



Shaping stories / Construire des histoires

Project for a regional ASSITEJ TYA laboratory

Yaounde, Cameroon, Novembre 2016

Cape Town, RSA, May 2017

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In the frame of its mission of promoting contemporary playwriting for young audiences, Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ organizes, with ASSITEJ International, an international training laboratory, designed for French-speaking playwrights, and for other professionals vested in performances for young audiences in Africa. This laboratory is part of ASSITEJ's Regional workshops program, and will be carried out in two times : a session at the Festival Africain du Théâtre pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse (FATEJ), in Yaounde (Cameroon), from 11 to 18 Nov., 2016, and another in the frame of the festival « The cradle of creativity », 19th Congress of ASSITEJ , in Cape Town, from 20 to 27 May, 2017. Followings are considered in Africa and Europe.

The aims of this laboratory are to promote Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA), as an open and specific space for creation, to propose steps to the artists to commit into it, to accompany the raising of a regional network of professionals who acknowledge themselves as TYA artists, and wish to act as well for children as for adolescents, in the frame of ASSITEJ International.

This project is undertaken by François Fogel, as project coordinator, and Gustave Akakpo, as pedagogical coordinator, for Scènes d'enfance – ASSITEJ France, and by Vigdis Jacobsdottir (Iceland), and Stephan Fisher-Fels (Germany), for the Project working group of ASSITEJ International's Executive committee.

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" Why not to organize playwriting workshops or training sessions for performers, using contemporary plays for young audiences? It would require to have a "suitcase" of play circulated, as it exists, furthermore, in each of these countries of Western Africa?"

G. Akakpo, France, Togo, playwright

"We need to learn new techniques, of a reflexion about playwriting for puppetry, and that a new generation of artists could be recognized, beyond established representatives »

Jude Zounmenou, puppet artist, General delegate of fesitval TENI-TEDJI, Benin

1 - A shared acknowledgement

The preparation of ASSITEJ's congress in Cape Town

The congress of ASSITEJ (Association Internationale du Théâtre pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse) is held every three years, and its next edition will take place in Africa, for the first time since the creation of the organization (from 20 to 27 May, 2017, in Cape Town, South Africa).

Its general theme, « The cradle of creativity » refers to the encounter between youth and arts, and to the African roots of humanity. It will gather several hundreds of professionals of performing arts and youth, from all around the world, since ASSITEJ has, to this day, 79 National centers and 5 transverse professional networks (Early childhood, Inclusivity, Research, Professional development, Playwriting), representing more than 100 countries.

It will propose an international artistic program, an ensemble of symposiums and professional meetings, and a training session for 25 young international artists (Next generation program).

Through the answers to the calls launched out for the festival's artistic programming and contributions to the diverse encounters, ASSITEJ noticed the weak representation of Western Africa in the candidacies. This acknowledgement cross-checks the information collected by the Executive committee of ASSITEJ, through the National centers of the continent:

- Theatre for young audiences is sparsely present, on the general level, and its networks lowly structured;
- Only a few National centers are active, representative and stable;
- Apart from Cameroon, which National center's President served at ASSITEJ International's Executive committee till 2014, the most active countries are likely in the sphere of influence of South Africa (Zimbabwe, Zambia, Angola), and / or are English speaking (Nigeria, Kenya) ;
- In Mali, in Democratic Republic of Congo, in Guinea, in Benin, in Togo, in Rwanda and in Senegal, ASSITEJ national centers are present, but have great troubles to carry on a steady functioning. Yet, some TYA artists are active, and initiatives exist (Festivals, international cooperation)
- Burkina Faso is a special case, with a new National center, and an active TYA scene, with many invested actors : artists, festival, companies.

A survey with French-speaking professionals

From September 2015 to February 2016, Scènes d'enfance – ASSITEJ France initiated a series of meetings with TYA professionals working in Western Africa: Artists, managers of venues and of cultural cooperation programs (15 interviews, see attached « Elements for a workshop in Western Africa »)

After a reminding of the specific importance of the Congress in Cape Town, and a general presentation of the Regional workshops of ASSITEJ, everyone has been asked to define the situation of Western

African TYA, regarding his / her experience, and to express what priorities should be assigned to such a project.

To repeat the words from Gustave Akakpo, associated artist at the TARMAC (International theatre for francophonie, Paris), TYA is at an “*embryonic*” stage, in most of the countries of the region. All the persons met underline the lack of a specific recognition of the child as a spectator, and the confinement of the artists who choose to work for TYA.

