

## RAPPORT project

### **ACTA (Bristol), PI(È)CE/ Tantarantana (Barcelona), Historieberattarna (Sweden), Teatr Grodzki (Poland)**

RAPPORT is a 31 month cooperation project aimed at promoting integration between refugees and host communities, using and developing collaborative community arts practice between four European partners: **ACTA (Bristol), PI(È)CE/ Tantarantana (Barcelona), Historieberattarna (Sweden), Teatr Grodzki (Poland)**. The project has been developed from the learning from two previous projects funded through the Refugee Integration call (EACEA 2016): REACT (Refugee integration And Engagement through Community Theatre) and Storytelling without Borders.

RAPPORT has been developed by the instigating organisations from these projects, acta and Historieberattarna, and uses their accumulated learning and experience to create a new project to further the improvement of integration between refugees, migrants and host communities.

RAPPORT is focused on artistic and social integration between individuals from host and refugee communities from the very beginning, and throughout the project, in order to: create stronger networks, raise the profile of integrated refugee/host artistic cooperation through larger, more visible collaborative projects, share and develop practice, diversify the workforce, and create a sustainable, practical legacy to assist the continuation and development of integration through the arts.

RAPPORT aims to find ways across the borders, creating intercultural spaces and platforms, and using innovative collaborations, to make artistic connections between different sections of the community in each country, to discover and celebrate the common humanity that all share.

#### RAPPORT essential elements:

- Refugees involved throughout, artists and participants – including planning stages
- Range of art forms and artistic practices involved
- Working with marginalised communities to develop and diversify audiences
- Integrated refugee/host community arts projects from beginning
- Refugees in training as artist/facilitators
- Extended artistic mobilities for partner staff to share/learn creative practice and develop collaboration
- Small local projects for training and engagement
- BABEL - Larger collaborative project to raise profile – with live and digital content (year two) – performed with variations in each partner country
- Publication and documentary film of project
- National seminars in each country to disseminate learning
- Use of digital art and social media to reach large audiences across Europe

## **2. Concept**

RAPPORT is aimed at involving marginalised people in each country, and especially at engaging refugees and migrants in a series of arts-based social interaction with host community members in their local neighbourhoods, with the aim of promoting and improving integration. The issues for refugees are the same in each country - poverty, lack of employment, discrimination, prejudice - exacerbated by a growing anti-immigration/refugee sentiment across Europe. The countries represented in RAPPORT demonstrate a range of national attitudes and policies towards issues of migration and the recent increase in people seeking asylum in Europe.

RAPPORT will create an intercultural space, a platform where no-one is host, no-one is guest, but all are equal in shared aims of learning about each other, telling and sharing stories, making friends and connections, planning and realising excellent art-works, celebrating common humanity.

The two previous projects - REACT and 'Storytelling without Borders' - demonstrated how European companies working with refugees can connect, share their learning, and improve their practice. However, these projects also highlighted the challenges for refugee participants and artists in moving between countries with national borders, creating practical difficulties for staff and participants to meet in person to share work and experiences.

Learning from these experiences, RAPPORT aims to move to the next level of cooperation, to explore how companies can collaborate artistically around refugee integration, to make excellence in art, and to draw public attention to the issues of the movement of peoples – the context of migration - to make the most of refugee talent, and to provide a place for integrated creativity which effectively uses influences from different cultures.

RAPPORT will explore the use of digital technology, sharing training and artistic cooperation to forge collaborative performances that cross borders; artistic creations that challenge and subvert the restrictions of increasingly hard attitudes across Europe, and aims to inform and change national attitudes to the movement of peoples; recognising that Europe is a place of movement, that over the centuries, borders have changed, and the whole region has been enriched by a steady influx of people migrating from other areas.

