language a key source of tension in the country/social context of your partner/s?

> 'We (...) learn that sometimes artistic organisations have a great knowledge of their field, but do not necessarily have the "big picture" in terms of the political situation in their countries and/or its perception by the international community.'
> Riccardo Olivier, The Festival of Silence, Italy (page 29)

Project length: Resourced partners may be interested primarily in one-off projects before moving on to the 'next experience'; less resourced partners would be interested in longer-term partnerships (at least three years) to help sustain their other work through such a project. How long will the project last? Is it a one-off project, or will it have components that are repeated/developed over time? If the project tours, how will this impact on your partners if they are required to forego local income-generating opportunities? How would you avoid/manage potential issues of

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dependency with the partner relying on the project for ongoing income, or of disappointment when the project ends?

Mobility: One of the key issues in international projects relates to the movement of artists and other creative professionals. Some of the key findings in UNESCO's 2018 report on the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in this regard are: While the Global North[1] provides the main market destinations for artists and cultural practitioners from the Global South, access to these destinations is becoming increasingly difficult in the current global security climate; visa regulations continue to jeopardise the efforts of cultural institutions and civil society to address the persistent inequalities between the Global North and Global South and restrictions on freedom of movement and mobility of artists are used as tools of repression and censorship. When planning your project, do you require visas and/or work permits? Do you require inoculation certificates? How long does it take to obtain these? If the project is scheduled to tour (or if it generates unexpected opportunities for international touring), do your partners have passports and visas? If not, when will these be applied for – before the project starts or while the project is being developed (and what if project participants are denied visas)? Can you help to speed up the application and approval procedure? Will partners be prejudiced when it comes to mobility? If so, what plans should be put in place to mitigate such risks and the potential disappointment, as well as the potential financial losses to yourself and/or your partners?

Cultural mores: Most western societies are liberal democracies that affirm and protect human and cultural rights, and are generally tolerant of unconventionality and individual expressions of personal taste. In other countries where religion and more traditional values hold sway, the cultural mores might be more restrictive. What are the cultural practices and expectations in your proposed partner country with regard to women (e.g. do they need head coverings)? What is the attitude to LGBTI practitioners, and to projects that might include nudity, excessive violence or language laced with expletives? What about alcohol consumption and appropriate dress? What about religious beliefs – is it acceptable, for example, to proclaim atheism in your partner country?

'I want to scream at the women, but it isn't my business. Not my culture. Not my place to rail with western feminist vigour against 'gender power dynamics.'

(…) 'Through active listening and creative exchange we grow to 'comprehend the complexities of other people's histories, to know and sympathize with their orientation, their passion, their language and their traditions.'

Jessica Litwak, 'My time with the Freedom Theatre' (collaboration USA-Palestine), page 24

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1 For the definitions of Global North and Global South see Chapter 1.2

Artistic traditions: Different countries have different cultural traditions, different economic and social circumstances, different histories that impact on the development of their creative and artistic expressions. These are not less evolved or more conservative than yours necessarily, and you will need to research and seek to understand the forms used by your partners and the reasons for doing so. What are the primary artistic forms and practices within your discipline in your proposed partner country? Are they similar or different to yours? Most importantly, whose 'aesthetic standards' will prevail when pursuing the project? How will these be negotiated?

'I suppose the key learning for me – and hopefully, for my Dutch partners – was that different theatre traditions require sensitivity and understanding; what may work in one context, may be completely inappropriate in another.'

Mike van Graan, exchange between South African and Dutch artists (page 7)

Political space: In some countries, artists are allowed to tackle any topic without any legal or other constraint, with ample freedom to express their views, even if they conflict with the dominant views of those occupying political power. In other countries, freedom of creative expression is much more restricted. How protected is freedom of creative expression in your proposed partner country? If there are political restrictions and/or your partner is under scrutiny from the authorities because of their critical engagement with such authorities, what measures do you need to take to safeguard the project, yourselves and your partners, if any? Consider this also when communicating about the project, particularly through social media: visibility through pictures and Twitter/Facebook posts can provide unwanted visibility to artists whose political engagement is endangering them in their home country.

Logistical and project infrastructure: A project requires general logistical and infrastructural support. What kind of support would the project require? Does your partner have the office space, the equipment, the rehearsal space (or access to these) to support the project? Is information technology available to support the project and communication (skype, internet, etc)? Do you require local transport, and if so, is a vehicle and/or a licensed driver available? If not, how would you help to develop these capacities? Could this be integrated into the project?

Technical equipment and skills: Most projects require skills in lighting, sound and other technical skills to stage a project to have its maximum effect. Some contexts may be less-resourced than others in terms of the availability of technical equipment and skills than others. What technical skills does the project require? What level of technical skills is necessary – entry, medium, advanced?

What technical skills will each partner bring to the project? Will the project lead to the development of technical skills for some who may not have such skills? Might the project be able to provide equipment for one of the partners and the necessary skills to operate and maintain the equipment?

'Another poignant cultural difference that took up a good deal of effort and negotiation was about technology. (...) After much discussion about the colonising influence of ever changing, 'progressive' technology and the associated changing aesthetics, the Australian team agreed to purchase a new computer with the appropriate program, which would be donated to Teater Satu as part of the cultural exchange.'

Pippa Bailey, 'The Age of Bones (collaboration Australia-Indonesia), page 27

Administrative capacity: The sustainability of a project and the ability of partners to raise funds in future require strong administrative capacity. If a project is funded, it generally comes with strenuous administrative burdens. Is your partner a legal entity as required by (most) funders? Do you and/or your partners have the administrative capacity to manage the finances of the project? Do your partners have proven sound financial management experience? Managing finances is crucial to a project and to funders who are providing the funding, but so is control of the finances: if your partner is in a less-resourced country, would you give them full control of the finances to avoid the appearance of 'neo-colonialism'? Does your partner have effective accounting systems that are aligned to the reporting requirements that the project's funders may have?

Health risks: In partner countries, there may be health issues (e.g. malaria, excessive heat, poor drinking water) and safety issues (e.g. war, conflict, criminal violence, violence against women and children) that you need to be aware of, and that you need to inform your fellow workers from your country about, so that they may make informed decisions about whether they want to be part of the project or not. Some countries might require inoculations and even certain medical tests e.g. HIV/AIDS, that could be experienced as discriminatory. How do your partners feel about that? Are there travel advisories about your partner country? What is the likelihood of criminal violence in the city in which the project takes place? What mitigating plans may be put in place to avoid these?

2.3. FURTHER TIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION, PARTICULARLY IN CONDITIONS OF INEQUALITY

These tips are gleaned from a variety of past IETM meetings that have addressed this theme. Reflecting on these points will help to assess risks, and plan and prepare mitigating strategies.

1. Embrace differences as a starting point. See them as healthy, rather than as threats.

2. Be honest with yourself, with your own team and with your partner/s about your limitations (time, resources, skills, capacity and managing the expectations of your partner/s). With regard to values, do you have a minimum expectation of your partner/s, beyond which you are not prepared to go? How much are you willing to compromise, if at all?

'In the culture and civil society sectors, unfortunately, it has become common to name any and every joint endeavour as a partnership, which conveniently veils the fact that, more often than not, external cooperation is solicited for reasons of self-interest and expediency.'

Anmol Vellani, Three stories from the exerience of IFA - India Foundation for the Arts, page 20

3. Be generous rather than defensive. Be prepared to be challenged, to take risks, but also to challenge and have difficult conversations about rights, values, governance of the project, etc. Be sure you do not appropriate ideas, strategies and knowledge of smaller organisations without actually establishing a collaboration and crediting them for what they brought to the project (other than money).

4. Ensure regular and open communication with your partner/s to build and maintain trust.

'There is probably only one important rule (...): each partner has to know about the contribution of the other partners and has to accept the 'proportions'.'

