
FABULAMUNDI

MOBILITY

PROGRAMME



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

This report describes the Capacity Building activities implemented during the large-scale project Fabulamundi Playwriting Europe: Beyond Borders? (Fabulamundi), supported by the Creative Europe programme of the EU in the period 2017-2020.

Fabulamundi is a cooperation project between theatres, festivals and cultural organisations from 10 EU Countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain and UK). The network aimed at supporting and promoting contemporary playwriting across Europe, in order to reinforce and enhance the activities and strategies of the professionals and artists working in the sector, and to provide the theatre authors and professionals with opportunities for networking, multicultural encounters and professional development.

Within Fabulamundi, the project partner ECCOM was in charge of designing a structured mobility programme (MobPro) in the participating countries, addressed to 80 participating playwrights. This consisted of eight mobility activities to develop in the eight countries represented by a theatre partner.

This report describes the framework within which the MobPro programme was conceived, its purpose and the results achieved. It includes not only the words of those who planned and delivered the MobPro but also the voices of the playwrights who took part in this programme. The report is addressed to cultural professional working in the field of contemporary dramaturgy and theatre in general, whether they are cultural managers, directors, playwrights or artists but it could also be of interest to professionals working in the field of lifelong learning education in informal contexts. A shorter version has been realized for a wider dissemination: it is downloadable from the Fabulamundi website.

Cristina Da Milano
François Matarasso

ROME, DECEMBER 2020

“My memories are sweet, fresh and long-lasting. I think it is a great idea to connect Europe, to connect people into one voice, into some beautiful new world without divisions.”

WARSAW PARTICIPANT

2.1 FABULAMUNDI

Funded twice by the European Commission before the current edition, Fabulamundi won the Creative Europe Call as cooperation project 2017-20 and it intended to widen both its reach and impact in the theatre sector. Through its work during the past four years, Fabulamundi has demonstrated the growing interest in European contemporary playwriting and a need to provide the sector with suitable tools to help it overcome its weaknesses. In this context, the need to improve the multilateral relationships and the exchanges has become urgent.

The theme of this edition of Fabulamundi was 'Beyond borders?', a broad reflection on challenging and important issues for European institutions and citizens. At a time shaped by the immigration emergency and by the appearance of new walls, 'Fabulamundi – Beyond borders?' focused on overcoming tangible and intangible borders, in order to develop theatre's insight and understanding on contemporary matters.

Fabulamundi's main objectives were:

1. To promote the circulation, translation, publication and staging of new plays across Europe, through an ongoing exchange process supported by the participating organizations.
2. To promote the knowledge and circulation of valuable playwrights in Europe through an ongoing programme of mobility and exchange.
3. To support the playwrights' professional development, through a programme of peer-to-peer learning activities, networking and encounters with other playwrights, theatre professionals and stakeholders.
4. To involve drama related organizations (theatres, festivals, playwrights' associations, publishers, drama schools...) in the development of specific competences (audience development, co-production, training...).
5. To enhance a favourable 'ecosystem' for circulation and production of new plays, promoting dialogue and cooperation between the stakeholders in the value chain.

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6. To create an international network of playwrights, theatre artists, professionals and stakeholders (from public institutions to drama schools, from cultural associations to publishing associations) aimed at strengthening the whole drama sector, in a long-term perspective.
7. To promote audience development in the drama sector at EU level, through the definition, testing, assessing and dissemination of specific strategies.
8. To create, test and assess collaborative strategies and methodologies for the promotion of playwriting at EU level, to be replicated in a long-term perspective with the aim of guarantee the sustainability of the project.

In order to achieve these goals, Fabulamundi implemented the following activities:

- **A ‘Fabulamundi Playwriting Europe – Beyond borders?’ Artistic Programme** in the participating countries, fostering the circulation of new plays and playwrights through an ongoing and coordinated selection, translation and distribution of plays.
- **An Audience Development Strategy for drama related organizations** has been designed, run and assessed to promote the practice in the participating countries and to become a replicable successful model.
- **A Mobility Programme (MobPro) for playwrights’ and drama organizations** to support professional development and internationalization), which is the focus of this report.

2.2 CAPACITY BUILDING AND THE CREATIVE EUROPE PROGRAMME

Capacity building (or capacity development) is commonly defined as the process by which individuals and organizations obtain, improve, and retain the skills, knowledge, tools, equipment, and other resources needed to do their jobs competently. In this section we briefly outline how this concept has been linked to that of lifelong learning and to its related key competences in EU

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programmes for education and culture, and how this relationship has given birth to the Mobility Programme of Fabulamundi.

2.2.1 FROM LIFELONG LEARNING TO CAPACITY BUILDING: A EUROPEAN JOURNEY

The concept of capacity building, in the EU context, is strictly related to that of lifelong learning, intended as a process of continuous learning throughout the different phases of life. It has been divided into:

FORMAL LEARNING

which takes place in a formal education or training settings; and normally leads to a qualification;

NON - FORMAL LEARNING

which is a form of structured and organised learning but does not lead to a qualification;

INFORMAL LEARNING

which occurs through family, social or civic life, not necessarily intentionally and is the king of lifelong learning that takes place in cultural institutions, such as museums or theatres.

In the last 20 years, lifelong education has taken on an increasingly central role in Europe and individual European countries as a tool for supporting equal opportunities for participation in all types of learning, particularly with respect to disadvantaged and marginalised people. Providing new opportunities to encourage adult learning and the development of new skills has become an important factor in many countries' social agendas, as these activities are completely in line with actions to expand access to education, regenerate communities and counter social exclusion.

At an international level, the importance of lifelong learning was endorsed during the 5th International Conference on Adult Education organised by UNESCO in 1997 . In 2000, the Lisbon Strategy—whose aim was to make Europe 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' — enshrined the will of EU member states to support lifelong education as a means of strengthening their citizens' cultural identity and creating a more unified and cohesive society.