If artistic exchanges seem to be facilitated in the Western countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Ivory Coast), by free circulation agreements, they keep to be complicated, diplomatically as well as economically, between countries of the Central region (Cameroon, DRC, Congo Kinshasa). Thus the request for sharing information and techniques is important, whatever the discipline or the line of business of our interlocutors. « *In my opinion, the priorities are dramaturgy, including for dance, and play : How to make the particularities of this specific audiences understood ?* », asks Seydou Boro, head of « La termitière », Choreographic development center in Ouagadougou. « *How to address children, depending on their age?*», resumes, in similar terms, Bilia Bah, director of Company la Muse, in Conakry, and organizer of the playwriting biennial « The universe of words ».

Many, furthermore, stress the difficulty to do, for children, theater out of pedagogy, which is, often, the only form of theatre supported by NGOs. « *The misunderstanding must be dispelled* », says Emilie Lansman, publisher, and a member of the International of French-speaking Theatre (CITF), « *and quality must be distinguished, by differencing discourse, distraction, and artistic creation. In a production for children, what is a builder ?* »

2 - Playwriting as a vector

Introduction to the laboratory

The goal of the laboratory is to accompany a group of young French – speaking African professionals, recognizing themselves in TYA, and willing to develop a network, sharing good practices and experiences within ASSITEJ. This group may, in the future, expand through the National centers of ASSITEJ in Africa, the Write Local, Play Global network (the playwrights network of ASSITEJ), and new sessions, organized within French festivals, or at the TARMAC, the International French Speaking venue in Paris.

The laboratory is dedicated to playwriting, in a broad definition : what are the specificities in building a play addressed to children ? What are the needs of this audience ? Can we do culture for this audience ? Why quality matters ?

A first session, in prefiguration, will be held within the Festival d'Art et de Théâtre pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse (FATEJ), in November 2016. Organized by Théâtre Chocolat, the FATEJ is one of the oldest TYA festival in Africa. In the perspective of the congress in Cape Town, it will host a meeting of the EC of ASSITEJ International. The Swedish ASSITEJ will give, on its part, training sessions on play, administration, and scene management. This session will be open to the professionals attending to FATEJ, which gathers many French - speaking TYA professionals.

A second session will be held within the festival « The cradle of creativity », in Cape Town. It will, then, be included in the program of the congress of ASSITEJ, which offers, in addition to an international artistic program, a very wide range of professional meetings, workshops and seminars, organized either by the festival, or by ASSITEJ and its five thematic networks (WLPG, playwriting ; IIAN, inclusivity ; ITYARN, research ; Small Size, early childhood ; Next Generation, professional development).

French vs International

None of the interviewed African artists and managers cared to express the need to recognize himself or herself in a French speaking TYA identity. It seems far less relevant than, for instance, developing recognition for TYA as a specific field.

But the need of developing playwriting abilities in the region, in French, then, has been significantly acknowledged. Compared to the early definitions of the workshop, when puppetry was included in the topics, it narrows the possibilities to have more than one working languages.

The proposal of a close work of the future Western African network with WLPG could handle the necessary internationalization of the project, especially if plans are made in the next years to develop translation programs.

Participants

The project addresses a group of 15 to 20 French-speaking professionals from Africa, and Indian Ocean (Reunion Island, Madagascar, Maurice Island), identified for their interest for TYA, without condition of specialization.

Yaounde's session participants will be recruited among professionals attending to the festival.

Cape Town's session candidates will be recruited through a call out by ASSITEJ's playwriting network, Write Local, Play Global, and by direct contact. Some of them have participated in [1 day, 1 play](#), the playwriting game organized yearly, at the occasion of the World Day of Theater for young audiences, on 20th of March.

The contents

Yaounde's session

For 15 participants, having communicated elements of their works. All the program will be designed and carried on collectively by Pascale Grillandini, Karin Serres, and Gustave Akakpo.

Round table (90')

Meeting with the participants. "What do you do?", "How do you work?". Everyone has a personal practice

Dramaturgy workshop, speaker : Pascale Grillandini (3h) :

Requires active involvement of the trainees

Draw on 3 plays :

- L'ogrelet (Suzanne Lebeau)
- A la renverse (Karin Serres)
- A bout de sueur (Hakim Bah)

This corpus addresses all the stages of childhood to adolescence

1. Introduction to Postures association (see bellow)
2. Panorama of contemporary playwritings for young audiences : context / development of the status of childhood, introduction to several contemporary playwrights.
3. How to talk about a play? How to render its identity and its dramaturgy? How, from which elements, to gain an opinion? Proposal of diverse grids of analysis.
4. Could conclude by the selection of a play by the group.