Dóra Büki, Proton Theatre (Hungary), page 25

5. Invest time in the project: time to learn to know each other, time to understand each other's context, possibilities and constraints, particularly if you are engaging with the partner/s for the first time, and even if you have operated in the region before. Try to ensure that partners spend time in each other's country. Understand your partners' role in their own context:

do not assume, for example, that an artist based in a richer country has 'naturally' more access to resources, or vice versa.

> 'There is an implied power dynamic around the acquisition of funds, but sometimes it is not what is expected. Creative approaches and transparency are required to fairly and successfully fundraise for an arts project.'
>
> J.J. El Far, Theatre Mitu - collaborations USA-Egypt, page 30

6. Check that you and your partners have the same meaning for the terms that you use.

7. Build an exit strategy. As much as you plan to initiate and run a project, plan for how the project ends so that it leaves a lasting legacy, an ending that your partners understand and agree to. Allow some flexibility in the project, rather than absolutely rigid deadlines.

8. Check the local market for your work: is there an audience and/or a paying market for the project you intend to produce, particularly if the project's sustainability is linked to local box office income?

9. Check the availability of local funding if this is necessary for the project (for example, sometimes funding is provided for a Global North-Global South project by Global North donors, provided that the Global South partner provides/raises a percentage of the funding too), and this may be done as 'in kind' funding e.g. rehearsal venues, human capacity, transport, etc).

> 'We soon found out that most funding opportunities for in-ternational co-productions in Europe and Asia are aimed at African, Middle-Eastern, European and Asian countries, while none focuses on Latin America. On another hand Latin Amer-ican funding programmes like 'Iberescena' do not support inter-continental projects like the one we were planning.' In addition, the existing cooperation opportunities are generally bilateral and do not cover projects involving three countries, like this one.
>
> Paz Begué, '12H Project', page 23

10. Check the local fee structure and how the payment of fees within the project could impact on the local arts market. How much will you be paid versus payment for your partners, and given the different conditions in which they live, their possible dependence on public transport, etc. There is no one-size-fits-all and what may be possible in one context, may cause tension in another, so that it is important to research and discuss this theme in detail with your partner/s. The project will suffer if one partner believes they are being paid less even though

they are contributing equally to the artistic product in terms of content, expertise and quality. Also be aware that in some cases, cooperating partners may come with more people than you expected and budgeted for e.g. assistants, partners, etc. that may need to be understood culturally or as context-specific. This needs to be discussed in order to manage it.

> 'We were very aware of how money and privilege can assert power, expressed through subtle shifts in attitude and attention.'
>
> Pippa Bailey, 'The Age of Bones (collaboration Australia-Indonesia), page 27

2.4. STARTING A PROJECT: THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES

There are generally three elements to starting an international or cross-cultural collaboration: raising the funding, having an idea and finding an appropriate partner. It is important to consider the order in which these three elements take place; there are different possible combinations, each offering pros and cons.

It is also worth noting the different approaches of funding agencies: some agencies (e.g. arts councils) support international collaborations provided the lead partner is based in their country, other agencies support projects only if the lead applicant is from the Global South or in a position of precarity, and still other agencies support Global South applicants, provided they partner with an agency in the country from which the funds are sourced primarily, e.g. USAID (the United States Agency for International Development).

- *Have the idea, raise the funding, find a partner*

Pros:
- It is an idea for a project that excites you
- On the basis of that idea, you can raise the funding
- The certainty of funding helps you search for and find an appropriate partner who will benefit from the funding

Cons:
- Once you have found a partner, they may not like or be wholly committed to the idea as they were not part of its origination
- Your partner may do it, if only to access the funding and the opportunities (e.g. a tour abroad) attached to the project
- You may be perceived to be acting in a neo-colonial manner, using a partner in a less-resourced country to raise funding for a project that sustains and interests you

- *Raise the funding, find a partner, generate the idea*

Pros:
- You and your partner will develop the idea together, so creating greater joint ownership
- The project will have guaranteed funding (or, at least the project idea will have specific budget parameters)
- You will be seen as a partner, rather than as a missionary

Cons:
- Funds are seldom raised without a specific idea for which it will be needed
- Your partner may take greater ownership of the project, but will still be largely dependent on you

- *Find a partner, generate the idea, raise the funding*

Pros:
- You and your partner will jointly generate the idea
- You and your partner will agree on a joint fundraising strategy once you have jointly budgeted the agreed idea

Cons:
- You will need some up-front investment/risk finances to travel and find/meet an appropriate partner
- The funding sources in your country/region may not support the idea, preferring one that more closely suits their interests

There may be other ways of approaching this, but it is important for those interested in collaboration to be aware of and think through these different starting points.

'(...) collaborations in the artistic field cannot be made to order. They emerge, more often than not, without forethought or by accident. An artist might happen to witness the work of another artist and recognise a kindred spirit. Or a chance meeting between artists might start a conversation about their vastly divergent perspectives, producing a creative tension that entices them to consider working together. What this suggests is that a sincere desire and readiness to collaborate among artists will very rarely be in sync with the deadline of a programme designed to support such projects. Inevitably, therefore, a calendared call for applications for artistic collaborations will attract largely manufactured proposals.'
Anmol Vellani, Three stories from the exerience of IFA - India Foundation for the Arts, page 20

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*A framework for fairer international
cultural collaborations*

Collaborative projects between north and south, between resourced and less-resourced partners are not simply arts projects but are microcosms of an inequitable world order, where some have more funding, skills, experience, infrastructure, etc. than others, but where we wish to work together for our common good. To achieve this, we need to negotiate a range of dynamics that have to do with power relations, values, worldviews, aesthetic traditions, differing markets, etc. Some of the key questions related to such exchange and collaboration have been raised in this Toolkit.

What follows is a proposed framework to discuss at the beginning of a project involving partners from unequal contexts. The framework could be worked through at the outset of the project, in order to set the parameters, to manage the expectations and obligations of each party, to resolve potential conflicts, and also to serve as a sound basis for evaluating the project at a later stage.

You may consider using this as a basis for discussion with potential partners, even if you or your partners may not want to formalise it in writing (although a written agreement will be a useful tool for managing the project, particularly if one or two participants leave and others come in during the duration of the project). Discussing this framework could also be an initial team building exercise, particularly if the people involved in the project have never worked together before. Each point will need discussion - possibly facilitated by an external person with a neutral point of view - and decision-making, and, while it may take some time, it will help to avoid future misunderstandings, and provide an important basis for handling potential conflicts.

The framework is meant as a flexible tool and you should feel free to adapt the content and order of the paragraphs according to your specific case - always in agreement with your international partners.

Please note that this framework is the beginning to arrive at points of mutual understanding, and should be complemented by a Contract in which the details agreed to by the parties, are written down and signed off by both parties (as an inspiration, you may use this agreement, or these Sample Agreements for Joint Ventures, Partnerships, Collaborations, etc.).

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE

Preamble

Acknowledge, together with your partners, the broader context in which the project will take place, the possible challenges that this brings and the desire to co-operate towards mutually beneficial ends. Try to list the items that you and your partner believe need to be acknowledged as part of the broader and/or historical context impacting on the project potentially. Try to highlight what brings you together (e.g. artistic trends, topics of social debate etc.) in spite of contextual differences.

Name of Project

To be mutually agreed on.

Aims of Project

To be mutually agreed on.

Principles of co-operation/Values underpinning the project

Parties should agree on these: e.g. a commitment to mutual respect, to sound governance, to non-discrimination on the basis of gender, colour, language, etc.

These values/principles may require negotiation to arrive at mutual agreement and acceptance, or an agreement to acknowledge existing differences and to seek to work together nevertheless, in a pragmatic manner.

Language of communication

Which language/s will be used during the different stages of the project? Will translation be necessary? Who will provide/pay for it?

Place/s of project

- Where will it be created?
- Where will it be distributed (country/ies and/or cities/towns)?
- How might this impact on the project (different market expectations, etc.)?

Funders

- State the primary funders.
- State clearly the expectations of the funders/reasons for the funding: cultural diplomacy? Culture and development? Social cohesion? Art for its own sake? Others?