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The establishment in 2006 of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) 2007-13 clearly demonstrates the central role that lifelong learning was playing in the EU . The Programme combined all European cooperation learning and training initiatives and encompassed also the previous ones (the Socrates and Leonardo programmes launched in 1995 and 2006).

The main objective of the LLP was to create a more knowledgeable Europe by promoting lifelong learning, encouraging access to learning by all and, in particular, the learning of languages in order to meet the challenges of a technological civilisation. In general, the programme aimed to contribute to the development of the European Union as an advanced, knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic development, new and improved working opportunities and greater social cohesion, while ensuring valid environmental protection for future generations, in accordance with the Lisbon Strategy. In particular, it was intended to promote, within the European Community, sharing, cooperation and mobility between learning and training systems, so they would become a quality benchmark around the world.

In 2011 a Resolution adopted by the Council on a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning highlighted the need to significantly increase adult participation in formal, non-formal and informal learning whether to acquire work skills, for active citizenship, or for personal development and fulfilment. The Agenda outlined a vision of how adult learning should develop in Europe by 2020 and set specific priorities for 2015–20: in 2014, the LLP was replaced by Erasmus+ (2014-2020), which was meant to put into practice the priorities indicated by the Agenda.

In 2018, the Council published a recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning , which included knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by all for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship.

The approach was to promote key competences by:

1. Providing high-quality education training, training and lifelong learning for all.
2. Supporting educational staff in implementing competence-based teaching and learning approaches.
3. Encouraging a variety of learning approaches and contexts for continued learning.

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4. Exploring approaches to assess and validate key competences.

The recent history of lifelong learning in the EU shows clearly that the link between adult learning and the cultural sector has been established since the very beginning, thanks to the definition of informal learning and of the inclusion, among the key competences, of the encouragement of a variety of learning approaches and contexts (point 3 above).

This made it possible to support during the last two decades, thanks to the EU Programmes LLP and Erasmus+, many projects based on the idea that cultural institutions, such as museums and theatres, could provide non-formal adult education trainings .

This concept has now fully entered the cultural sector at EU level: in fact, it has been at the basis of the definition of the main objectives of the Creative Europe Programme (2014–20), in which – in contrast to the previous Culture 2007-2013 Programme – lifelong learning in informal contexts plays a role under the heading of capacity building. The spill over on the cultural sector has officially occurred.

2.2.2 CREATIVE EUROPE COOPERATION PROJECTS

The Creative Europe programme supports cross-border cooperation projects between cultural and creative organisations within the EU and beyond. Projects can cover one or more cultural and creative sectors and can be interdisciplinary. The main objectives of the support for European cooperation projects are:

- To strengthen the capacity of the European cultural and creative sectors to operate transnationally and internationally and to promote the transnational circulation of cultural and creative works and transnational mobility of cultural and creative players, in particular artists.
- To contribute to audience development by engaging in new and innovative ways with audiences and improve access to cultural and creative works in the Union and beyond with a particular focus on children, young people, people with disabilities and underrepresented groups.

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- To contribute to innovation and creativity in the field of culture, for instance through testing of new business models and promoting innovative spill overs on other sectors.

In order to achieve these objectives, the action focuses on the following priorities:

1. Promote the transnational mobility of artists and professionals with a view to enabling them to cooperate internationally and to internationalise their careers.
2. Strengthen audience development as a means of improving access to European cultural and creative works and tangible and intangible cultural heritage and extend access to cultural works to children, young people, people with disabilities and underrepresented groups.
3. Foster capacity building through innovative approaches to creation, develop and test new and innovative models of revenue, management and marketing for the cultural sectors, in particular as regards the digital shift, and developing new skills for cultural professionals.
4. Enhance intercultural dialogue, promote shared EU values and mutual understanding and respect for other cultures, thereby contributing to the social integration of migrants and refugees.
5. As a legacy to the European Year of Culture Heritage, raise awareness of common history and values, and reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space.

Priority no. 3 provided the framework for the Mobility Programme of Fabulamundi.

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2.3 THE MOBILITY PROGRAMME CONCEPT

In designing the Mobility Programme for Fabulamundi we understood that we would be working with professional playwrights, who certainly did not need any sort of technical or professional training. Instead, our aim was to offer a creative learning experience based on a menu of proposals and ideas they were invited to take and use as far and as deep as they wished. The MobPro would enable 80 playwrights selected by Fabulamundi partners (10 playwrights from each country) to:

- **Meet other EU playwrights and other relevant organizations and people**, and to exchange experiences in a peer-learning approach.
- **Meet a selection of relevant stakeholders of the host country** in an effective networking and a professional opportunity. Open debate sessions were held, based on the best practice for dramaturgy circulation and playwrights' mobility; EU countries peculiarities, tips and suggestions; focus on resident country. The activity allowed playwrights to enhance their knowledge on the different possible EU markets through a direct confrontation with other playwrights and local experts, able to provide them with practical suggestion.
- **Reflect on the 'Beyond Borders' theme with colleagues and experts.** This part of the MobPro aimed at stimulating the discussion and knowledge amongst the participants. Playwrights, experts, professionals from hosting organisations participated in the activity and discussed together the addressed theme and the plays selected, in order to receive and exchange inputs, visions and knowledge that they will treasure as personal enhancement. The aim was to create a lively communication and exchange between playwrights and their stakeholders, stimulating them in inserting new visions, interpretations and stimuli for their professional development.

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2.4 PLANNING AND SELECTION

The MobPro were conceived as one of the added values of this new edition of Fabulamundi, being a unique occasion for the 80 playwrights participating the project to participate in peer-to-peer learning activities, and meet organizations and stakeholders relevant at national and international level. The eight MobPros were meant to host 10 playwrights each, with the decision to participate to one MobPro or to another left to the playwrights, according to their personal and professional commitments. For some of them it was not possible to participate at all and for this reason some playwrights took part in more than one MobPro.