Writing workshop, speaker : Karin Serres (3h) :

1. Begins by warming exercises : "Switching out one's reason, switching on one's

intuition"

2. Writing with the 5 senses. The playful, concrete aspect is put forth
3. Writing of personal short texts
4. Must draw on the multidisciplinary of the participants to explore diverse aspects of their scenic potential

Joint workshop (3h) :

Feedback from the laboratory productions, recorded readings
Introduction to the Suitcase

Debriefing (90') :

Working on consistency : Cape Town, French Festivals, TARMAC, Univers des mots Festival (Conakry)... Which network to build for which perspectives?

3 - Around the workshops

A Suitcase of plays

In collaboration with the publishing house Lansman Editions (Belgium) (other partnerships under confirmation), the participants will be proposed to work on a "suitcase" of selected contemporary plays they can take away when returning home. Diverse methods will be presented, for using the suitcase with groups of scholars and students. In the future, this could likely match with the request from French schools and cultural institutions abroad, for programs using the language as a cultural vector.

Training in rights management (in project for Cape Town)

Recognition of authors rights contributes to the professionalization of the industry, and fulfils a general request in the region. Scènes d'enfance – ASSITEJ France would like, in the future, to propose a training in principles of the copyrights, in association with SACD.

4 - Suitable followings

The structuration of TYA in the region

ASSITEJ International wishes to contribute to the development of international relations in TYA in Western Africa. In that, the project of laboratory is a step, which, beyond the proposed technical expertise, aims to encourage the raise of a community and networks of artists, institutions, and cultural leaders. Their participation to the congress of Cape Town, in May 2017, is a major challenge, as is the development of National centers including new executives.

Write Local, Play Global, the international network of TYA playwrights

Among the specialized networks of ASSITEJ, WLPG is aimed to writing and translation. Gathering professionals of five continents, it is managed by an editorial board of 10 persons, including a French author (Karin Serres). It proposes to the participants of the laboratory a possibility to access a global network. (WLPG website : <http://writelocalplayglobal.org>)

The circulation in French - speaking space

Scènes d'enfance – ASSITEJ France strongly wishes to contribute to the sustainability of this program by inviting African artist to participate to the main French TYA festivals in 2017 and 2018. Possibilities to set up delegations are explored with Petits et Grands (April 2017) and Théâtre à tout âge (Dec. 2017).

The TARMAC (International venue for francophonía, Paris), on his part, proposed to host a group of participants for further works, and to contribute to potential publications.

5 - The speakers

Gustave Akakpo

Playwright, graphic designer, storyteller, and actor. Cultural mobilizer.

Gustave Akakpo was born in 1974 in Amého (Togo).

He took part in several residencies and writing workshops in Togo, in France, Belgium, Syria...

As a cultural leader, he chairs the association "Escale des écritures", created as a result of writing camps organized in Togo by the "Ecritures vagabondes"(Wandering writings) association. He also coordinates the peer of TARMAC.

Gustave Akakpo has received numerous awards, including the 1999 junior prize "Togolese Feathers" in the Fraternity Theatre Festival, organized in Lome, Togo, the SACD Prize for French Drama for his play "La mère trop tôt" (A mother too early" in 2004), the 6th playwriting prize of Guérande in 2006 for his play "A Petites pierres", the Witches prize for his novel for preteen "Little wonderful world" and the prize of Primeur festival for his play "Habbat Alep" (Habbat Aleppo).

His texts were played in Togo, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, France, Belgium or Italy.

Most of his plays are available from the publisher Emile Lansman.

Pascale Grillandini

Directrice artistique de l'association Postures (association agréée Éducation nationale et Jeunesse-éducation populaire), dont la mission est de sensibiliser les enfants et les adolescents aux écritures contemporaines, à travers l'organisation de comités de lecture. Postures organise des prix littéraires attribués par des écoliers, parmi lesquels "Inédits d'Afrique et d'outremer", prix lycéen de littérature francophone, attribué en 2015 à Hakim Bah (Guinée Conakry).

Artistic director of the Postures Association (association approved by the Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Youth) whose mission is to sensitize children and adolescents to contemporary writings, through the organization of reading committees. Postures organizes literary prizes awarded by school children, including "Unreleased Africa and overseas", a French literature prize attributed by high school students, awarded in 2015 to Hakim Bah (Guinea Conakry).

Karin Serres

Born in 1967, Karin Serres is author, theater director, set designer and theater translator. Fellow of the Ile de France Region, National Center for Books, Board of Music, Dance, Theatre and Performing arts (Ministry of Culture), Radio prize SACD 2011 she wrote sixty plays, often published, created and translated. She also writes radio plays, novels, albums, songs and operas. She has staged several plays and takes every opportunity to broaden her artistic horizon, crossing her theater with objects, puppets, clowning, entertainment, opera ..., in France as abroad..