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- State clearly the relationship between the funder/s and the respective parties, and the (contracted and unstated) obligations of the respective parties to the funder/s.
- Which partner is bringing which funders?
- How will any income be split?
- How will any loss be made up? Who carries the risk?

Expectations

Each party to spell out:

- their expectations of the project – what they would like to achieve through it, and this would include what they hope to achieve artistically, as individual practitioners, as organisations, etc.;
- their expectations of the project in relation to their organisation's strategy (e.g. is this project part of a broader programme?);
- their expectations of the project regarding its broader impact at a local or national level, and even internationally given the manifold contexts in which the project takes place;
- their expectations with regard to income/funding from the project;
- their expectations of the project in terms of its legacy: how will it contribute to greater sustainability in terms of human development, infrastructure development, organisational growth, continued income streams for both or either party, impact on local audiences/communities, etc. How could the project develop after the agreed termination date for the collaboration, and who will be responsible for this?

Contributions

Each party spells out clearly what they can/will bring to the project in terms of

- Financial resources
- Human resources
- Time
- Technical, artistic and administrative skills
- Experience
- Infrastructure
- Networks
- Etc.

Project Plan

- Outline a clear time framework for the project: a beginning and an end date. Is it a one-off project? Will there be ongoing collaboration? How long will the project take?
- Outline clear outcomes/milestones within projected times for the implementation of the plan.
- Indicate clearly who is responsible for which outcomes.

Governance and management

- Clearly indicate who the project leader is for both parties.
- Outline a governance structure for the project: who will be responsible for overall decisions, how will decisions get made?
- Indicate clearly who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the project, its finances, financial reporting, etc.
- How will disputes/disagreements be managed and resolved? (e.g. can you appoint one person in each team to take the final decision for that party in case of a disagreement?)

Legacy

What will the project leave behind? Skills? Infrastructure? Resources? Aesthetic repertoire?

Concluding remarks

Parties to make any further additions that would impact on/help with the management of the project.

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4

International collaborations: case studies

4.1. TOWARDS STRONGER INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS AND CULTURAL RELATIONS. LESSONS FROM THREE STORIES

Anmol Vellani (India) is a theatre director. His essays have critically viewed nationalism, development, state policy and the creative industries through the lens of culture and the arts. He is the founder and former executive director of the India Foundation for the Arts, an independent, grant-making organisation that supports arts practice, research and education in India.

'I will be narrating three stories that I believe to be variously instructive for creative professionals engaged in international collaborations, funding agencies promoting cross-cultural dialogue and partnerships, and policy-makers working to boost cultural relations.'

- ● *Story 1*

In 2008, India Foundation for the Arts (IFA), an independent grant-making agency, was approached by three European cultural organisations, each seeking to partner IFA on various projects for which they wished to apply for funding from the EU. They were in a hurry to get IFA to sign on the dotted line, as it were, since the deadline for applications was fast approaching. Their proposals were more or less ready for submission and it was unclear what role IFA was expected to play as a project partner. The organisations in question did not appear to have taken much trouble to familiarise themselves with the nature of IFA's work. This sudden upsurge of interest in IFA would have been puzzling were it not easy to explain: Googling for 'India' and 'Arts' fetches 'India Foundation for the Arts' on the first page of the search results.

There were many reasons why IFA had no regrets about turning down all these requests. IFA could not take ownership for proposals that it had played no part in developing. The proposed projects, moreover, were in no way connected to IFA's core activities, and were, in fact, inconsistent with its mandate and purpose. Primarily, though, it was a matter of self-respect. The requests were motivated not by any real interest in IFA, but merely by the need to fulfill a key requirement of a grant programme under which these organisations were seeking support. In effect, IFA was being asked to assume the role of a 'sleeping' partner to facilitate the pursuit of essentially Eurocentric agendas.

Two lessons can be extracted from this story. One is that cultural relations cannot be promoted by forms of assistance which, however well-meaning, are unable to ensure that the collaborations they support are grounded in shared responsibility and joint ownership. Second, collaborations in the artistic field cannot be made to order. They emerge, more often than not, without forethought or by accident. An artist might happen to witness the work of another artist and recognise a kindred spirit. Or a chance meeting between artists might start a conversation about their vastly divergent perspectives, producing a creative tension that entices them to consider working together. What this suggests is that a sincere desire and readiness to collaborate among artists will very rarely be in sync with the deadline of a programme designed to support such projects. Inevitably, therefore, a calendared call for applications for artistic collaborations will attract largely manufactured proposals.

An open-ended call for applications is far more likely to attract proposals for collaboration in the arts that are well-grounded and free of contrivance. The more common one-off funding that is offered in this area, moreover, can be less effective and even counterproductive, for it fails to appreciate that collaboration is a fragile, fraught and intractable process, which finds artists entering previously uncharted territory. A better approach would be to extend funding in a phased manner—first for laying the ground for collaboration (which may require reciprocal visits to experience each other's conditions and contexts of work, preliminary research and exploration, sharing of perspectives, expectations, skills and working methods, and so on); next for working on the resulting fully-developed project for artistic collaboration, if any; and finally for the wider presentation or dissemination of the outcome, if fruitful.

This more cautious funding strategy, importantly, is prepared to embrace failure, recognising that collaborations can fall apart at any stage, and for any number of reasons—incompatible temperaments or unresolvable cultural or ideological differences, among them. Supporters of international collaboration need to structure their funding with an alertness to the hazardous nature of such initiatives, accepting that some will produce artistic growth and enrichment, while others will cause bitterness, loss of confidence, disenchantment and much else besides. To persist with a faltering collaborative project would hardly serve the purpose of strengthening intercultural relations.

- ● *Story 2*

In 2005, the British Council commissioned Tim Supple, the famous theatre director, to produce 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in collaboration with Indian actors and designers. A highly acclaimed production, it toured India and had two extended runs in the UK, before embarking on an international tour.

Supple auditioned performers from all over India for the production, selecting those who were proficient in at least one Indian movement form. Many of them came from modest backgrounds, with prior experience of working only in native performance contexts or with

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theatre groups operating in local languages. These artists suddenly found themselves catapulted into an international context of performance, thrown together with people they did not know, with some of whom they did not share a language, travelling the world for close to two years, completely cut off from their social milieu, and receiving incomes in amounts they could not have imagined earning before, and which in all likelihood they would not be able to earn later—once the project was over.

Abrupt, enforced dislocation can be disorienting and disturbing for anyone; more so for people who have not grown up in a cosmopolitan environment. I know some of these performing artists personally and I am aware that they suffered from extreme anxiety and loneliness during the long tours of the production. Some took to drinking heavily. Others have had difficulty re-adjusting to their original performance contexts on their return. One of them drank himself to death. His lifeless body was found in a hotel room at the end of the Australian tour of the production.

There is no doubt that the poorer Indian performing artists would have seen 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' as providing them with a life-altering artistic and financial opportunity. At the same time, however, they could not have had any inkling that their participation in the project might have deleterious longer term consequences for their personal and professional lives. To say, therefore, that they freely chose to be part of this venture would be no defence at all.

This raises questions that neither artists from the Global North who pursue international collaborations, nor the bilateral and other agencies that support them, probably ask themselves. Are there ethical issues or local social or political realities to be taken into consideration in choosing collaborative projects and collaborating artists? How can one be more mindful of the possible harmful repercussions on project collaborators and be better prepared to anticipate and ameliorate the risks and dangers of such initiatives? And if artists from the Global North are venturing to work in unfamiliar countries or cultures for the first time, what homework should they do? How should they access relevant information, knowledge, insights and networks, and from whom? Should they arrive much ahead of time to soak in the new environment in which they will be working—absorbing the sight, sounds and smells, observing how people talk, gesture and interact, and discovering how intangible and tangible forms of local expression produce meaning?