Designed and organised by ECCOM, the Mobility Programme ran from July 2018 to January 2020, following a pilot, designed by former Fabulamundi partner Creative Skillset, run in April 2018 in London that proved to be an important test for the following ones. It led to a rethinking of the approach (**see 3.1 The London Pilot, below**) and, as a result, the eight MobPros adopted the same core structure, with minor variations reflecting the theme and the needs or interests of local partners.

This structure involved:

- INTRODUCING THE GROUP:** helping the group to get to know one another, their personal stories and their work as playwrights.
- THEMATIC DISCUSSION:** each MobPro took a different approach to the theme of Crossing Borders, inviting speakers to bring a local perspective.
- AUDIENCES DISCUSSION:** within a context of audience development, we made time to explore how the playwrights saw their audiences and any responsibilities they might – or might not – feel towards them.
- CITY WALK:** as described below city walk was an opportunity for the playwrights to understand something of the heritage of the place where they were meeting.

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PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS: with theatre and literary professionals were a key element of every MobPro, as set out in the original proposal.

GROUP DISCUSSION: the largest single element of the new MobPro structure was time for playwrights to share experience and ideas with their peers.

“ *The feeling of [being] ‘European’, using 3-4 languages at a time without it being confusing, just practical.”*

PRAGUE PARTICIPANT

ECCOM and each of the hosting organisations were responsible for the activity implementation and for the results to be achieved. The working language was English and, in some cases, the support of a translator was needed, but the playwrights also used their own languages around the formal sessions. One participant reported that they enjoyed.

The format of the MobPro was based on sessions articulated in 3 days, and that followed a similar structure. The evaluation in Section 4 reports on the success of each of these activities in supporting the goal of informal learning.

2.4.1

DAY 1 - PEER TO PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY AND CITY WALK

The first day was dedicated to the peer-to-peer learning activity amongst playwrights. It began with a morning of familiarisation, followed by a session on the responsibilities of playwrights towards audiences (In the context of audience development) and first discussions of the MobPro theme.

The day ended with a city walk, an idea introduced in Barcelona, for several reasons. First, it seemed important to give the playwrights a chance to experience the place to which they had travelled, rather than spending all their time in studios or windowless rehearsal rooms.

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We wanted the European exchange to be experiential as well as intellectual and human, so that it might spark a writer's imagination, perhaps even suggest new stories or characters. But that meant getting beneath the surface of the city rather than sightseeing. Consequently, we planned a guided walk as part of each MobPro, leaving it to the host organisation to choose a suitable person to show the group something they were otherwise unlikely to discover. The range of this was impressive:

- In Vienna, we explored Rot Wien, the social-democratic city built after the First World War that failed to prevent the rise of fascism but also outlived it.
- In Pont-à-Mousson, we visited a large NGO that helps asylum-seekers, homeless people and others in need to (re)-integrate into the social fabric of Nancy.
- In Rome, we saw, through the eyes of one of the actors, a modern neighbourhood that had been the inspiration and site of promenade performance.
- In Warsaw, we imagined the Jewish quarter and the wartime ghetto in streets lined by glass-fronted office buildings and the words of a gifted storyteller.

The city walk had another, more prosaic purpose. Usually organised at the end of the first day, it was designed to be a natural way to enable the group to dissolve and reform and get to know each other better, outside the ambience of a facilitated discussion, and wake us up with a little exercise.

2.4.2 DAY 2 - WORKSHOP ON 'BEYOND BORDERS?'

The thematic discussion was one of the main strands of the MobPro and each was different, reflecting the interests of the host partner, the local situation and the Fabulamundi's own assessment. A workshop on the theme 'Beyond Borders?' was held in each country on the second day according to a specific declination of it (geographical, cultural, social borders). Speakers were identified in each country in order to provide participants with a relevant conceptual framework aiming at feeding the following debate among playwrights, experts, professionals from host organization.

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2.4.3 DAY 3 - STAKEHOLDERS MEETINGS

The meeting with stakeholders took place on the third day. Participating playwrights will have the opportunity to present their work to relevant national stakeholders, invited by the hosting partners on the basis of their interests and artistic visions.

2.4.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

During each MobPro, evaluation sessions were held in order to verify the quality of the programme and its correspondence to playwrights needs and expectations. Questionnaires were also delivered to playwrights and stakeholders and collected; interviews have been realised with partners, playwrights and stakeholders. Each MobPro has been documented by videos or photos, which became also a useful tool not only for the evaluation of the activities but also for sharing findings amongst the different partners.

2.4.5 ADDITIONAL OUTPUTS

Alongside the nine MobPros (the London pilot plus eight) the programme produced substantial further outputs. These include a body of documentation, ranging from short videos about four of the sessions, photographic archives, participant interviews and questionnaires and this report. Alongside this, two important projects were developed during 2020 in response to the public health regulations imposed to contain the Covid 19 pandemic.

The first was a webinar organised within the framework of the Fabulamundi Effect festival. it took place online on 16 September 2020, presented a panel with François Matarasso in dialogue with French author Nathalie Fillion and Spanish author Helena Tornero and Margherita Laera (University of Kent) who was in charge of a research about contemporary dramaturgy within Fabulamundi) in dialogue with Caroline Marcilhac (Theatre Ouvert, Paris).

The other innovation was In a New Light, a series of interviews with Fabulamundi playwrights, recorded on Zoom before being edited into a series of films by Giulio Boato, who had also filmed

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several Mob Pros. The interviews themselves were conceived and led by François Matarasso, building on the confidence that had been nurtured with the writers during the Mob Pros and link their memories, experiences and ambitions with reflections on the art of theatre during lockdown. The speakers are **Alexandra Badea** (France), **Ferran Joanmiquel Pla** (Spain), **Mihaela Michailov** (Romania), **Thomas Perle** (Austria), **Pier Lorenzo Pisano** (Italy), **Maria Wojtyszko** (Poland) and **Petr Zelenka** (Czech Republic). In a New Light has been very well received by Fabulamundi partners and a second series, focusing on the future of theatre after the crisis is now in preparation.