Co-founder of CIG COQ GRU (collective writing stirrer) then LABO / O7 (working and reflection network about the contemporary European TYA), member of H/F (French collective for gender parity in performing arts), of Write Local, Global Play, repeatedly jury for the Grand Dramatic Literature Award, she also works with the European Theatre Convention, the Banff playRite Colony, Maison Antoine Vitez, The Summer harvest, the National Library... and various theaters and companies.

6 - Planning

Oct. 2015	Launch of the project by ASSITEJ EC
Oct. 15 - jan 16	Survey on contents and partnerships
Mar - may 16	Definition of the program, research of stakeholders
June - Oct. 16	Preparation of the workshops
Nov. 2016	1st session at FATEJ
Mai. 2017	2 nd session at ASSITEJ Congress / Festival in Cape Town

7 - Budget (Yaoundé)

Expenses

Tickets for speakers	3	800,00 €	2 400,00 €	3 round trips	Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ France
Accommodation for speakers	18	40,00 €	720,00 €	3 X 6 nights	Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ France
Meals for speakers	30	7,00 €	210,00 €	6 x 5 days	Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ France
Fees for speakers	2	750,00 €	1 500,00 €		Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ France
Plays	150	8,00 €	1 200,00 €		Publishers (Valorization)
Premises	5	80,00 €	400,00 €		Fatej / EC (Valorization)
Supplies	1	300,00 €	300,00 €		Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ France
Supplies shipping	1	300,00 €	300,00 €		Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ France
			7 030,00 €		

Recettes

SEAF			5 430,00 €		
Publishers			1 200,00 €		(Valorization)
FATEJ / EC			400,00 €		(Valorization)

			7 030,00 €		
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8 - Considered partnerships

SACD (Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques), Ministry of Foreign Affairs SACD, Francophonie, MAEDI, Commission Internationale du Théâtre Francophone, Instituts français, le TARMAC, Emile Lansman Editeur.

Notes

A - Resource persons

Pays	Nom	Fonction	Projet
Belgique	Emile Lansman	Editeur	Emile Lansman Editions, Commission Internationale du Théâtre Francophone
Benin	Jude ZOUNMENO	Marionnettiste	Festival TENI-TEDJI
Benin	Eliane CHAGAS	Présidente	ASSITEJ Bénin
Burkina Faso	Athanase KABRE	Directeur artistique S.G. ASSITEJ Burkina	Project Filigrane
Burkina Faso	Alain HEMA	Directeur Théâtre-Eclair Compagnie du Fil	Festival La Ruche (March 17)
Burkina Faso, France	Seydou BORO	Chorégraphe Compagnie Seydou BORO	CDC La termitière (Ouagadougou)
Cameroun	Etoundi ZEYANG	Théâtre Chocolat, ASSITEJ Cameroon	FATEJ
Denmark, Burkina Faso	Jacques S. Matthiessen	Passepartout Theatre Production	Ateliers Europe - Afrique Prospero
France	Valérie Baran	Directrice	Le TARMAC
France	Sandrine Grataloup	SACD	
France	Cyrille Planson	C.A Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ France Festival Director	Festival Petits et grands
Guinea Conakry	Bilia BAH	Actor, director Compagnie Muse	"L'univers des mots", biennial of writings
Mali, France	Mehdi Meghari	Choreographer Compagnie Dyptik	Dyptik, co-production France - Mali
Togo, France	Gustave Akakpo	C.A Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ France Artiste associé Le Tarmac	Ateliers d'écriture « Passerelle » (Togo - France)

B - Who is who?

Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ France

Scènes d'enfance - ASSITEJ France is the main association of TYA people in France, and the French centre of ASSITEJ.

ASSITEJ Internationale

Founded in 1965 in Paris, the Association Internationale du Théâtre pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse unites organizations and individuals, worldwide, who make theater for children and youth. The term "Theatre" is used broadly to represent the arts dedicated to young audiences, which include dance, puppetry, visual arts, performance, as well as textual theater.

ASSITEJ members are national centers (79), professional networks (5 : Training, Inclusivity, Early Childhood Research, Playwriting), and individuals.

It is headed by an Executive Committee elected every three years at the Congress.

The regional workshops of ASSITEJ Internationale

The International ASSITEJ (International Association of Theatre for Children and Youth) wants to develop regional training workshops, aimed at professionals of theatre for young .

It is intended to:

- Share knowledge and expertise between different regions of the world
- To allow TYA artists of underdeveloped areas to gain access to professional high-level training and inter-regional networks

The principle of the workshops is to bring together a group of 30 to 50 people in the region, in a space for housing and work, and to offer them training by international professionals of high level.

The infrastructure, the costs to stakeholders are the responsibility of ASSITEJ. Participants transportation costs are dependent on them.