Agencies that support intercultural dialogue and interaction, it should be clear, have a significant role to play in preparing artists and other professionals for assignments in contexts other than their own. Serving as a source of funding is not enough; they must also act as guides, facilitators, interpreters and educators in order to fulfil their mission more effectively. Speakers from Europe, for example, sometimes sound patronising and naive when delivering

From the grant made to Sandesh Bhandare under the IFA programme Arts Research 2016-2017 (courtesy: Sandesh Bhandare)

talks in India, and are heard out with barely concealed amusement, simply because they have not been properly briefed about the nature of the audiences they have been invited to address.

● *Story 3*

In late 2011, IFA was approached by World Event Young Artists (WEYA) for assistance in identifying young artists from India for participation in a world event in September 2012 in Nottingham. As a partner, IFA was also expected to support or attract support to enable some if not all the selected artists to travel and ship their artwork and other essential materials to Nottingham. IFA agreed to help because doing so was consistent with its broad mandate to support Indian artists.

This request from WEYA was received very late, obliging IFA to recommend artists for selection within five months. To meet this pressing deadline, IFA teamed up with Toto Funds the Arts (TFA), which is dedicated to working with young artists in India, dividing responsibility for identifying artists in different fields (moving image, performance, visual arts and literature). During this short period, moreover, IFA had to commit an inordinate amount of staff time and resources to developing and disseminating a public call for proposals and convening juries to screen the large number of applications.

WEYA endorsed the seven artists that were finally selected by IFA and TFA. Since, however, WEYA identified fewer than half of the chosen artists for travel support from their side, IFA assisted the others to apply for alternative sources of funding. In the end, however, only a two-member music band, a visual artist, a photographer and a poet went to WEYA 2012; the rest, although they had secured the means to travel to and from Nottingham,

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were refused visas because they had inadequate bank balances or sources of income.

WEYA's engagement with IFA was erratic and inconsistent from the start to the finish of this so-called partnership. WEYA kept changing its mind about how many artists IFA should recommend for selection and then kept IFA guessing about whether any travel support would be made available for the selected artists. Their final decision to support three artists was communicated tardily, followed by a long pause before the identity of the three artists was made known to IFA. This seriously compromised IFA's efforts to attract travel support for the remaining artists. WEYA also neglected to inform IFA about the conditions under which visas would be issued to artists—a factor which could have been taken into account while selecting artists for the festival.

IFA gained nothing from its association with WEYA 2012; if anything, it threatened to diminish IFA's standing among its two key constituencies—artists and donors. Indeed, the experience of working with WEYA was so frustrating that IFA resolved not to work with the organisation ever again. Not that WEYA has made any overtures to IFA since 2012. In retrospect, it is clear that naming IFA as a partner was, for WEYA, merely a rhetorical flourish; their real interest was limited to leveraging IFA's institutional and financial resources to attain their own finite and immediate ends.

It is instructive to take note here of the difference between 'collaboration' and 'partnership'. The former refers to a joining of forces to achieve a specific, time-bound result, and, for that reason, is more likely to come apart in the face of conflicts and setbacks. In contrast, the latter implies a sustained, mutually supportive alliance. Its value is seen by partners to reside in the longer-term and wider reciprocal benefits that will accrue, and, for that reason, it is better able to weather disappointments and reversals. In the culture and civil society sectors, unfortunately, it has become common to name any and every joint endeavour as a partnership, which conveniently veils the fact that, more often than not, external cooperation is solicited for reasons of self-interest and expediency.

Historically, intercultural relations have been promoted via support for ad hoc and short-lived collaborations in the arts. Very little attention has been given to nurturing constructive and enduring partnerships between cultural organisations operating in different parts of the world. Perhaps policy in this domain should now be recalibrated, setting its sights on also building intercultural *relationships* in the arts.
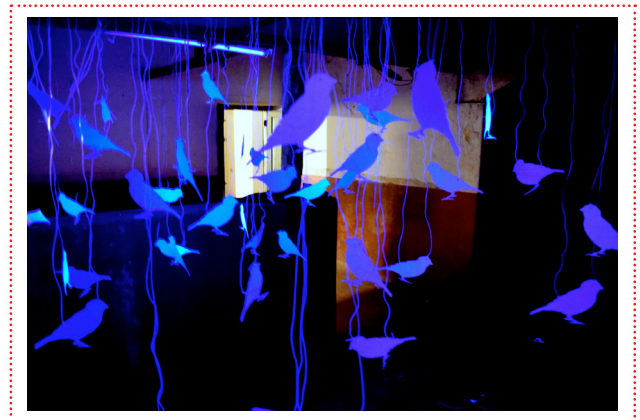
'Myself Mohan, 1909', installation, Shaunak Mahbubani / KLATSCH Collective (courtesy: Shashank Satish) - IFA programme Project 560, 2015

4.2. '12H PROJECT' - COLLABORATION ARGENTINA - KOREA - GERMANY

'12H project' by Paz Begué/Verdever (© Daniel Barth)

<u>Paz Begué</u> (Argentina) talks about her experience with '<u>12H Project</u>', an international dance project with emerging artists from Argentina, South Korea and Germany.

'In 2014 we started the pre-production of '12H Project' (the title comes from the time difference between Argentina and South Korea), expecting the creative process to be influenced by each cultural context. The challenge, however, began well before starting the artistic work on the ground, when we started to look for funding.'

A first issue was the geographical scope of available funding:

'We soon found out that most funding opportunities for international co-productions in Europe and Asia are aimed at African, Middle-Eastern, European and Asian countries, while none focuses on Latin America. On another hand Latin American funding programmes like <u>Iberescena</u> do not support inter-continental projects like the one we were planning.' In addition, the existing cooperation opportunities are generally bilateral and do not cover projects involving three countries, like this one.'

A second problem related to the amount of funding and the costs covered in different countries:

'In Korea and Germany, cultural policies for the performing arts include important funds and residency programmes (research spaces, rehearsal facilities available for full days or half-days, accommodation, and often even an artist's fee for the residency period), travel funding, support in communication, etc. In Argentina, instead, artistic projects are generally self-managed. If you get funding for a performing arts project, it covers only a small part of the actual production costs and resources needed. There are no cultural policies, funds or support programmes like those available in Europe or Asia.'

In spite of the many support letters from universities, artists, from the Korean Cultural Centre in Argentina, and even of a 'Declaration of cultural interest' by the Argentinian Ministry of Culture, funding applications to national funding and residency programmes in the three countries were not successful. 'South Korea replied to our request saying that they could support us, but only if each of the other two countries contributed with the same percentage of funding - which in the case of Argentina was just not possible.'

This difficulty with funding delayed the project, and eventually led to a change in the format:
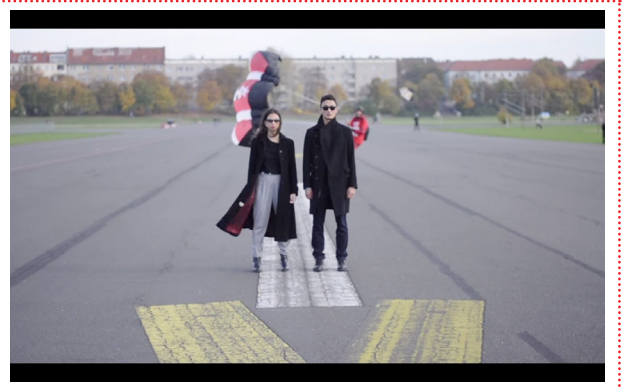
'After this experience we decided to change the format of the project and to develop in the mid-term a trilogy, creating a different work in each country. This way we hope to solve the problems of co-producing in so very different contexts.'

4.3. 'MY TIME WITH THE FREEDOM THEATRE' - COLLABORATION USA - PALESTINE

Jessica Litwak (USA) is a multi-disciplinary international theatre leader, recognized in the field of Theatre for Social Change. A founder of the H.E.A.T. Collective and of Theatre Without Borders, here Jessica talks about her time with The Freedom Theatre in Palestine.