3 MOBPRO CAPACITY BUILDING SESSIONS

“The group was interesting and funny – all the playwrights have the same problems, I think.”

BARCELONA PARTICIPANT

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3.1 THE LONDON PILOT

The first MobPro was a pilot session organised in London by Fabulamundi with several UK partners and held at Glass Hill Studios from 25 to 27 April 2018. The three days offered a rich mix of workshops, presentations and visits to London theatres, led by British directors and producers. Eight playwrights took part, but their reaction was mixed. Some of the meetings had been welcomed, but others were not well received. Overall, the assessment suggested that the approach was too structured rigid. It came across as a training course, which some playwrights felt they didn't want or need, and left little scope for learning from each other, or for discussion of ideas.

As a result of this feedback, the Fabulamundi team rethought their plans for the MobPro with Cristina Da Milano from ECCOM, who had attended the London pilot as an observer. It was decided that in future national partners would be responsible for the organisation and logistics of the MobPro, and have input into the thematic content, but that the sessions would be facilitated by ECCOM. Cristina Da Milano brought in her colleague, François Matarasso, to work with her on developing and delivering a new approach that recognised the playwrights as the primary resource as well as the beneficiaries of the MobPro. The emphasis moved towards a real exchange between professionals, each of whom had a great deal to offer the others.

The programme of the MobPro was rethought so that at least half the time was kept for discussion between the participants, so that a sense of shared purpose, even intimacy, could be created within each group. Outside experts would be invited to provide input that could stimulate debate on the theme of each MobPro, but discussion of their contribution would mostly happen in their absence. It was also agreed to introduce a guided walk in each city, led by a geographer or sociologist who could help reveal stories below the obvious surface of the place. These were intended both to highlight aspects of a shared European history and to allow the playwrights to interact in a different dynamic to the meeting room.

The eight MobPros after the London pilot were variations on this plan, adapted to suit the interests of host organisations and opportunities afforded by each location. The rest of this section briefly outlines the theme and activities of these, followed by a brief assessment of the experience.

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Section 4 reports on the evaluation of the programme as a whole, with particular reference to these consistent activities.

3.2 BARCELONA, SPAIN, 18-20 JULY 2018

“ *[I most valued] the internationality of the group, and the reflection on a common European culture [and] awareness that Europe needs to change its politics, especially on identity issues.*”

BARCELONA PARTICIPANT

The Barcelona MobPro, on hot summer days at Sala Beckett, was the first test of the new approach after the mixed experience in London. It turned out to be one of the most successful of the series, with the new facilitators (Cristina Da Milano and François Matarasso) providing a quieter and more thoughtful space for people to talk and learn from each other. The theme, 'After the border: the promised land' focused on the migrant crisis and how institutions in Barcelona were working to help recent arrivals. More than anything, the Barcelona MobPro showed that the new approach was a sound basis for the rest of the programme.

Participating writers

Muhammet Ali Bas (Austria); Lancelot Hamelin (France); Ferran Joanmiquel (Spain); Dana Lukasinska (Poland); Mihaela Michailov (Romania); Roberto Scarpetti (Italy); Katharina Schlender (Germany); Anne Jelena Schulte (Germany); Roman Sikora (Czech Republic); Sandra Szwarc (Poland).

Speakers

Albert Arribas, Teatre Nacional de Catalunya; Tania Branle, La Villarroel; Francesc Casadesús, Grec Festival de Barcelona; Jordi Duran FiraTàrrrega; Carme Portaceli, Teatro Español in Madrid. Victoria Szpunberg Helena Tornero, playwright; Marc Villanueva, writer, director and dramaturg and Blanca Garcés Mascareñas, Senior researcher in migration at Barcelona Centre for International Affairs.

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3.3 ROME, ITALY, 12-14 SEPTEMBER 2018

“ *It is an experience of ‘open-minding’; it was interesting to meet the playwrights to exchange about our works, our conditions in different countries [and have] the opportunity to meet Italian artists and programmes.”*

ROME PARTICIPANT

After the success of Barcelona, Rome was a bit of a set-back, because of the conditions in which the MobPro took place. Hosted by the Short Festival, the group found itself on the margins of a big event, of which it was not really part. This was also the group that took the longest time to gel, partly because there were several people from one cultural sphere and they tended to form a circle within the circle. The theme, ‘Beyond Stereotypes: Fiction to Rewrite Reality’ was set to connect with the festival, but the theoretical approach did not suit all the playwrights. Despite these difficulties, the MobPro process established in Barcelona proved resilient, and the writers did come together by the third day. The feedback was very positive and it seems that most of them had gained a lot from the experience.

Participating writers

Lucie Depauw (France); Werner Fritsch (Germany); Bogdan Georgescu (Romania); Maxi Obexer (Austria); Vit Perina (Czech Republic); Ferran Joanmiquel Pla (Spain); Elise Wilk (Romania); Maria Wojtyszko (Poland); and Felicia Zeller (Germany).

Speakers

Sophia Al Maria writer, artist, and filmmaker; Daniel Blanga Gubbay, researcher and curator; Daria Deflorian, actress, author and director; Antonio Calbi, Teatro Di Roma; Stefania Lo Giudice, Romaeuropa Festival; Linda Di Pietro, Caos/Terni Festival; Claudio Longhi, ERT; Isabella Lagattolla, Sergio Ariotti, Festival Delle Colline Torinesi; and Settimio Pisano, Primavera Dei Teatri.

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3.4 PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC, 1-3 DECEMBER 2018



[The best thing was to] understand the theatrical context of another country, the magic struggle (or maybe not) between local and universal. We are different, we spoke different languages, we share the love and the pleasure of the theatre.”

PRAGUE PARTICIPANT

Held at two locations in a wintery Prague (Pražské kreativní centrum in the old heart of the city, and Theatre LETÍ, in a suburban area), the MobPro focused on immersive theatre, within the theme, ‘Space Beyond Borders: migration in the future’. It was a rich encounter, notable for one of the more successful meetings with local professionals, which involved a mix of presentations and speed-dating in small groups. The city walk, led by Michaela Pixova, a social geographer and postdoctoral researcher at the Charles University in Prague, proved to be inspiring in reframing debates about migration.

