

## **GROUP 2: Education Group**

### **chairman: Taina Kopra**

(Friday, October 19th)

#### **Presentations of Circuses**

##### **Le Plus Petit Cirque Du Monde (France) / Katérine**

- A non-profit association

Teaching:

- 60-minute lessons
- 32 study weeks a year
- 8 pupils / a group
- Every four years the study program changes (or every 2-4 years)
- Problems:
  - No permanent place to practice (own circus facilities planned for the year 2012)
  - Pupils from difficult social situations, special needs
  - Expenses
  - Not able to take in all the children who would like to join
- Teaching staff:
  - Dancers, artists
  - Ministry of culture is working on a diploma for teachers
    - The teachers don't have a diploma at the moment
- Aim of the circus is not to graduate artists, but to give the children tools for life through art
- Cooperation with schools, arranges extra-curricular activities for pupils at a teacher's request (can be for example a year-long project)

##### **Santelli (Holland) / Natalie**

- Multidisciplinary teaching, all techniques
- Teaching:
  - Under 11 year-olds are in children's group, from there on in youngsters' group
  - No systematic curriculum, no resources yet to formulate one
- Teachers:
  - From circus schools, pedagogues, jugglers from France (artists from professional schools), different backgrounds
- Financing:
  - Tuitions (used for rent, costumes, props etc.)
  - Santelli foundation
  - Birthday parties
- Problems:
  - Money (teachers get to train instead of salary)

- Teachers change from time to time, using volunteers because of unemployment benefit
- Hard to find professional teachers, there aren't enough of them

### **Beweging** (Belgium)

- Teaching:
  - 33 lessons / a year / per group
  - No official curriculum, a personal study plan
  - Length of the lesson varies depending on the discipline
  - Big groups, three teachers for 33 children
    - After warm- up groups are split into smaller ones
    - Special groups: 12 pupils for one teacher
    - Unicycle group 100 pupils in one big hall
    - Groups are of very different skill levels
- Youth work popular in Belgium, used in the field of circus also
- Teachers:
  - Diploma not needed, experience is enough
- Groups are full at the moment, there is a waiting list
- Everybody doesn't have to pay, but in order to be able to provide education there has to be other activities
- Aim not to produce circus artists, but to develop the children's self expression etc.
- Some performances have live music
- Problems:
  - Location
  - Funding; only 9% of funding from state subsidies
    - Communication with teachers, because there is a lot of them

### **Tryllehaven** (Denmark) / Felix Becker

- Association, other project also besides circus (not an active circus group at the moment)
- Problems:
  - More room for activities needed
  - Clubs, children have to be somewhere after school (aren't necessarily interested in circus)
  - Unemployment system is good, but groups aren't being formed because of it
- Denmark has a tradition of street performing. There are old circus families (informal, they don't get government money)

### **Circo Hannover** (Germany) / Wolfgang Pruisken

- After school courses /clubs
- Teachers:
  - From different schools
- Free admission to circus school, no criteria
- Teaching:

- 44 study weeks a year
- 0-200 € / a year
- No official curriculum, a learning program

Problems:

- Financing, arts are supported by the state but circus is not a part of that
- Facilities, after school hours you have to pay, causes practical problems

**Zaltimbang** (Luxembourg)/ George?

- Founded 14 years ago
- Teaching:
  - 10 teachers from circus schools
  - 250 children
    - Ages from 4 year-olds up
  - Technical courses, two years. After that, special courses, different levels
  - 1,5 hours/week,
  - 360 € / year (special arrangement for those who can't pay)
  - 32 study weeks a year
- No official education system
- Philosophy: circus as a pedagogical tool for social, physical and creative development
- Workshops, outdoor activities for schools
- Local organization
- Problems:
  - Getting bigger, need a learning system to organize teaching
  - No own facilities, after school halls, no rent (but causes practical problems)
  - Three different places to train in, practical problems
  - Teachers have another job, circus a side job

**Smulene** (Norway) / Cecilie Helme

- Problems:
  - No own facilities, no capacity to take in more pupils
    - Problems with financing
  - Lack of good infrastructure (facilities, props etc.)
  - Lack of time to get to know the children better
  - Pupils with special needs (hearing problems etc.)
- No open training. Some want more training, but the school can't afford it, so new voluntary groups are formed which can apply for the same funding from the state as Smulene
- A need for an organization? Different system in different countries
- Teaching:
  - Once a week.
  - Two teachers
  - 1, 5- 2 hours a lesson
  - 12-week term
- No systematic learning program
- The main aim is to be creative and have fun
- Circus culture in Norway growing, an organization is being planned