'I engage in cultural collaborations so that I can employ courage and generosity to make art that serves. As a Jewish theatre artist, it feels essential to me to work in Occupied Palestine in a redemptive attempt to use theatre as a vehicle for change. I travel to conflict regions in the Middle East to conduct theatre workshops for the Freedom Theatre, with the purpose of effecting change in the individual lives of participants and benefitting the theatre as an organisation. Doing therapeutic theatre work including Drama Therapy, Playback Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed, Puppetry, Voice and Acting, I offer rigorous training and socially engaged performances. The project I speak of here took place during one of the many times I have worked with The Freedom Theatre in Palestine. It was designed to present substantive theatre experiences specifically puppet building to people living in the Jenin refugee camp.'

'We built puppets all over the West Bank. The stories keep coming... I teach a workshop in Nablus for a group of women in a community center. An older woman comes in last and addresses the group. 'Ladies! I am pregnant! I know, I know Habibti, it's hard to believe, you look at me and you think she's too old- way past childbearing years... But Ladies, Allah wants me to give my husband a baby boy. You know I lost the last nine, but not this one! My husband is going to marry a second wife - this girl- so young, so pretty- breaks my heart. I gave him just one daughter nineteen years ago. If I give him a son, Inshallah, he won't take the new wife. But Lady Teacher, I have to leave the class before lunch to see the doctor. I can feel him inside me. My boy.' She returns to the workshop just after lunch. 'My baby is dead!' The other women all begin shouting at once. I bring them into a circle. I ask the woman to come into the centre. I ask each woman to say one supportive thing. Every single woman says a variation of the same thought: 'Inshallah you give your husband a son. God willing you can make for your husband a baby boy. Inshallah God saves that baby for your husband.' Not one of the women say: I hope you are OK. Eat some lunch. Take care of yourself. Thank God you have a daughter. Cherish her. Inshallah your husband is kind to you. The woman weeps harder in the centre of the circle, clutching her belly, rocking back and forth, tears streaming. Her voice shaking: 'I hate my body - I hate my life, I hate my body / I hate my life.''

Puppet Workshop at Freedom Theatre (©Jessica Litwak)

'I want to scream at the women, but it isn't my business. Not my culture. Not my place to rail with western feminist vigour against 'gender power dynamics'. I ask the women to write poems to put inside the brains of their puppets. The pregnant woman writes about the day her daughter was lost for three hours during the Second Intifada. They were hiding in a mosque and everyone was searching for the little girl. She makes a puppet of her daughter. In her play, the other women's puppets join the story, bobbing up and down with bright and crooked faces. I ask her what she will do when she leaves the workshop.

'First thing? I am going to call my daughter.' After the workshop, I call my daughter too.

I believe this kind of work is meaningful and makes what seems culturally impossible, possible. Through active listening and creative exchange we grow to comprehend the complexities of other people's histories, to know and sympathize with their orientation, their passion, their language and their traditions. We can cultivate paridoxical curiosity and build arts based communities that bridge cultural chasms and move us a little closer to peace.'

4.4. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PROTON THEATRE - HUNGARY

Dóra Büki (Hungary) is the managing director and producer of independent company Proton Theatre, a virtual artistic company she co-founded in 2009 together with the film and theatre director Kornél Mundruczó. Chiefly, Proton's performances are realized as international co-productions.

Overall, Proton has received state support 4 times, covering each time 10-20% of their yearly budget. Here Dóra talks about collaborating with Western European partners.

'To be able to produce new performances, there is no other way for us but working in international co-productions, because it is simply not possible to collect money in Hungary for a new independent production, especially not in the dimension we are working in, which means 6-10 actors, 6-8 technicians, light, sound, video and a big set, like in state theatres, but produced and managed independently.'

Their latest international coproduction was the theatre performance 'Imitation of life', which was produced in Hungary with 7 international and 1 Hungarian co-producers: Wiener Festwochen (Austria), Theater Oberhausen (Germany), La Rose des Vents (France), Maillon, Théâtre de Strasbourg / Scène européenne (France), Trafó House of Contemporary Arts (Hungary), HAU Hebbel am Ufer, HELLERAU - European Center for the Arts, and Wiesbaden Biennale (Germany). The world première of 'Imitation of life' was in 2016 at the Wiener Festwochen.

The aims of the project were clear for all partners since the beginning, as 'Imitation of life' was already Proton's fourth international co-production and they had already worked with all of the partners before.

Financing and producing the project was a long process:

'It takes about one-and-a-half years to finance and produce such a project. In the case of 'Imitation of life' we had a quite long rehearsal period, split in three stages of several weeks each, and a lot of technical rehearsals, which were necessary because of the complicated set we had. Now I can say that even if it was more expensive to have three stages of rehearsals instead of only one, it was artistically, but also on the practical side, a perfect timing.'

The key benefit for Proton was the possibility to produce a new performance, 'which is both an artistic and a practical need for our company.' On their side, the co-producers 'received a show, which they could be proud of, as it got very good reviews, several nominations and prizes, - the most important being director Kornél
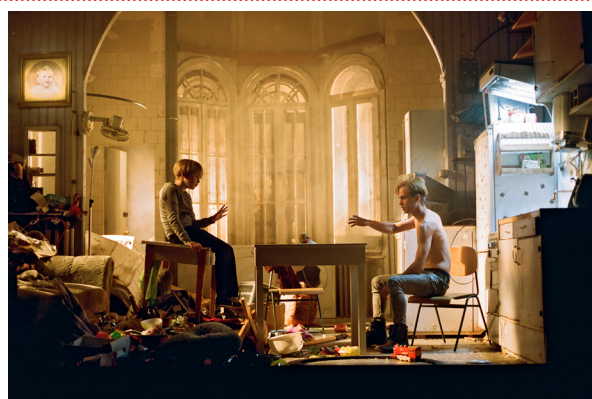
'Imitation of life' by Proton Theatre (© Marcell Rév-Proton Theatre)

Mundruczó's nomination for the FAUST 2017 in the best theatre director category. It was the first time in the history of the prize that a non-German theatrical production was nominated.'

The contribution of each partner varied based on their respective financial capacity, which is a recurrent situation in international co-productions. 'There is probably only one important rule in this: each partner has to know about the contribution of the other partners and has to accept the 'proportions'.'

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4.5. ARQUETOPIA ARTIST RESIDENCY - MEXICO AND PERU

Francisco Guevara talks about Arquetopia's approach to international art and culture collaborations. Based in Mexico and Peru, Arquetopia is an internationally established, non-profit arts and culture foundation with a social scope that emphasises critical thinking through artistic practices.

'Historically art and culture have been the motivation for modern world travel. Modern tourism and cultural exchanges (including art residencies) have their origin in the Grand Tour, the traditional trip around Europe from the seventeenth century. Later on and throughout the nineteenth century, European colonialism would shape every modern idea about traveling; from the universal expositions to the establishment of museums and art biennales as cultural institutions, colonialism will help consolidate the idea of the tropical paradise as a destination, and the construction of 'foreign' lands as exotic and wild.

Understanding this complex context has been crucial to Arquetopia's mission and the scope of all of our programs and activities. In the history of Arquetopia we have had approximately 400 different international exchanges and projects, ranging from collaborations with large institutions both public and private, to one-on-one projects with international artists. We are especially invested in approaching art and art history with a critical perspective by understanding Mexico and Peru's complexity in context and incorporating nuances in narratives and interpretation of the 3,000-year heritage of visual culture of these countries. As Arquetopia's mission is to promote social transformation, we depart from historical consciousness as a necessary context to understand cultural complexity and have a successful cultural exchange. All of our programs are based on a non-exploitative model and partnering institutions as well as artist-in-residence are strongly encouraged to explore various ways of cultural exchange and artistic collaboration.