Participating writers

Marc Artigau (Spain); Alexa Bacanu (Romania); Davide Carnevali (Italy); Aurore Jacob (France); David Košťák (Czech Republic); Tomasz Man (Poland); Gerhild Steinbuch (Austria); Miroslava Svolicova (Austria); and Victoria Szpunberg (Spain).

Speakers

Martina Schlegelová, Theatre Letí, Ivo Kristián Kubák, VILA Štvanice, Kateřina Součková Pomezí, Tomáš Loužný, director; Lukáš Houdek, HateFree project; Marta Ljubková, National Theatre Prague; Eva Zembok, director, Theatre X10, Prague; Klára Novotná, dramaturg, Czech Radio; Hana Hložková, dramaturg, National Theatre Brno, Czech Radio Brno; Michal Zahálka, dramaturg, Prague City Theatres; Jana Slouková, artistic director, Klicperovo Theatre in Hradec Králové; and Sylvie Vůjtková, dramaturg, National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in Ostrava.

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3.5 WARSAW, POLAND 5-7 MARCH 2019



Curiosity is the most valuable thing in life. I loved the visit of the invisible traces in the city.”

WARSAW PARTICIPANT

The Warsaw MobPro was held at the Dramatic Theatre, in the monumental Palace of Culture and Science that was given in 1955 by the Soviet Union to the Polish People. The city walk took in the site of the former ghetto, of which only the faintest traces survive today. History was the ghost at the feast of this MobPro, although the formal theme was ‘We and they: on different aspects of cultural narcissisms.’ It was explored in some rich contributions from Polish writers and critics, and proved a source of stimulating conversations. The meetings with representatives of Poland’s literary agencies and publishers were also productive.

Participating writers

Alexandra Badea (France); Clàudia Cedó (Spain); Nathalie Fillion (France); Bogdan Georgescu (Romania); Industria Indipendente (Erika Z. Galli and Martina Ruggeri, Italy); Petr Kolečko (Czech Republic); Bonn Park (Germany); Volker Schmidt (Austria); Csaba Székely (Romania).

Speakers

Katarzyna Miller, psychotherapist, philosopher, poet and writer; Kamila Paprocka-Jasińska, academic and critic; Agata Bogumiła Dąbek, academic and critic; Małgorzata Semil, Małgorzata Sikorska-Miszczuk and Rafał Kownacki, ZAiKS; Elżbieta Manthey, ADiT; Jerzy S. Majewski, art historian, contemporary architecture critic.

3 MOBPRO CAPACITY BUILDING SESSIONS

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

3.6 VIENNA, AUSTRIA, 21-23 MAY 2019

“ *The most important thing [was the] open, wise and full of humour people.*”

VIENNA PARTICIPANT

The Vienna MobPro was slightly different because several of the writers had been commissioned by the host, Wiener Wortstaetten, to contribute to a joint text on ‘The end of tolerance’, which was also the theme of the meeting. There was therefore a sense of common purpose that absent from the earlier events. Meeting in an office rather than a theatre also made the sessions relaxed, even intimate, and the MobPro had a very comfortable atmosphere. The city walk by Gernot Trausmuth retraced the heritage of Red Vienna, and was very evocative in revealing the past in the present.

Participating writers

Liv Ferracchiati (Italy); Nathalie Fillion (France); Tomasz Man (Poland); Josep Maria Miró (Spain); Jacinto Lucas Pires (Portugal); Radu Popescu (Romania); Gerhild Steinbuch (Austria).

Speakers

Anne Wiederhold-Daryanavard, Brunnenpassage; Christa Stippinger, author, director, publisher; Christa Stippinger, Zentrum Exil.

3 MOBPRO CAPACITY BUILDING SESSIONS

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

3.7 PONT-A-MOUSSON, FRANCE 25-27 AUGUST 2019

“ *Meeting and listening to people who are so different from me - they have different life, working differently, processing differently - but I am with them and as an artist I am not alone 😊.*”

PONT-A-MOUSSON PARTICIPANT

The MobPro in France was the second (after Rome) to take place in the context of a theatre festival, La Mousson d'été at a former abbey in eastern France. Perhaps because this was dedicated to writing for theatre rather than new productions, it made an easier frame for the MobPro, and the event unfolded very smoothly. Since the site was a small town, the decision was made to visit Le Grand Sauvoy in Nancy, an NGO working to support social integration. This fitted well with the theme of 'Inclusion', as did a presentation about the Atelier des artistes en exil.

Participating writers

Baptiste Amann (France); Ayse Bayramoglu (Turkey); Valentina Diana (Italy); Claudius Lünstedt (Germany); Małgorzata Sikorska-Miszczuk (Poland); Helena Tornero (Spain); Tyrfingur Tyrfingsson (Iceland); Elena Vladareanu, Alexandra Pazgu (Romania).

Speakers

Mathieu Bertholet, Théâtre Poche/GVE, Genève; Hubert Colas, playwright; Emilie Capliez, actress and stage director; Matthieu Cruciani, actor and director; Michel Didym, La Mousson d'été, and Theatre La Manufacture, Nancy; Alexandra Tobelaim, NEST, Thionville; Judith Depaule, Atelier des artistes en exil.

3 MOBPRO CAPACITY BUILDING SESSIONS

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

3.8 BERLIN, GERMANY, 23-25 SEPTEMBER 2019

“ *The wonderful people! Especially the fact that there is a variety of languages involved – THANK YOU!*”

BERLIN PARTICIPANT

The Berlin MobPro at the Deutsches Theater took the theme of ‘Translation’, which was naturally fertile ground for the playwrights involved, all of whom contributed a text on the subject before coming. There were fewer sessions with speakers, but each stayed longer, which meant that the conversations were both more relaxed and more probing. Meetings with professionals in Berlin were therefore assessed much more favourably by the Berlin participants. As in Warsaw, the city walk uncovered the wartime and post-war past of the formerly divided city.