In the definition of each project, attention is particularly focused on relevance, and sustainability.

Two workshops are currently being developed : South America (Uruguay), and Western Africa.

The workshop project in Western Africa is organized by Vigdis Jacobsdottir (Iceland), Stefan Fisher - Fels (Germany) and François Fogel (France), as part of their duties to the Executive Committee of the International ASSITEJ.

C – Elements for a workshop in Western Africa

A preliminary survey – September 2015 – May 2016

Purposes

- To identify needs, resources persons and structures
- To encourage participation of TYA artists and representatives from Western Africa in the 2017 congress, in Cape Town
- To propose facilities in the frame of ASSITEJ's network, and, specifically, to evaluate the workability of a Regional workshop at FATEJ Festival, in Nov. 16.
- To help ASSITEJ centres to exchange and to participate in ASSITEJ Internationale

Methodology

The introduction sheet for regional workshops of ASSITEJ, and the specific issues of ASSITEJ working in the region, as reported in Kristiansand and earlier, highlight some important criteria for this project :

Fitting to the context:

Workshops should be organized in close collaboration with the concerned regions / countries. They must be relevant in their topics, in the proposed methods, valuable for the local artists. They must, notably, take account of the poor recognition of TYA as a specific field in Western Africa.

Looking for lasting effects:

In each workshop, it is important to welcome attendees who would likely transmit their knowledge, and, then, to ensure a certain sustainability. What is left from the workshops should form seeds for the future.

Supporting networks:

In the short term: encourage artists and executives to take part in Cape Town's congress, and to get involved at any level of ASSITEJ's programs. Push any kind of joint initiative or self-recognition as a community of TYA-concerned professionals.

In the long term : reinforce existing National centres, foster involvement from local / international permanent partners.

Accordingly to these points, during this exploratory period, I have been trying to meet as much as possible persons involved in running collaboration programs with and within Western Africa, to collect their priorities, and identify which seem to be sound, and sustainable, projects. Field experience, involvement in networks, new voices, even if not specialized in young audience, have been favoured.

I began every interview by putting forward the importance of participation in the congress, then presenting the general framework of the regional workshops, asking what priorities should be assigned to such a project, then more general questions about the statute of TYA in the country, and the best qualified actors.

Simultaneously, I have presented the project to potential supporters, with encouraging results.

Sandrine Grataloup, Marion Rousseau, Cyrille Planson, and Gustave Akakpo, from the board of ASSITEJ France contributed a lot to this project.

Contents : Puppets and playwriting ?

Puppetry seems to a very popular artistic form in most of the regions I enquired about, a good basis : deepening performing technics, studying new forms, creating a performance (cf Playwriting) are some needs expressed by my interlocutors.

Playwriting seems to be a topic of great interest, with different meanings, depending on who is talking:

- Dramaturgy : how to compose a show for children? How to specifically address this audience? What are the good practices? "In past experiences, notably in the workshops we designed in French West Indies and French Guyana, people needed to know how to begin a story, to sort different elements and spot what is a builder, and what is not" (Emile Lansman)
- Building a corpus, a referential set of texts for the region, in order to create a dynamic among artists and institutions in an outside Africa (see Gustave Akakpo's interview, bellow)
- Professionalization process : it is the point of view of SACD, which would likely support, for instance, information about copyright included into the training, and is able to offer further

support through diverse grants and programs.

Ressource persons

Contact?	Country	Name	Function	Project	Notes
Met	Benin	Jude ZOUNMENO	Marionnettiste	Festival TENI-TEDJI	
Phone	Benin	Eliane CHAGAS	Président ASSITEJ Bénin		
Written	Burkina Faso	Alain HEMA	Director Théâtre-Eclair Compagnie du Fil	Project Filigrane	Answer pending
Met	Burkina Faso	Athanase KABRE	Artistic director of the Compagnie du Fil, and General Secretary of ASSITEJ Burkina Faso Burkina		Registrating ASSITEJ BF
Met	Burkina Faso, France	Seydou BORO	Dancer, director, teacher	Compagnie Seydou BORO CDC La termitière (Ouagadougou)	
Met	Cameroun	Etoundi ZEYANG	Théâtre Chocolat, ASSITEJ Cameroon	FATEJ	
Met, mail	Denmark	Jacques S. Matthiessen	ASSITEJ Denmark Passepartout Theatre Production (PTP)	Prospero Workshop Co productions with Burk. / Malian companies	
Met	Guinea Conakry	Bilia BAH	Actor, director Compagnie Muse	"L'univers des mots" (The universe of words)	
Met	Mali, France	Mehdi Meghari	Dance company Compagnie Dyptik	Dyptik production in cooperation	