### **Nörköping** (Sweden) / Marcus ?

- Founded 30 years ago
- An association
- 400 pupils
- Performances in the summer, circus schools in different areas
- Pupils from 5 years up (usually pupils leave the circus around the age of 20)
- Teaching:
  - About 20 groups
  - One group for every discipline (some train once a week, some more)
  - 10-20 children in a group
  - Acrobatics are for everyone (but it's not obligatory), twice a week
  - Open training, three hours on Sunday
- Everyone can join, no admission criteria (besides age)
- 120 euros a year for everyone (the whole family can train, as much as they want)
- Financing:
  - Performances (100 shows a year)
  - Sponsors (companies)
- Work is expected of the pupils in order to be able to perform
- Philosophy is to have fun
- No other projects
- Cooperation with other art forms, dance etc.
- Problems:
  - The facilities are getting too expensive (a 2000-square-metre hall)
  - To inspire the parents to work, without them there is no organization
  - Differences of opinion with the parents
  - Communication takes time due to the size of the circus
  - How to keep it running efficiently if there are different people in the board of the association every year

### **Cyvk Zodiak** (Szczecin, Poland) / Pawel Królik

- Problems:
  - Not a lot of cooperation between circus groups
  - No learning material in Polish
  - Need proper training facilities
  - No professional trainers in circus arts
  - Political history of Poland (everything closed for many years, during the communist era state supported the arts), people should be more self-initiative now
  - How to combine the social and the artistic side of circus
- Voluntary work, workshops
- Background in a scout organization (partly in Germany and partly in Poland)

- A few teachers
- Lack of a good vocational school for (circus) artists in Poland
- Training after normal school
- Artistic development of Poland, a few good theatres who use acrobatics

### **Zirkusschule Seifenblase** (Germany) / Inga Purwin

- Founded in 1987
- Teaching:
  - 42 study weeks
- Problems:
  - Communication between the parents and the teachers
  - Financing
  - Facilities (a sports hall)
- Teachers:
  - Circus trainer from a traditional circus, and different backgrounds

### **Elleboog** (Holland) / Rosa Boon?

- Own facilities in Amsterdam
- Membership of the circus club for one year (have to be a member)
- Big performance twice a year
- Teaching:
  - Education divided in three different areas:
    - Circus play (6-12 years old and 12-18 years old)
    - Training (From 12 year-olds on. Emphasis on good technical skills)
    - Performing (Making their own acts, realizing what is a good act, choosing music etc.)
  - You can choose more than one area
- Performance group has an audition (due to large number of applicants)
- Afternoons for children who do circus play
- Teenagers training group: two skill levels
- Performing group must go to training
- Every group performs
- Providing the skills and quality to apply for different purposes
- 11 000 participants a year
- Organization:
  - Two buildings, a third one being planned, a need to expand (financing)
- Teachers:
  - Different specialties, for example dance, theatre, pedagogical ( circus school in Brussels), street artists, performance group pupils help with groups, secondary schools, social pedagogical schools
  - No diplomas for circus schools (A few circus schools in Holland)

**Folie** (Estonia) / Terje Bernardt

Teaching:

- Free trainers (25-40 hours per month)
- Training:
  - Two places in Tallinn (not far from each other), gym shared with dance clubs
- Problems:
  - Practical problems with sharing the facilities
  - A lot of training, too tough for some children
  - How to teach creativity? The balance between creativity and technical skills
  - Need for more professional trainers (on different disciplines)
  - Financing
- Four training days a week, after school
- No rent
- 70 pupils
- This year more opportunities for the performing group: three times a week (+ theatre etc.)
- Three months summer holiday

**Kuopio Circus School** (Finland)

- An association
- Teaching:
  - Unicycle, acrobatics, air acrobatics (normal and advanced), pyramids, handstands
  - 1, 5 hour lesson
- Financing:
  - Support from city of Kuopio (€ 500 / semester from the city)
  - Place is free
- No official curriculum, no basic education in the arts, no systematic learning program
- Problems:
  - Eastern Finland not enticing for teachers
  - Not much to offer for teachers, should be passion for circus

## **Education Group** (Saturday October 20th)

### **General information about Sorin Sirkus and circus in Finland**

#### ***The teachers:***

According to the Finnish law, the teacher gets paid for sixty minutes, even though the lesson lasts for 45 minutes. In Sorin Sirkus, the monthly paid teachers have 20 lessons and 10 hours of (planning) work in a week. 20 lessons means 15 hours of work. If the teacher is ill, it affects the whole system. Under school aged children's lessons are sixty minutes, for everyone else 45 minutes. The teachers meet up on a weekly basis to discuss their work and how to develop it. The teachers plan their work beforehand. There is a plan for the whole year, which defines what there is to learn during the year. There is also a weekly timetable. This is very useful for the part-time teachers. The teachers write down, what has been taught in each lesson.

#### ***The groups:***

In Finland school starts at the age of seven. In Sorin Sirkus the basic syllabus can be completed either in three or four years. There are 60 students in pre-primary studies, 172 in basic syllabus, 54 in advanced syllabus, and about twenty in the performing group. Every lesson should have something about performing. All groups except the performing group do the warming up with the teacher.