Participating writers

Katja Brunner (Germany); Lucie Depauw (France); David Drabek (Czech Republic); Azar Mortazavi (Austria); Artur Pałyga (Poland); Pier Lorenzo Pisano (Italy); Gabriel Sandu (Romania); Fabrizio Sinisi (Italy); Robert Woelfl (Austria); Petr Zelenka (Czech Republic).

Speakers

Christa Müller, dramaturg; Henning Bochert, writer, dramaturg, and translator; Carsten Brandau, playwright; Claus Cäsar dramaturg; Stephan Wetzel dramaturg.

3 MOBPRO CAPACITY BUILDING SESSIONS

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

3.9 TÂRGU MUREŞ, ROMANIA, 21-23 JANUARY 2020

“ *[I will remember] the talk about the legitimacy of writing about vulnerable groups, meeting the other playwrights and sharing experiences.*”

TÂRGU MUREŞ PARTICIPANT

The final MobPro took place at the University of Arts in Târgu Mureş, one of the principal cities in Transylvania. It seemed particularly to be concluding a series of reflections about borders in a land where Hungarians, Germans and Romanians have lived together, not always easily. The theme of 'Interculturalism and Self-identification' was constantly evoked, from the languages spoken in the streets to the theatre traditions, and provided rich material for the city walk. The sessions were warm and lively, and including some of the most interesting speakers in the whole programme.

Participating writers

Olga Macrinici (Romania); Jakob Nolte (Germany); Radosław Paczocha (Poland); Bonn Park (Germany); Thomas Perle (Austria); Pier Lorenzo Pisano (Italy); Csaba Székely (Romania); Elise Wilk (Romania); Joan Yago (Spain)

Speakers

Maria Albert (Hungarian journalist, theatre scholar and dramatic advisor); Oana Cristea Grigorescu (theatre critic and radio drama producer for Radio Romania); and Smaranda Enache (Romanian pro-European human and minority rights militant and author).

“The organization has been very good; also, the treatment and the whole human concept.”

VIENNA PARTICIPANT

4.1 CONCEPT

The MobPro concept was founded on two important ideas. The first was simply that playwrights rarely benefit from opportunities for professional development. Indeed, it is hard to think of any cultural professionals who receive less attention or investment in this way. And yet, spending much of their time in solitary work at home, they are particularly in need of such support. The second was that, given the individual nature of their creative practice, playwrights would probably not welcome or benefit from structured training programmes in the way that cultural managers might.

On the other hand, travellers the same road, they do have many experiences in common, albeit gained in the different national cultures that compose the mosaic of European theatre. The MobPro concept therefore sought to create opportunities for the writers to learn rather than trying to teach them, and recognised that they could best learn from one another. At the heart of each MobPro was an implicit mutuality, in which every participant gave what they could and took what they needed. By bringing a group of 8-10 writers together in a neutral space and on an equal basis, the MobPro created possibilities for interaction and exchange whose principal resource were the people intended to benefit from the experience.

That approach largely worked very well. It was striking that playwrights at very different points in their careers were able to meet without the hierarchies common in other situations, because the focus was on their ideas and creative processes rather than their professional standing. Each MobPro quickly developed its own character, shaped by the people in the room, and there was a palpable feeling of common purpose. It is telling that across a total of 24 long and intense days, there was only a single instance of confrontation within the group of writers, and it soon ended in apologies. Moments of frustration, usually at an external speaker who had misjudged the tone or content of their presentation, were borne stoically and tended to further unite the playwrights.

The exceptions tend to confirm this analysis. The London pilot was problematic largely because the playwrights felt lectured and patronised, rather than enabled to share their ideas and knowledge. That led to a successful rethinking of the approach from Barcelona onwards.

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

During the course of the programme, there were four or five participants who seemed unwilling or unable to fully integrate the group, and that experience underlined the importance of being open to participation. One writer, who had an unhappy time in a first MobPro, returned to a later one where they did contribute fully and enjoyed themselves in consequence.

The very positive response of the participating writers, at the time, in formal evaluation and in subsequent feedback, demonstrates the soundness of the approach taken as well as the broad effectiveness of the delivery, as described in more detail in the next section. Indeed, it might be that devising and refining a model of professional development for creative artists is one of the key achievements of the mobility programme.

4.2 DELIVERY

4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the main elements of the mutual learning process, and gives an assessment of how well each part was delivered, drawing on data from the evaluation forms that participants were asked to complete at the conclusion of each MobPro, informal conversations with them and the reflections of the whole team. In this analysis, we have concentrated on the consistent architecture of the MobPro concept, rather than variable elements, such as the themes or speakers. As already noted, some speakers were much more appreciated than others, while some themes were richer than others, but these are relatively minor judgements. Wider lessons are noted as relevant; for example, the still not entirely solved problem of facilitating exchanges with the theatre profession in each country.

Among other questions, the evaluation questionnaires asked participating writers to rank the principal elements of the MobPro on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was bad and 5 was excellent. Not everyone completed an evaluation form, and not everyone who did scored the elements of the MobPro, but between 50 and 56 people did (some scored only some parts).

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

The full data table is included in Appendix 6.2, with summaries in the discussion below. Overall, the participants' assessment is exceptionally positive. In five of the six areas only six marks fall below the middle of the scale, defined as 'okay'. Only the professional meetings saw a significant negative assessment, with 25% of scores being below the mid-point. The reasons are discussed below, but they should not distract from the overwhelmingly positive assessment that the playwrights' made of the MobPro experience. Anonymous quotes from the writers' evaluations give a more nuanced and vivid sense of that experience in the pages that follow.