Since Arquetopia was established in 2009 as a non-profit private Foundation, promoting Development and social transformation through cultural, artistic, and educational programs has been our priority. At the core of the Foundation is Sustainable Development through four principles embodied in all of our programs and activities: social awareness, shared responsibility, innovation, and local networks development. Having an international scope, and permanent programs both in Mexico and Peru, we approach cultural and artistic collaborations by emphasizing synergy, innovation, viability, reciprocity, and respect for local knowledge. We are proud to have established through our multiple residency programs a generous and culturally diverse space by hosting every year artists, scholars, and researchers from the Americas, Europe,
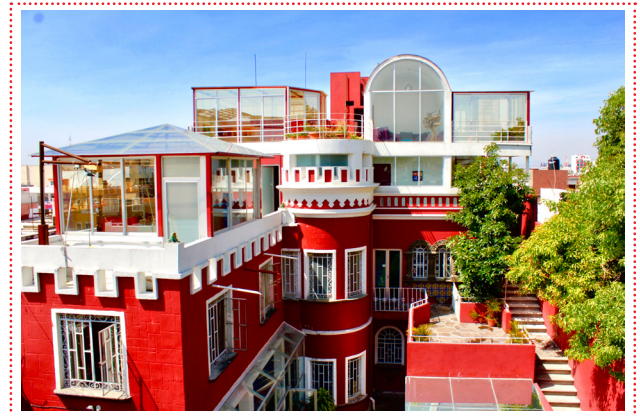
The Arquetopia residency in Puebla, Mexico (© Arquetopia)

Asia, Africa and Australia. Our experience has been enriched by the multiplicity of perspectives and differences of our residents coming from many regions around the world and approximately 60 countries.

At Arquetopia we consider every residency an opportunity to ignite change and to approach art practices with ethical responsibility. In the words of Audre Lorde, writer and civil rights activist, 'within the interdependence of mutual (non-dominant) differences lies that security which enables us to descend into the chaos of knowledge and return with true visions of our future, along with the concomitant power to effect those changes which can bring that future into being.' At Arquetopia we know that international collaborations are necessary for social change, and although art and culture have the possibility to create a space to ignite change, we also understand that art history never narrates, but celebrates the triumph of power and domination. Therefore, we approach differences as the necessary departing point for dialogue and the exchange of ideas. We address art making by placing art practices at the center of critical discussions to reveal the complex relationship between 'the ways of seeing,' power, and the production of art and/ or the writing of art history.

As art and culture continue to be a motivation for traveling and seek collaborations, we need to remember that cultural diplomacy can become another form of colonial expansion, domination, and exploitation. Artistic and cultural collaborations represent not only opportunities for artists and creative practitioners to learn and grow, but even on a small scale, they become a possibility to individually change the course of history.'

4.6. 'THE AGE OF BONES' - COLLABORATION AUSTRALIA - INDONESIA

Australian creative producer **Pippa Bailey** reflects on the project 'The Age of Bones', collaboration between Australia and Indonesia.

The story, written by Sandra Thibodeaux, is 'a heartfelt and darkly funny tale inspired by the real-life stories of 60 Indonesian boys imprisoned in Australia for working on refugee boats.'

'I have always been interested in intercultural work, I was bullied as a child and have always been passionate about fairness and understanding difference. I work in the arts because creativity can be a powerful way to break barriers and build bridges. As a daughter and granddaughter of migrants, I have dual citizenship and can travel easily. I am acutely aware of the responsibility that comes with this privilege', writes Pippa.

In 2015 Pippa went to the Darwin Festival in the Top End of Australia to a reading of 'The Age of Bones'. 'This work was ambitious, marrying an Australian text and Australian creative team with Balinese Wayang (puppetry) and Teater Satu, led by acclaimed Indonesian director Iswadi Pratama and his ensemble of physical theatre performers from Sumatra.'

Australia and Indonesia are near neighbours but there are far fewer artistic collaborations between the two countries than one might suppose. Until relatively recently Australia has been influenced by the UK, Europe and USA whereas Indonesia declared independence from The Netherlands in 1945 and has focused on ties within Asia. They are culturally very different despite constant traffic between the two countries over generations.

'The Age of Bones' was being produced by Sandra, the writer, and co-directed by Iswadi (Indonesia) and Alex Galeazzi (Australia). Alex had not worked on an international collaboration before, while Iswadi and Sandra had a long working relationship. 'This multimedia work combined text, puppetry and physical theatre in two languages. The form was new to both directors and to the rest of the team.'

Pippa was working for Performing Lines, a funded producing organisation. She suggested to Sandra that the company could support the production as co-producer and they started fundraising from various Australian funding pots. 'We were acutely aware that Indonesia has no arts funding system and Teater Satu is largely unfunded, often only paid for the performance which gives the performers a small fee but in no way covers the weeks and months required to make the work. Sandra and I were clear that Australia would be providing the means to make the work but were determined that the work would not be a commission but an
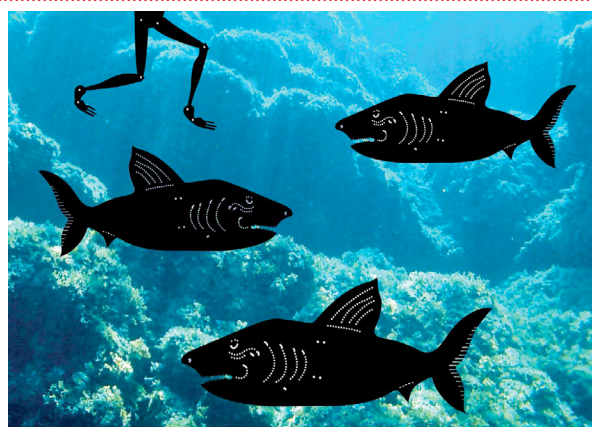
Picture from 'The Age of Bones' (courtesy: Pippa Bailey)

equal collaboration.'

There were many differences between the two groups, first of all in terms of working conditions: 'Teater Satu Company regularly rehearses six nights a week, after everyone had finished his or her day jobs. They are a well-established and committed ensemble. This was very different to the expectations of the Australian team of freelancers. By example, trained professional performers in Australia often have to have day jobs to support themselves between artistic engagements but consider it unprofessional to work without a fee for their creative work including rehearsals, whereas the Indonesian performers rehearse for free and are only paid for presentations. Also in Australia, we prioritise speed - we have to work fast because time is money and we are under union regulations that determine everything (including seemingly unchangeable meal times for production staff). There are beneficial working conditions however these shape how we structure bump-ins, rehearsals, preparation sessions, etc. Conversely the Indonesians prioritise participation and relationships and these come first when the day/project/tour is structured.'

'Another poignant cultural difference that took up a good deal of effort and negotiation was about technology. The vision for the show included a screen and moving image set. The expert Aussie creative team, including the videographer, were used to working with computer programs to operate complicated lights and sound for a production. Teater Satu are a physical company and do not use much technology in their work. This makes sense when you visit Lampung, Sumatra which is plagued by blackouts and power surges. After much discussion about the colonising influence of ever changing, 'progressive' technology and the associated changing aesthetics, the Australian team agreed to purchase a new computer with the appropriate program, which would be donated to Teater Satu as part of the cultural exchange.'

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Language was an issue as well. Most of the creative process took place in Indonesia, while the show was mounted and rehearsed in Sumatra, at the home of Theater Satu. Several members of the Indonesian team spoke some English; Sandra and one of the Australian actors speak some Bahasa Indonesia, but the rest of the Australian team didn't speak the working language, which proved challenging, despite having a superb translator during rehearsals. Eventually, 'co-directors Alex and Iswadi found ways to share the load and play to their own strengths.'

'The play opened in Lampung and toured to Java for a week. The less regimented working conditions and constant improvisation with space and resources for each Indonesian venue challenged the Australians who were accustomed to a more streamlined working environment.' Despite the challenges, 'they all responded very positively to the ethos of this hard-working ensemble and everyone stumbled and joked through their differences to become firm friends.'

The remounted show in Australia required some changes in the aesthetics, to adapt to contemporary Australian audience, particularly because the show 'was telling a dark part of our own story that divides communities'. 'The Australian creative team were all delighted to have the equipment and resources they were accustomed to, although we could not always meet their new creative ambitions' due to budget constraints.