Met	Togo, France	Gustave Akakpo	Playwright Board ASSITEJ France, Associate artist Le Tarmac	Playwriting workshops « Passerelle » program (Togo - France)	
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Potential support

Contact?	Country	Name	Function	Project	Notes
Met	Belgium	Emile Lansman	Publisher Board Commission Internationale du Théâtre Francophone	Commission Internationale du Théâtre Francophone	Could support fares
Met	France	Ina Pouant	Department of creation	Ministry of Foreign affairs	Relaying our initiatives to Instituts Français in Africa. Proposes a diplomatic notice.
Written	Benin Togo Cameroon Burkina		French Cultural attachés		Togo : could support fares > Cape town 2017 Burkina : Invested in TYA, nothing precisely offered but we stay in contact
Pending	France	Annick Girardin	State Sec. For Francophonia		(Has been dismissed. No further contacts with the administration)
Met	France	Valérie Baran	Director	Le Tarmac, French international theater for Francophonia	Wants to be involved in playwriting projects. Media relay and welcoming place for African pros in Paris

Summaries

Benin

Jude Zounmenou

(Jude is a puppeteer, committed in promoting Beninese artists through association Thakamou, and General delegate of Festival TENI-TEDJI, with international experience)

Jude pointed out, as priorities :

- Training, access to different techniques in puppet;
- Playwriting for puppets
- Giving access to a new generation of artist, beyond established representatives

Eliane Chagas

Priorities:

- Developing TYA in Benin. Promoting acknowledgement of TYA
- Training puppeters
- Training trainers
- Playwriting is good, but secondary

Burkina Faso, France

Seydou BORO

Seydou BORO is a choreographer, founder of the Center for Choreographic Development "La termitière" in Ouagadougou, with Salia SANOU, and author of the performance "Why the hyena...", selected for Edge.

Observations:

Development of a specific TYA sector is a priority. He shares the observation that many artists are isolated, says the discipline needs recognition, and gives a major importance to training issues.

His priorities for a workshop :

- Playwriting (including choreography)
- Acting: bring to the light the specificities of this audience
- Remarks:
- Seydou points out the shortness of the proposed project : 5 days are too short to invest into the travel for most pros in the area.
- In his opinion, expenses of the participants shouldn't been fully taken care of.

Burkina Faso

Athanase KABRE

AK is a puppet artist, artistic director of the Compagnie du Fil, and General Secretary of ASSITEJ Burkina Faso.

AK has recently organized the Filigrane program, supported by ADAMI (regional cultural agency Ile de France, France), and a Swiss foundation. It gathered 4 puppet companies (2 from BF, 1 from Chad, 1 from Ivory Coast), for a performances professionalization session. Performance are brought at an early stage of production, and presented by extracts of 30'. Then, they are collectively discussed under the direction of the speakers.

During a second phase, the shows tour in schools across BF. Due to the political situation, this part of the program has been partially postponed to Nov. 2016.

Filigrane includes, since 2011, a specific address towards women puppeteers. And is presenting itself as a resource-center for puppet in Western Africa.

About the regional workshop, AK agrees with puppet and playwriting as potential topics. He underlines that the existence of a free circulation zone in Western Africa facilitates economic and legal mobility, compared to Central Africa. There are affordable communications by bus between the countries. Ouagadougou offers good facilities.

The March 2017 "Festival International de Théâtre Jeune Public" could be a good candidate for the workshop.

Cameroon

Etoundi ZEYANG

Observations:

- "It is important to adapt this to the African context"
- "It is difficult for an artist to find money just for transport, and that's why, usually, we organize things depending on people coming to FATEJ. Artists manage to be given training, and guests must be able to train them".
- "There is no TYA tradition in Africa, thus, beside advanced countries, we have to push artists from less developed regions, but who are willing to work in the field of TYA. During FATEJ, they can see foreign productions, and be trained".
- "There are DR Congo, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, where artists are really willing, but lack training."
- "Regarding the planned workshops for 2016, with the Norwegians : stage design, acting; with Sweden stage management, acting, management."
- "Regarding the planned workshops for 2016, with the Norwegians : stage design, acting; with Sweden stage management, acting, management. If ASSITEJ can take action with puppets and playwriting, we are sure to have a full range of artists to ensure trainings."
- "FATEJ can only work for its participant artists. It would be easier for us".

Denmark

Jacques S. Matthiessen

Experience :

"For PTP, we have a long 'history' working Africa especially with Burkina Faso and we still have many concrete productions on its way.