4.2.2 INTRODUCING THE GROUP

All MobPros began in the same way: the first morning was about making the time and space for a group of strangers to get to know each other and begin to feel comfortable enough to share their ideas. This involved the usual round-table introductions, but also more intimate conversations in pairs, structured around the theme to help the words flow. The invitation to share memories of an early experience of theatre was particularly successful, quickly allowing people to get an insight into one another and the cultural and historical situations that was the cradle of their professional life. This session, along with the group discussions, received the most positive assessment, with 96% scoring it 4 or 5 on the scale.

“ *At the beginning [it] was not that easy because there was quite a lot of silence and in general people were kind of shy to speak, but during the day it got better and better. I'm happy so.*”

ROME PARTICIPANT

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme



MobPro Participants Feedback: Introducing the group (n=51)

The positive assessment suggests that the sessions were well conceived in tone and content, but it may also be explained by people's settling in to an experience whose character they could not easily foresee. There is an understandable nervousness when a group of strangers meet for the first time, knowing that they are committed to spending the next three days together, but unsure what they have let themselves in for:



The first time each of us open his mouth to say something about himself. The fear of not saying enough. The fear of saying too much. To say useless things. To say things out of place. Gradually [to] discover, day by day, the richness and the specificity of each one, the live, the frailties.”

PONT-À-MOUSSON PARTICIPANT

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

But during the morning, with an atmosphere created by experienced facilitators and the participants' curiosity about each other and their willingness to share, the group quickly bonded. The one exception to this was a MobPro where half the writers share a common language (German), which encouraged them to talk among themselves; that tended to split the group and the facilitators had to work hard, eventually with success, to bridge the gap. But overall, the feelings of this writer was typical of the MobPro:

“ *Everyone was very friendly for each other, open to talk and exchange experiences.*”

TÂRGU MURE PARTICIPANT

4.2.3 THEMATIC DISCUSSION

Local circumstances and the host partner's interests determined the thematic discussion of each MobPro and made them very different. With the equally diverse personalities and artistic identities of the writers who took part, it would be surprising if there was consensus about the richness or effectiveness of this aspect of the meetings. The facilitators also felt that some themes were more successful than others. In Rome, the Short Theatre festival was concerned with the boundary between fiction and fact, which, at a time of fake news, was potentially a rich subject for the playwrights to consider. As the sessions unfolded, we were concerned that the abstract nature of the presentations left some writers uninvolved. However, and not for the last time, it transpired that the participants' assessments was more positive: in the feedback questionnaires no one scored these sessions lower than three out of five.

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme



MobPro Participants Feedback: Thematic Discussion (n=50)

This positive response was consistent across the eight MobPros, with no one who responded to the request for feedback scoring these sessions as poor. It seems that, even where people had reservations about the theme, they valued the conversations that came out of it. This happened in Warsaw, where ‘cultural narcissism’ left several writers cold, but they reported enjoying the discussions with peers that followed.

The lesson may be that the themes were less important than they seemed because, even if some playwrights did not find them especially engaging, they provided a spark for rich conversations. Indeed, sometimes those conversations were especially good because some of the writers reacted against the presentations.

There is a parallel here with the plays and performances that were offered on most of the evenings. All the playwrights were keen to see new work, but they could also be quite critical the following day. They naturally took a professional interest in both text and production and were keen to consider the flaws and improvements. The resulting discussions – during meals and social time as well as in the formal sessions – were a vital aspect of the informal learning in the MobPro.

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“ | *Limits (borders) has pany. ”*

VIENNA PARTICIPANT

Some participants felt that there wasn't sufficient time to go into often complex subjects with the degree of depth they wanted. Occasionally, someone described the resulting discussion as 'superficial', but this was exceptional. It is probably also unavoidable. Any group is likely to contain people with greater knowledge of a subject and others for whom it is new ground.

That said, most of the themes were rich and well-chosen for discussion. The participants were enthusiastic about the new ideas and experienced to which they were exposed. This is especially true of those which kept closest to the overarching concept of 'beyond borders', such as migration (in Barcelona and Prague), translation (Berlin), inclusion (Pont-à-Mousson) and interculturalism (Târgu Mureş). These themes were quite concrete, sometimes political and usually accessible. They were mostly introduced from people outside the theatre sector, and by people with deep knowledge of their subjects. For many participants, they opened new perspectives on important issues facing European society and in which they felt engaged both as writers and citizens.

“ *Debating the theme from different perspectives and framing it politically and emotionally, because migration is also a vulnerable path towards unexpected effects and desires. Listening and entering the 'unbordered' territories of the imagination of the others. The fact that we had the chance to listen at the presentation of the migration issues from someone with sociological approach.*”

BARCELONA PARTICIPANT

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

In Vienna, the visit to an intercultural art space in the central market as part of the city walk (see below) strengthened this sense that the issues being discussed were real and urgent. The same was true in Pont-à-Mousson, where the city walk was a visit to an NGO, in Târgu Mureş, where the group saw the urban traces of the Romanian and Hungarian populations' complex relations. In short, the themes were an important part of the MobPros that helped prevent the discussion from being too inward-looking or professionally preoccupied, but the most successful were those most closely rooted in the place and its social and political realities – in other words, the stuff of theatre.

“ *[Most valuable was] the possibility of a deep and serious confrontation with other playwrights on ethical and political aspects of our job that are only sometimes discussed between the writers and the directors. Listening to different point of views from other writers is to me always challenging, even when I disagree.*”

BARCELONA PARTICIPANT

4.2.4 AUDIENCES DISCUSSION

Since audience development was part of the training offered to the partners by Fabulamundi, it made sense to discuss the issues with the playwrights too. Audience development is still variously understood and applied in different countries and institutions. Some see it narrowly as a way to increase customers and income, while to others it offers new possibilities of dialogue and a richer relationship between cultural institutions and society.

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme



MobPro Participants Feedback: Audiences discussion (n=50)

As the chart above shows the participants' response to the session was largely positive, but with a few more reservations from those who were less interested in the issue.