#### ***Performing:***

Every spring the pupils get to perform. There are four different shows, where the same circus numbers are performed by different children, and the tricks change according to the skill level. A theme is chosen for the show, for example circus history. It's a useful way of learning history at the same time. A director plans the performance, chooses the theme and the music, and discusses it with the teachers. There is an open stage twice a year. It is organized together with the annual meeting with the parents. Everyone gets a chance to perform on the open stage at least once a year. The pupils prepare the performances by themselves.

Sorin Sirkus strives to organize possibilities for performing as much as possible, because circus is not a sport but a performing art. The advanced syllabus pupils have a possibility to go perform on their own. Performances are one way of financing the operation of the circus. When pupils of different ages are included in the show, the audience gets to see how the skills develop.

#### ***The curriculum:***

The education providers have the right to decide how they apply the national core curriculum. Sorin Sirkus offers the advanced syllabus in four years. The system is developed all the time. Four years is turning out to be perhaps a bit too tough for some pupils. It is not required to start from the beginning of the curriculum, if the pupil has trained for example gymnastics before. A special certificate is given for those pupils. In the advanced syllabus all the pupils should have acrobatics and dance. In addition, there are visiting teachers of capoeira, tap dance, contemporary dance etc. Also former pupils, who study abroad, give lessons when they are visiting Tampere. The pupils also write poems and present them, which is one way of teaching other art forms. There are also lessons on improvisation and theatre.

***International circus:***

The pupils get to know a bit of English through visiting teachers and they learn circus terminology in English. Knowing different languages is useful, if the pupil wants to study abroad later on. The advanced syllabus should be multicultural and multiartistic.

***The association:***

Associations must organize bi-annual meetings. The children are the actual members, but they need to be 15 years old to vote. The meetings are a good way to make the parents aware of what is happening, discussing about the budget and so forth.

**Sorin Sirkus Curriculum*****Financing:***

Sorin Sirkus receives financing from the government. If an association wants to receive financial support from the government, it should already have active operation. The condition is, that the association should also survive without the support. Everyone has the opportunity to join Sorin Sirkus; financial matters shouldn't be a hindrance, because there is a special arrangement. Tuitions rise up a bit every year, but circus as a hobby is still cheaper than dance classes for example. No certain number of pupils is needed to get funding from the state. The number of lessons the teachers give is counted. This system makes sure that also the smaller circuses get subsidies.

***Studies:***

The advanced syllabus pupils prepare a final project in their last year of studies. This year in Sorin Sirkus the project was chosen to be a performance. The final project can also be a port folio. The final project also includes writing tasks: drawing a picture, coming up with a name for the act etc. Also the length of the act, the music and so forth are tested throughout the making of the performance. The pupils assess their work on the basis of their own goals. Finnish pupils are used to self-assessment, because it is used a lot in normal schools as well.

***Motivation and writing tasks:***

Pupils need motivation to do the necessary writing. Usually boys object to this kind of work, but making a port-folio encourages them. Unfortunately there isn't always a lot of time to properly make the port-folio. Some pupils are very creative with it. There are also circus history lessons once a year, or along with a project. The way the teaching is implemented is important, because it doesn't have to be boring. The port-folio can be useful after the circus school in applying for vocational studies, but it also makes a nice memory. In Sorin Sirkus, the very first group of nine pupils have done the final project now.

***Problems:***

More boys are needed in circus training, which is a common problem. Boys tend to need the approval of others. Ice hockey and other sports take boys away from artistic hobbies such as circus. In addition, an immigrant background can also have influence, for example certain ethnic groups tend to put pressure on the need to be masculine in the eyes of others. In Sorin Sirkus everyone should participate in all the disciplines, which perhaps makes it unsuitable for some children. Boys tend to be interested in certain areas, for example juggling.

**Advanced syllabus:**

When the pupil enters the advanced syllabus, circus should become a priority hobby. Everyone who wants to join, can. The parents need to be involved in the decision, because the training takes time and can pose practical problems. Children's opinions about commitment may change. It depends on the pupil, if he/she is ready to enter the advanced syllabus at the age of nine, when it is possible to start. Very few pupils are mature enough to start at that age, usually they start around the age of twelve.

**Assessment:**

The pupils and their parents fill out a questionnaire every year to assess the operation of the circus. The information is very useful in developing Sorin Sirkus.

**General thoughts:**

On occasion workshops are arranged for children who don't want to join the teaching of the curriculum. It would be nice to offer more free training, because the system is quite demanding. Sorin Sirkus is also interested in the social side of circus, but there is a lack of teachers to do that. In addition, the performing group needs a detailed study plan, but it requires a lot of work.