As co-producers, Sandra and Pippa talked a great deal about the differences between the two distinctive cultures within this temporary company and how to minimise the impact of these differences. 'We were very aware of how money and privilege can assert power, expressed through subtle shifts in attitude and attention. One very interesting issue was rates of pay. For the Australian tour we worked out how much higher the Australian union rates were compared with an Australian basic minimum wage. We wanted to pay the Indonesians the same percentage higher than a basic wage in Sumatra. All the touring costs of travel, accommodation and per diems were covered in Australia so this seemed fair in recognition of the different standards of living in each country. However, the Australian government demands that all foreign workers are paid the same as Australian workers. On the one hand this makes sense and ensures Australian workers are not undercut. In this instance, it meant the Indonesians were being paid disproportionately more than their Australian colleagues. We were aware that this meant that the Indonesian cast then had a rather unrealistic view of our 'lucky' country. Ultimately we also knew it was helping their families and we didn't mind.'

'The week the show opened in Melbourne we heard that an Indonesian lawyer was leading a class action against the Australian Government on behalf of more than 100 underage boys jailed illegally in Australia. This was a wonderful outcome for the boys'

families and for the show. The Age of Bones tells the very human story of a boy, his time in jail and his long journey home to his mother. Throughout the tour we hosted panel discussions where human rights lawyers and refugee activists joined the cast and teased out the thorny issues that had inspired our work. The houses were small and we needed more time and money to promote it. The reviews were excellent, which helped; and the show has been nominated for a prestigious Green Room Award for Best Ensemble. Despite many hurdles and for all our differences, we were constantly reminded of how important these cultural collaborations can be in healing wounds and enabling greater understanding.'
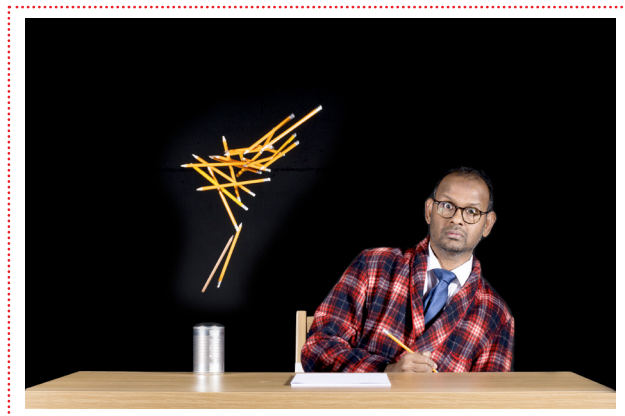
4.7. FESTIVAL DEL SILENZIO, ITALY: THE POLITICS OF SIGN LANGUAGE

Riccardo Olivier is a dancer, choreographer and cultural manager based in Milan, Italy, where he works, among others, for the artistic collective Fattoria Vittadini. One of Fattoria Vittadini's projects is the Festival del Silenzio (Festival of Silence'), which had its first edition in March 2018. 'At the Festival of Silence you are invited to see, experience and listen to different performative forms of art. You'll be able to understand and appreciate them without any help of any spoken or sign language, just open your mind and your gaze to a new experience. You will learn about the work of artists of different origins and cultures, including native signers, people who use the Sign Language as their mother tongue, and thus discover the culture Sign Language, like any other Language, brings within itself'.

Ramesh Meyyappann 'Off kilter' at Festival silenzio 2018 (© Niall Walker)

The Festival launched an open call to support an Italian (or Italy-based) Deaf artist or artist who has Sign Language (SL) as her/his native language, or a non-Deaf artist working with SL, to produce a new work to present in the 2019 edition; meanwhile, the Festival is also engaging in collaborations with partners from different countries, including Morocco, Romania, Ukraine and the UK, to prepare an international call, with the double aim to support Deaf artists from different countries and to appoint 'national artistic experts' in this relatively new field. However, 'when discussing with our international partners, we suddenly faced various questions about power relations and "fair" collaborations'.

A first issue concerns those countries with two official - or widespread - languages. 'In Morocco, for example, there are two national SL, namely standard Arabic Sign Language, which is international (like spoken Arabic) but not so widespread in the country, and French Sign Language, which is much better known and used. French SL, though, is used particularly among middle and upper classes, while lower social classes can hardly afford to access this teaching. Besides, our overall aims with this project are to empower local sign languages and to facilitate access to culture for non-French (Sign Language) speakers. Our Moroccan partner is very open to certain topics, such as queer culture, gender identities, freedom of expression and secularism, that are more easily tackled by the French SL community, which is, generally speaking, less conservative than the Arabic SL community'.

A similar issue was raised in Ukraine, although for different reasons. 'In Ukraine there are tensions related to "who" is teaching Ukrainian and Russian Sign Languages, since both are taught by private organisations or foundations that are (or are perceived as) pro-Russian, and funded with Russian money. Interestingly, this point was raised not by our Ukrainian partner but by other international partners... So here we have an ethical problem that relates to larger geopolitical tensions. We also learn that sometimes artistic organisations have a great knowledge of their field, but do not necessarily have the "big picture" in terms of the political situation in their countries and/or its perception by the international community'.

'I believe there is a "fair approach" to international collaborations, but not such a thing as "fair international collaborations", because one can never be completely informed about another context and know all the details.'

The Festival is trying to cope with these issues through an open dialogue with all the partners. 'We share all these concerns with the partners in each country, we enter into dialogue, and we trust them since they are key figures in the performing arts (specifically using Sign Language or not). We let them decide on those issues, and of course we will have the final word as project leaders, but our hope is to raise awareness among our partners and allow them to make an informed decision.'

Another point Riccardo raises is the disparity of conditions for Sign Language artists across countries. 'We aim to launch a Sign Language/sign culture international call, because we believe in internationalisation as a form of empowerment - we look at common elements beyond national specificities. However, the call will be open to artists based in our partners' countries, i.e. Italy, Romania, Morocco, Ukraine and the UK... which obviously have very different starting conditions in terms of awareness and professional experience, so we will certainly have a strong geographical unbalance in the applications, particularly in very strong ones. We are considering the use of quotas at some stages of the selection procedures, in order to make sure that all partner countries are presented in the shortlist, and to use resources to fund more than one project. At the same time, we want to develop

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an internal reflection and trans-national selection mechanism that takes into account the different contexts. This requires a huge translation work - both in terms of actual translation (it is not always possible to translate directly from one national SL into another...), and in terms of artistic language (this makes it difficult to translate a project for policy-makers, for example). Indeed many national Sign Languages lack specific artistic terms, as well as specific training for interpreters who can be on stage, enriching the performance; a best practice in this sense is the BUZZCUT festival in Glasgow, Scotland, which the Festival of Silence considers also to be a model in terms of on-going efforts to be fully accessible.'

4.8. THEATRE MITU - WORKING BETWEEN USA AND EGYPT

J.J. El-Far is the General Manager of Theatre Mitu, a Creative Strategist and Producer based in the USA. She shares her reflection about a recent collaboration with a friend theatre artist from Cairo - a case which echoes other experiences that J.J. has had when collaborating with colleagues from other countries as well, both in the Middle East and in other places.

'It is essential that all parties of a collaboration enter into a project with clear terms and understanding of roles for each person. Specifically who is occupying the role of the producer, or doing the primary fundraising. It is critical that the nature of funding is explicitly discussed with frank and transparent terms, remembering that the USA has its own vocabulary for fundraising. Many times I have encountered artists from the Middle East or Europe that assume that funding in New York or the USA is either readily available, or easy to access. Similar assumptions are made for acquiring audience and venues. I have found that I need to explain how difficult and competitive funding for the arts is in the USA many times, and I wish that this was more widely understood. Yes, there is funding we can apply for, but these applications are projects unto themselves and have requirements and timelines that all collaborators in the project should commit to meeting as a team. There is an implied power dynamic around the acquisition of funds, but sometimes it is not what is expected. Creative approaches and transparency are required to fairly and successfully fundraise for an arts project.'