## **3. The RAPPORT Partnership**

The RAPPORT partnership consists of four organisations which are passionate about the work they do, and excited about the prospect of working together. They have much in common; a dedication to using arts to improve society; expertise in art-form; an enthusiasm for partnership. They represent different countries, with different attitudes to refugees and refugee integration, but they share common aims, and believe that together they can make an improvement to refugee integration.

As coordinating partner, acta has sought the involvement of the other partners which share key characteristics which are necessary to successful engagement of refugees, migrants and host communities in creative, co-owned artistic projects. All of the partners:

- have experience with, and enthusiasm for, participatory/community art with marginalised communities
- are innovative and successful in their artistic practice and methodologies

- have an understanding of the key issues of ownership and integration
- are open to collaborative methodologies

Partners in Sweden, Spain and UK, already:

- use participatory arts practice specifically to integrate refugees and host communities
- have experience of involving refugees in the creation of new work
- offer training/employment to refugee artists

In addition, Historieberattarna and acta have both been involved with Creative Europe Refugee Integration projects, while Tantarantana have been developing innovative work with young refugees and older people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Barcelona for eight years, using theatre, dance and music.

The fourth partner, Teatr Grodzki, although not currently engaging with refugees, works exclusively with marginalised people, and has been engaged in the project for their artistic expertise in puppetry and physical theatre and to lead on publication and dissemination, in which area they have great experience. They work exclusively with people living on the edge of society, including disabled people, the deaf community, and have a particular interest in addressing the issue of migration and refugee status in Poland for Ukrainian migrants, seeking to engage and integrate this part of the Polish community.

### **3.1 Background to partners' practice**

#### **1 acta**

founded in 1985, acta has worked exclusively with marginalised people, using theatre and related arts as a means of making transformative changes to individuals, and the communities in which they live. The company targets its work at the most marginalised sections of the community, including socially isolated older people, vulnerable young people, people living in poverty, and refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

acta's practice is focused on working with people new to theatre, using games, improvisation, role-play and story-telling as a means of creating new plays, based on their life-experience and imaginations, with the aim of developing personal skills, improving well-being, and improving access to, and diversity within, the arts.

The company was commissioned by Arts Council England and the Government Department of Communities and Local Government to create and deliver 'Arts and Communities', a highly successful two year programme which used participation in the arts as a means of improving integration between people from different cultures and faiths. acta also works at a national and international level, delivering a quarterly seminar programme examining community theatre practice with national and international speakers, organising and hosting festivals of community theatre, including COAST (EU Culture 2012); Theatre from the Heart (2016); REACT (Refugee integration Fund 2018).

acta's innovative methodology, is studied at university level in UK, and contributes to books and studies of community theatre and participatory practice. The company is particularly committed to developing artistic practice and European/international collaborations; through publications COAST (2012), MedArt (Erasmus + 2017), REACT Guide (2018) .

acta works increasingly at international level, and is a sought-after partner in EU projects, with partners in twelve EU countries, and in USA and South Korea. acta has been involved in six EACEA-funded projects, three of them as Coordinator; the most recent of these, REACT (Refugee integration and Engagement through Community Theatre), culminated in a highly regarded festival of Refugee Theatre in March 2018, with the documentary film now being shown across the world. acta is a frequent contributor to the tri-ennial International Community Arts Festival held in Rotterdam, and have delivered training and teaching at several European and International events.

acta is particularly experienced at instigating and delivering successful partnership projects, with experienced leadership and project management skills, including financial and project delivery to schedule. acta has an experienced Senior Management Team who will deliver overall project management, coordinating artistic development. The company's methodology is based around facilitation and co-creation, and AD will use these skills to ensure that all partners are fully involved in the artistic process of developing the final collaborative piece, and also to manage and chair the ongoing discussions around refugee integration which will be at the core of the project.