'Bandiougou le dernier' a performance we made in collaboration with Malian group back in 2008, which we what to remake in Ouaga with actors from Burkina Faso. Sorry our homepage is not updated or well done. <http://passepartout-theatre.com/pages/dk/projekter/mali.php>

'Dans l'ombre du soleil / In the shadow of the sun' A co.production between Burkina Faso, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, created in 2012, with two actors from BF and the Set designer, one actor from Denmark and one from Sweden and the Composer from Norway. A performance with actors and big puppets, where the puppets talks the local languages, in this case in Nordic. The idea has always been to make in BF in French and then in Uganda or Kenya in English. We are working on making the English version in 2016. <http://passepartout-theatre.com/pages/dk/projekter/burkina-faso.php>"

Priorities:

- "The Puppet work and the writes work are two fields in which I have been working with very much. Personally when I see puppet I often fell – think is that it needs a story."
- "Perhaps we could combine the 3 workshops: Writing for puppets, puppets work and then the two

workshops together? I hope that you can follow my thoughts. I really would like to take part of that work."

Guinea Conakry

Bilia BAH

Bilia is an actor and manager of the Muse Company, based in Conakry.

The 2nd edition of their biennial "L'univers des mots" (The universe of words) proposes a 2 months residency for 3 French-speaking African playwrights, in March-May 2016. A "Festival of readings" will conclude the program, with the pieces set on the stage and readings in French schools and Cultural center. It proposes meetings with international TYA professionals.

"L'univers des mots" is supported by the French - Guinean Institute in Conakry.

His priorities for a workshop:

- Playwriting and research in link with playwriting
- How to address young audiences depending of their age?

Mali, France

Mehdi Meghari

Dyptyk Dance Company (hip hop) based in St Etienne. Works with Mali, in the frame of a residency which gave birth to a mixed production with Malian and French dancers.

Priority:

- Developing exchanges about urban dances

Togo, France

Gustave Akakpo

Gustave Akakpo is a playwright, associate artist at the Tarmac. His TYA play "Même les chevaliers tombent dans l'oubli" (Even the knights end up in oblivion) was staged at 2014 Festival d'Avignon.

See interview, attached.

Gustave also points out the need of calling out and selecting very ahead of time, for the search for means to travel and visas would be very demanding.

France

Valérie Baran

As the director of the Tarmac, Valérie's charge is to accompany the contemporary creation in international French - speaking performing arts.

About the context:

- Tale is cheap, and an heritage
- Puppetry is very developed and should be used in our training projects
- "Consideration for the public is recent, theatre is for the whole family, regardless the ages or statute".

Her priorities :

- Build on existent, sound projects and artistic communities : Burkina Faso , Re-créatrices festival.

Ina Pouant

Ina Pouant works for the Creation department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and is in link with the central administration of Institut Français, the local institutes abroad, the Ministry of Culture, and the State Secretary of Francophonie.

- She indicates that our project is in line with the governmental policy, which makes cultural education and creation for children and youth a priority.
- She points out that dissemination of French language is a priority of foreign cultural policy, over cultural animation.

Appendix : Interview with Gustave Akakpo

From "L'Observatoire", the magazine of the Observatory of Cultural Policies, autumn 2015.

Question : Today, in French-speaking Africa, could a child meet a theatre specially addressed to him?

GA : The African child who, as me, has been growing up on this continent, evolves in a universe in which the oral tradition, and thus, the tale, has a great importance. He meets it at different times. In the family, as well as in school. Puppetry, is, as well, a very strong artistic reality in Western Africa. And, now, childhood albums tend to be a little more available. But the theatrical form for young audiences is very rare, almost non-existent, in Africa

Do you see new projects emerging in Western Africa?

The countries I best know are Togo, Benin, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Chad. In these ones, there is not really playwrights for young audiences, and, then, almost none African plays that are addressed to them. But energies and talents are there. We lack an impulse for them to spread out, and for creation for young audiences to develop, out of the narrowing frame of pedagogy. The French Institute gave this impulse in the field of youth literacy, with the "Illustr'Africa" association. This project has, notably, generated vocations and new productions by African authors. The same should be done with the playwrights. Support to creation is missing and it discourages the artists, who permanently have to use the "do it yourself" system. The festivals have the same difficulties. FITEB (Festival International de Théâtre du Bénin) is the only one to be really supported by the government.

In a very young Africa, how is this public taken account of?

If there is no specifically designed for young audiences productions, you have to consider that many forms that I would name "hybrid" are available. In Africa, we often rehearsal at night. Everything is at hand, and it is frequent that children attempt to rehearsals, easily, by entering into a yard. It is where the shows are performed, in Burkina Faso. Some actor vocations are born this way, and we can think that children are not kept apart from theatrical culture, when they have a chance to meet it. Even if theatre is not in the tradition, I notice every time that the children have a genuine attention for what is happening in front of them.