Hybrid Theatre Works' 'Global Spotlight Series' (photo courtesy of Hybrid Theatre Works / thanks to J.J. El Far)

5

Relevant international and regional policy instruments & Additional resources

5.1. RELEVANT POLICY INSTRUMENTS

The following policy instruments are among those relevant to international collaboration. They provide the vision of governments and multilateral agencies in promoting intercultural and international artistic collaborations, and the advocacy tools creative practitioners might need to agitate for funding, political and other support in pursuit of this vision.

Selected paragraphs from various documents are listed below.

1980 UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of the Artist

(8) In view of the growing importance of international exchanges of works of art, and contacts between artists, and the need to encourage them, Member States separately or collectively, without prejudice to the development of national cultures, are invited to:

a. assist freer circulation of such work by, inter alia, flexible customs arrangements and concessions in relation to import duties, particularly as regards temporary importation

b. take measures to encourage international travel and exchange by artists, giving due attention to visiting national artists

2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

Article 1: Objectives

The objectives of this Convention are:

(a) to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions;

(b) to create the conditions for cultures to flourish and to freely interact in a mutually beneficial manner;

(c) to encourage dialogue among cultures with a view to ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world in favour of intercultural respect and a culture of peace;

(d) to foster interculturality in order to develop cultural interaction in the spirit of building bridges among peoples;

(e) to promote respect for the diversity of cultural expressions and raise awareness of its value at the local, national and international levels;

Article 2: Guiding Principles

(4) Principle of international solidarity and cooperation: International cooperation and solidarity should be aimed at enabling countries, especially developing countries, to create and strengthen their means of cultural expression, including their cultural industries, whether nascent or established, at the local, national and international levels.

(7) Principle of equitable access: Equitable access to a rich and diversified range of cultural expressions from all over the world and access of cultures to the means of expressions and dissemination constitute important elements for enhancing cultural diversity and encouraging mutual understanding.

Article 12: Promotion of International Cooperation

Parties shall endeavour to strengthen their bilateral, regional and international cooperation for the creation of conditions conducive to the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions...notably in order to:

(a) facilitate dialogue among Parties on cultural policy;

(b) enhance public sector strategic and management capacities in cultural public sector institutions, through professional and international cultural exchanges and sharing of best practices;

(c) reinforce partnerships with and among civil society, non-governmental organisations and the private sector in fostering and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions;

(d) promote the use of new technologies, encourage partnerships to enhance information sharing and cultural understanding, and foster the diversity of cultural expressions;

(e) encourage the conclusion of co-production and co-distribution agreements.

Article 16: Preferential Treatment for Developing Countries

Developed countries shall facilitate cultural exchanges with developing countries by granting, through the appropriate institutional and legal frameworks, preferential treatment to artists and other cultural professionals and practitioners, as well as cultural goods and services from developing countries.

European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2017 on Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations (2016/2240(INI))

- whereas the EU is becoming a more prominent actor in international relations and should put additional resources and energy into the promotion of its common culture, cultural heritage, artistic creation and innovation within regional diversity...

- whereas the EU is an important actor in international politics playing an ever-increasing role in world affairs, including through the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity in international relations;

- whereas culture has an intrinsic value, and the EU's experience has shown that cultural exchanges can serve to promote its external objectives and as a powerful bridge between people of different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds, not least by reinforcing intercultural and interreligious dialogue and mutual understanding, including through the activities of the European External Action Service (EEAS); considers, in this regard, that culture should become an essential part of the political dialogue with third countries, and that there is a need to systematically integrate culture into projects and programmes;

- whereas culture and the protection of culture are inseparably linked to the honouring of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

- whereas the EU and its Member States have a variety of common cultural, linguistic, historical and religious roots, and whereas by drawing inspiration from Europe's cultural, religious and humanist inheritance, they have succeeded in attaining unity in diversity; whereas European culture and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, represent the diversity of European societies and regions, of their majority societies as much as of their minority cultures;

- whereas throughout the history of the EU cultural relations have been fundamental drivers of social cohesion and sustainable economic and human development, while playing a crucial role in strengthening civil society capacities and people-to-people contacts, and in preventing radicalisation, with a view to protecting cultural heritage, reinforcing democratisation processes and engaging in conflict prevention, resolution and resilience;

- whereas cultural diplomacy should promote cultural and linguistic diversity, including the preservation of minority languages in the recognition that this constitutes a value in itself, and contributes to Europe's cultural heritage;

- whereas human rights also include cultural rights, and whereas equal attention should therefore be given to the right of each individual to participate in cultural life and enjoy his or her own culture, whilst fully respecting the fundamental human rights of all;

- whereas the EU and individual Member States provide more than half of the world's development aid, a fact that deserves to be better acknowledged;

- whereas people-to-people contacts such as youth exchanges, city twinning and partnerships in the professional field have been important vehicles for fostering intercultural understanding and should be promoted by the EU in its foreign policy relations;

- whereas mobility is an essential part of the EU's international cultural relations, requiring the setting up of mechanisms to facilitate visa access to and from third countries for cultural professionals, researchers, academics, teachers, students and staff, and for alumni networks for former participants in EU programmes;

- whereas the EU and neighbouring states have historically influenced each other with regard to culture;

- whereas cooperation, training, mobility of artists and cultural professionals – and of their works, including through European and international networks, and artist residencies – are key factors in the dissemination and exchange of both European and non-European cultures and arts, and need to be promoted and enhanced;

- whereas a visa policy for artists and cultural professionals is key to successful cooperation and to the free circulation of works, through European and international networks, as well as to ensuring active artists' residencies programmes that involve civil societies in the different countries and regions of the world;

1. Suggests that each Member State could launch joint actions together with the EU to highlight a different EU country each year by means of, e.g., exhibitions and co-productions, with a special role given to the rotating presidency, with a view to delivering additional intrinsic value for the EU and the Member States and to increasing the visibility of their actions and initiatives abroad, including through EU delegations, with specific human and financial resources made available to this end;

2. Urges the Commission, in the next multiannual financial framework, to provide for a budget line dedicated to supporting international cultural relations in existing programmes and future calls, especially in the next generation of programmes on culture and education, so that these can develop their international action in a proper way;

3. Proposes that a dedicated EU programme be designed and resources focused on international mobility and exchanges such as residency programmes especially for young cultural and creative professionals and artists;

4. Underlines that, for reasons of sustainability, the EU's external cultural funding activities must result from a strong involvement of local partners, adaptation of programmes to local realities and a due consideration of the post-funding period for projects, including transition to national financing or other revenue-models;

5. Stresses that an active civil society in partner countries may help considerably when it comes to spreading the values promoted by the EU, and that it is therefore essential that the EU, when cultivating its bilateral relations, bolsters support for the civil society organisations of the cultural sector in partner countries;

6. Calls for the creation of a cultural visa programme, along the lines of the existing Scientific Visa Programme, for third-country nationals, artists and other professionals in the cultural field with a view to fostering cultural relations and eliminating obstacles to mobility in the cultural sector;

7. Highlights the important role of culture in EU external policy as a soft power tool, a catalyst for peacekeeping, stability and reconciliation, and as an engine for sustainable socio-economic and human development.

5.2. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following contacts may be useful when you plan to engage in international collaborations in the arts and culture field:

*   EU National Institutes of Culture

These Institutes – Goethe Institut, British Council, Institut Français, Instituto Cervantes, Pro Helvetia etc. – often have extensive networks and databases in the countries in which they are located. Contact these for potential partners in the country/region in which you plan to work.

*   On the Move

On the Move (OTM) aims to facilitate cross-border mobility in the arts and culture sector contributing to build up a vibrant European shared cultural space strongly connected worldwide. OTM signposts, on a free and regular basis, information on cultural mobility opportunities and funding via its website, monthly e-newsletters and social media. OTM co-produces free cultural mobility related guides and toolkits; through reports and meetings it tackles cultural mobility challenges (on visa, administrative and environmental issues) and occasionally co-organises training and events for its members and associated partners.

*   The Fund-Finder

This IETM publication, curated by On the Move, is a valuable guide to online information platforms which may help you to find funding opportunities for your current or future projects and initiatives with European or international dimensions.