## **2 Historieberattarna:**

*'By telling and listening to each other, we meet, it is an important part of a democracy. The storytellers work because more people are given the opportunity to tell and hear their voices based on their own terms. ' - Anusha Caroline Andersson, Operations Manager*

Historieberattarna (The Storytellers) were founded in 2015 by the chief executive Anusha Caroline Andersson, who has over ten years' experience of working pedagogically with narrative and working in cultural projects aimed at enhancing children and young people's understanding of different cultural expressions as well as providing more opportunities for more to be part of the cultural sector. Anusha was educated at the Bishop Arnö-Författarskolan, Stockholm University and Royal Institute of Art. Today, 18 cultural workers are attached to the company; an ideal association that works for everyone's equal value and human rights, for democracy, solidarity and freedom of expression. Established cultural and artistic practitioners organize workshops and various cultural events. The work of Historieberattarna has resulted in exhibitions, an art book, a creative cookbook, a large number of animations and short films. The storytellers have collaborated with, among other things; Companion Youth, Save the Children, RFSU Stockholm, Lava Culture House, Drama for Youth and Refugees Welcome. Historieberattarna were instigators and founders of EU project "Storytelling without Borders" since 2016.

'Storytelling without Borders' was a creative and intersectoral partnership between six creative arts and humanitarian organizations in Sweden, Greece and Denmark. The project worked with young refugee children and young people, and encouraged them to express themselves and tell their stories, using filmmaking with the help of animation to enable them to communicate despite language barriers. Workshops were delivered in refugee camps, community centres, schools. There were six partners, including film-makers, and humanitarian organisations

HB will bring to RAPPORT their experience of working with refugees, their links to other agencies, and particularly, their expertise in digital arts, animation and film-making, which will be an essential part of developing and linking the artistic collaborations throughout the project. HB plan to strengthen and facilitate participation and increase the inclusion as well as the integration for newcomers through this project. HB will work on a long term for 2 years creative workshops with the participants that will be given the opportunity to develop their creative interest, also will creating participatory workshops for larger groups. Through these workshops together with outreach work, HB will form a group of 30 with the extra interest in culture to participate in more focused work. This group will make individual films, and also create short films together. For example: If one participant works with poetry that text could booth lead to a exhibithion, a reading but could also be narration in a film.

HB will lead to the creation of films, animations, but also exhibitions, theater, a poetry book and an artbook created by the participants. All work will be made in co-creation with the participants. Associated partners throughout the project include preparatory culture schools and universities, engaging students and teacher; and with cultural institutions, culture workers and companies. The aim will be to increase the participants' understanding of opportunities for education and work but also strengthens the individual in his own interests. The project is based on an individual perspective, in which the newcomer's individual interests influences what activities they are taking on. The project increases possibilities for newcomers to integrate with society as well as giving them the opportunity to convey how their needs can be met.

The involvement of Historieberattarna in the project is central to the project's communication and dissemination strategies, which will use social media to raise awareness of the project and issues addressed though posting of animations and films created by HB through their integrated workshops.

### **3 Tantarantana; (TTT)**

Since its creation in 1992, the Tantarantana Theatre, a private Theatre with private management, has achieved its consolidation as a space for the creation of performing arts and achieved the recognition of the public, the creators and the public administrations sector. Since 2017 it became a public Theatre with private management and being part of the Creation Factories of the Barcelona City Council. At the moment, it is a space that receives from the public aids of the city council itself, of the government of the Generalitat of Catalonia and of the Ministry of Culture of the Spanish state. Since its inception, it has been a member of the Alternative Theatres Network of Spain, which groups 43 Theatres in 14 communities.

During 2016-2017 TTT co-produced 13 shows, programmed 112 companies (Theatre, dance, puppets, music, clown, etc.); with 52,000 spectators. The presentation of more than 50 new authors. Over 800 creators have gone through our Theatre (actors, dancers, puppeteers, playwrights, etc.). Finally, we have realized 15 creative workshops in which more than 200 people of different ages have participated.