You, who are mostly living in France, what major differences do you point out, in this first contact between a child and theatre?

Thinking creation relatively to the age of the child is not yet a reality in Africa. Over there, everything is more or less accessible for a somehow curious child. They develop their own view, assimilate the codes of theatre, and are given, thus, an adult theatre. It is the case for FESTEFA, the Festival of Fraternity, for instance. This festival takes place in Assahoun, at 45 kms west of Lomé, Togo's capital city. There is no real rejection of TYA, it is just tries which are missing.

Did you identify other differences?

In Africa, forum-theatre, which is not very usual in France, but much more in Belgium, for instance, allows to address children. But it is not about drama creation in the true sense of the world, the topic being often children rights. In Burkina Faso, Prosper Compaoré leads the International Theater Festival for Development (FITD), and, as for the Fil bleu festival in TOGO, I remark that attention to young audiences is, today, a little more developed. In Burkina Faso, too, the performer Alain Hema and its company, Eclair Théâtre, created the very first international festival for young audiences, in the frame of a cultural exchanges program named "Paroles croisées" (Crossed words) Burkina - Belgium, launched by Théâtre Eclair and Zététique Theatre, the Théâtre pour 4 mains and Une Compagnie (Belgium). The first edition took place in 2009, with the aim of opening the field of creation, of de-construct too formatted imaginaries, and to impulse a new breeze for creation in Africa.

Do you think these first tries could grow and give birth to a creation movement for young audiences in French-speaking Africa?

There is much desire, but, often, not enough tools nor experience, to give a real dimension to these projects. There is no public, in Africa, but a real curiosity. Most often, when artists are going to create for young audiences, they adapt a tale. They don't know about drama for young audiences. Text just do not reach them. This authors should be nourished, they should be able to discover these writings and to be accompanied in their own projects during workshops, or encounters with more experienced playwrights in the field of TYA.

What could be imagined to accompany playwrights and actors on this path?

A recent initiative gives me much hope. A first training school for performers opened in Togo in 2006. Three years later, it closed its doors, but the Studio - Theatre for Arts in Lomé (STAL), a theatre school just opened. The first performing session took place last July, at the Baguida House for Artists, under the direction of Jean Lambert-Wild, director of Théâtre de L'Union – Centre Dramatique National du Limousin et de L'Académie – École Supérieure Professionnelle de Théâtre du Limousin (France). Performing work was more specifically based on Molière's comedy "Les fourberies de Scapin". The STAL is a working place, a residency for artists. It is in this frame that we could make playwriting for young audiences and address to young audience being discovered by Togolese artists.

What could we imagine?

Why not to organize playwriting workshops or training sessions for performers, using contemporary plays for young audiences? It would require to have a "suitcase" of play circulated, as it exists, furthermore, in each of these countries of Western Africa?

Does cooperation also need to welcome African artists in Europe, for residencies, workshops, creations?

African playwrights as performers should, actually, come in Europe to explore what is happening and meet other professionals, share researches and reflexions. In Villepinte (north of Paris), the company "Issue de secours" (Emergency exit) plays this role. It impelled the Passerelle program, which follows the residencies already organised by the company in Villepinte. The first stage of this adventure took place last autumn in Lomé, in Togo. I am involved, along with playwrights Marc-Antoine Cyr (Québec), Marcelle Dubois (Québec), Ramsès Alfa (Togo) and the Togolese theatre company Louxor.

How did you work together?

Two plays have been written by duos of playwrights. They are premiered in Togo : "Je reviendrai de nuit te parler dans les herbes" (I'll come back at night to talk to you in the grass) from Marc-Antoine Cyr and myself, et Danse sur la ligne (Dance on the line) from Ramsès Alfa and Marcelle Dubois. Pierre Vincent, the Artistic director of the company, will stage them. Around this, we also designed

interventions in schools, playwriting acting, direction workshops. The project will continue with the plays performed at the Ferme Godier, in Villepinte, then at the Théâtre des écuries, in Montreal (Québec).

With these shared working spaces, and by inserting African artists in international project, can man succeed in changing the occidental gaze of African people, and conversely?

Yes, it strongly helps. With Association Postures, Lansman publishing company and the Tarmac, Issue de secours organises as well the "Unreleased Africa and Overseas Award", a competition in French - speaking drama in high schools. It awards unreleased plays from authors outside French mainland. This year, the Guinean playwright Haking Bah is the laureate, with his play "Mirage". He will be welcomed, during the 2015 - 2016 season, for a six weeks residency at the Ferme Godier. Recognition, what it provokes in working opportunities and confrontation with other people for playwrights, is essential.

Interview by Cyrille Planson