**Questions:**

- Exchange of trainers and skills
- How children with special needs could participate in normal groups?
- Special needs (what is a special need?)
- How to make circus school/curriculum, circus as an art form?
- How to find a balance between technique and creativity?
- How to make performances?

**Special needs: what should the teacher know beforehand?**

There is boundary to what the teacher should be informed about and what not. A behavioral problem differs from a disease. Children's behaviour can be quite different in different situations, in school, in training, at home. The teacher's attitude may change if they are told beforehand about a problem. Nevertheless, the parents shouldn't hide things, because the teachers can figure it out if the child somehow is different from others.

**Special needs group:**

- Mixing special needs children with "normal" children
  - depends on the group how it will work
  - it's great when it works, and sad when not
- Smaller groups work better
- Good to know about the problems, also sometimes it's useful that the rest of the group can hear about the problem
- All the children are individuals, and have special needs
  - a disability, illness, social background and problems
- New and different ways of teaching circus
- The ones with special needs should have their own assistants with them, circus teachers are not equipped to handle disabled children for example

- A safe and friendly environment
- Making a performance is important:
  - you get to be the “star”
  - experiences from the lighting, music, costumes...
  - important also for the audience to see what can be done
- Changes of facilities, teacher etc. can cause problems

### ***How to make a circus school and a curriculum?***

In Finland the easiest way is to form a (non-profit) association, which can apply for funds. The association doesn't do business, only the employees make money out of it. The board of the association works voluntarily. The money from a performance goes to the association, and it is used to buy props etc. The money can also be saved for the next year, but there has to be a plan. The system differs from country to country. In Finland many dance schools are private.

### ***Making a curriculum:***

What kind of a curriculum? Start by counting what you already have, the number of lessons in a year. After that, you can decide what is important, and which disciplines should be accentuated. The curriculum is a vision of what you want to achieve in the next five years for example. First come up with the main things you want to include in the curriculum, the titles. Then think of what the titles contain. Think of what you want to teach? Techniques, performing, improvisation, for instance. What is the philosophy of the circus school? What you want and what you can teach. All the pieces of the puzzle have to be put to place. What has been done previously, what should be done next? Practical things to write down. What should be kept from the old system and what should be changed? How easy is it to change the curriculum? It should be flexible, for example visiting teachers can bring changes, afterwards it can be reviewed what has been done. The curriculum is more of a guideline, not a law.

### ***Thoughts on music and circus:***

Dance lessons, expression, music in the background during lessons and in performances. Music can give ideas and inspiration for performances. Improvisation with music. The group can give ideas for the shows. Body drumming etc. Problems: difficulties in finding new music. Pupils playing instruments (no resources, there is not enough time?). In the performance music plays a very important role, it creates the atmosphere and the emotion. All the pieces of the performance are important, the timing, the rhythm, the totality of the routine. Problems with non-professional bands, level necessarily not so good. It would be ideal to work with a composer, but it's expensive. The necessity of music should be acknowledged officially also, to get the resources for it.

### ***Ideas in progress:***

A database for circus schools. Circuses tell the others what they need, what they can offer etc.

### ***How to make a show?***

- Choosing a theme, finding the music, arranging financing and advertising.

### ***Salaries of teachers in Finland:***

- In Lappeenranta about €2000 / a month (40 hours of work in a week), in Tampere region €1500 / a month for 20 lessons + 10 hours of work / a week, in southern Finland varies between €1700-1800. With hourly paid teachers it varies between €14-22 / a lesson, minus taxes.

## **Education Group** (Sunday October 21st)

### **Overview of the work done**

- Presentation of circuses
- Sorin Sirkus curriculum
- Dividing up into three groups:
  1. How to make a curriculum?
  2. How to integrate special needs children into “normal group” and sharing experiences
  3. A database for teachers / circuses

### **How to combine everything:**

- Practical matters:
  - Costume making, lighting, make-up..?
- Cooperation with other institutions, former pupils who have professional education in different fields, using the students of institutions from your own hometown (lighting, costumes, make-up etc.). The students get experience and everyone benefits. Internships. Problems: has to notified beforehand (varies depending on the country). Long-term projects. Gives new ideas. Networking important.
- Trainers need more training also
- Sorin Sirkus arranges workshops for each other, two hours of training together, hula hoops etc. Physical therapist telling about muscle maintenance, Method Putkisto (pilates)
- Observing the operation of other circuses for a weekend perhaps
- Videos of circuses (with the presentations), using the internet in learning situations
- Open spaces where things happen, using internet, people meeting and joining, cooperating, design of building, curriculum, sharing ideas, a warm and safe place to meet others
- It's easy to go and visit others, biggest problem is time, not money
- Small circuses should also visit each other, share problems and solutions, there is no need to be alone, others have the same problems also, it's not healthy to keep everything inside there should be someone to talk to