For RAPPORT, Tantarantana will develop their project - PI (È) CE – an intergenerational stage creation in Barcelona, which began in 2011, promoted and produced by the Tantarantana Theatre, under the direction of the choreographer Constanza Brncic and the playwright Albert Tola. There have been eight projects to date, with great social impact and artistic success.

For ten months, annually from October to July, TTT work with different groups of people, in two neighbourhoods of the city, the Raval and the Poble Sec, with high rates of immigrants and refugees. Raval and Poble Sec are also neighbourhoods with very low rents and with great concentration of associations and public institutions with attention to these people and an artistic hot spot of the city.

This integrated group of about 30 people are all involved in working together to co-create the work and includes 3 profiles of people:

- A group of about 13/15 young immigrant students who have just arrived in the country and whom the two high school we work with, host in special reception class-rooms so that they can adapt to the educational activities and immerse themselves in the learning of Catalan and Spanish, languages they don't speak. They are usually young people between 13 and 17 years old from India, Pakistan, China, Morocco, Nepal, Bangladesh and the Philippines in its great majority.
- A group of about 6/8 adult refugees for different reasons (political, sexual, economic, etc) from the countries mentioned in the previous group. These adults are under the tutelage of different associations with which Tantarantana works in a coordinated manner.
- A group of about 6/8 Spanish elderly people residing in two neighborhoods in public sheltered housing. The majority are people between 70 and 85 years old who arrived in Catalonia in their youth, emigrating from other areas of Spain, that is, they have also lived being immigrants within their own country.

The result of this way of working is a strong artistic and social experience that encourages reflection on learning processes and the function of creativity, providing a space to explore the social, political and economic contexts of the people involved. With words, movement and sound, with people of all ages and different social contexts, different countries and languages, come together to create a work of art that offers a new image of their city: a new landscape, our landscape in which each participant using their language, their culture, their history, can live a process of personal growth shared with others. This process helps him to understand the new social and political reality in which he has to learn to create new resources for personal, educational and work growth.

In the last seven years, the project has grown in participation, social impact, artistic quality and institutional participation. We have worked with the support of IMEB (Institute of Education of Barcelona) and Foment of Ciutat Vella. We have incorporated new partners: the Habitació 1418 project at the Contemporary Culture Center of Barcelona (CCCB) -Museum of Modern Art of Barcelona (MACBA), the Clavé XXI project at the Palau de la Música Catalana, the Arrels Foundation, the TotRaval Association and Faculty of Education of the UAB (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona).

#### 4 Teatr Grodzki

For Grodzki Theatre this project is complementary to the arts-based actions implemented in the past. First of all, it gives the association an opportunity to work with a new target group. Even though the company's focus has been always on integration issues and on supporting disadvantaged groups, TG has currently little experience of working with migrants and ethnic minorities. The company has long-standing experience in developing theatrical projects and creating community theatre shows, and some experience of working on collaborative pieces eg two youth exchanges in Greece in 2005 and 2006,, with Expedition Metropolis (Berlin) as part of the COAST project (EU Culture fund 2011-13). TG is a highly experienced company in terms of European cooperation, especially in the field of puppetry and physical theatre projects with integrated group involving disabled and deaf communities. The company is excited to use these skills and training expertise in the development of their artistic collaboration experience, within the RAPPORT project.

Teatr Grodzki brings a wealth of experience, skills and artistic practice to the project, particularly in the area of puppetry and physical theatre, and in publishing and dissemination. Their involvement in RAPPORT is also a positive move to broaden the debate about refugees in Europe, by involving a company working in a country which has effectively closed its borders to refugees from Middle East, but which has its own UNHCR-identified, issues with the integration of Ukranian newcomers, with some contention over their status as migrants or refugees fleeing conflict.

TG's involvement will give a different perspective to RAPPORT, enabling the project to question assumptions and broaden the discussion about what makes people leave their homes for asylum in another country; what makes a refugee, who do we class as a refugee, and to put the current debate in a wider global, and historical, context.