For writers, it is the latter that has most interest, and it led to some of the most fruitful exchanges in every MobPro. The playwrights naturally had different views about the question of their responsibility to audiences or wider society. Very few claimed absolute freedom of speech or that their vision was their only guide. But almost everyone welcomed the opportunity to talk together about questions that are not frequently raised in the production process. In some ways, this was the least controversial of the MobPro sessions, perhaps because many participants did not start with a lot of experience or fixed views. The conversation was therefore very thoughtful and it was possible to see people adjusting their position as new ideas were put to them and unexpected questions asked. One person reported that:

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

“ *The questions are the lessons to me. Who owns/control the play? Are we aware enough about what we are doing (especially working with vulnerable groups?).*”

ROME PARTICIPANT

4.2.5 CITY WALK

As explained in Chapter 2, the city walk was intended to give the writers another insight into the history and culture of the MobPro's locality, and to reset the group dynamics at the end of the first day's discussion. In both respects it was very successful. Almost universally, people enjoyed the break of rhythm, and the chance it gave to talk informally to others. There was positive feedback about the content, though naturally this varied with the guide. As far as possible, they were chosen because they offered a historical, sociological or even psychogeographic story of a city, and most were excellent.



MobPro Participants Feedback: City walk (n=50)

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

In Prague, where the city centre was filled with young people on short breaks, they had another perspective on immigration and how prosperity rather than poverty may create pressures on local culture. Noisy, often drunk tourists were a very intrusive presence in the streets, while bars and services catering for visitors had little to offer residents.

In some cities, the walk also enabled the writers to gain insight into the theme of the MobPro and the issues being discussed in the sessions. At Pont-à-Mousson, they visited a centre for migrants, homeless people and others in the nearby city of Nancy, where they were able to hear about social inclusion from the professionals involved. Some of the playwrights were deeply impressed by the experience:

“ *I will never forget our trip to Nancy. It was priceless to have an opportunity to see how hard is to organize a new life for others.*”

PONT-À-MOUSSON PARTICIPANT

Fabulamundi is a European project par excellence, dedicated to strengthen a space of common culture, and the city walks were a way of supporting that commitment. They helped not only create a shared experience of a place, but contributed to sense of a common past and future. Although English was the working language of the sessions, which meant that interpreters were needed by a small number of participants, it did not crowd out languages, as one writer observed:

“ *I realized that there is still an invisible border between Western European and Eastern European people in our generation. That makes me thoughtful. I will remember all the interesting and beautiful one-to-one chats. I thought quite often how happy I am that we can meet and talk and discuss and that this kind of international meetings should become something less extraordinary.*”

BARCELONA PARTICIPANTS

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

4.2.6 PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

“ *From my point of view, I am quite disappointed. [...] I had the feeling that our interlocutors in the speed date were not open to us authors, nor were they really interested in what we were proposing.*”

PRAGUE PARTICIPANT

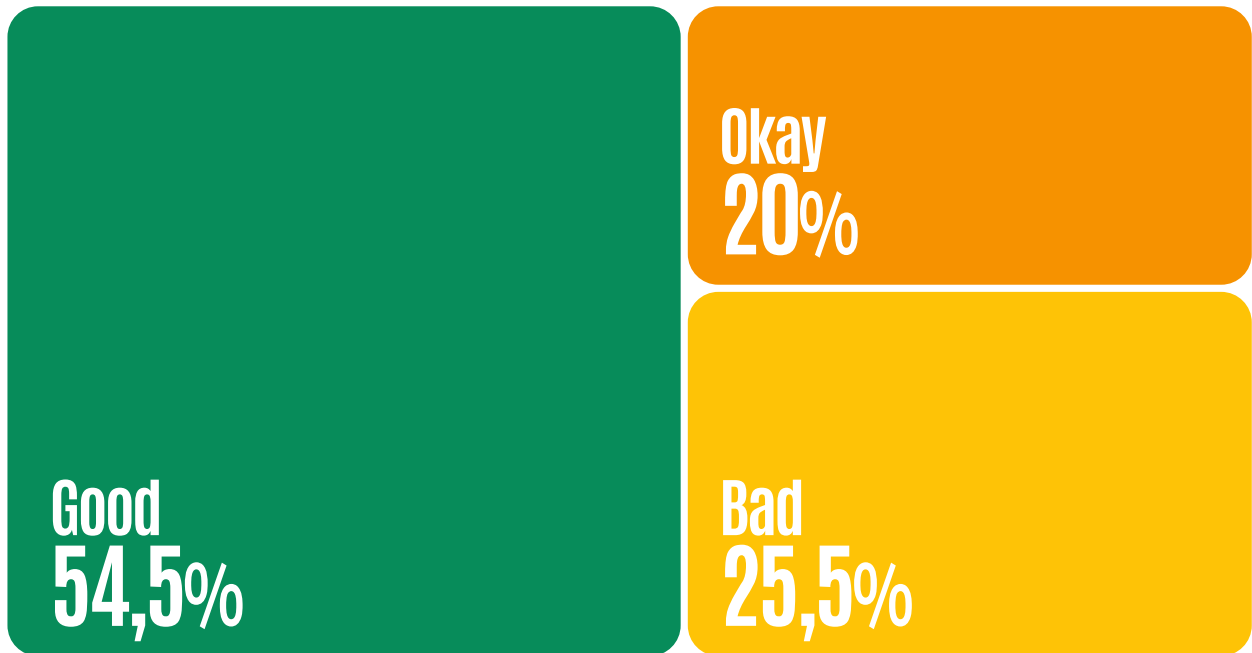
A key part of the MobPro concept was giving writers a chance to meet with professionals in the theatre and publishing industries of the host country. This proved to be the most difficult element of the programme to get right, although lessons were learned from experiences in London and Barcelona and changes were made to the approach. The London pilot had included a session on self-promotion entitled 'Life's a pitch' to which most participants responded to negatively, although a couple loved it. In general, it was clear that the writers did not like this business-oriented approach. In Barcelona, the professionals expounded at length on their institutions, which most playwrights found condescending in a different way. One person observed that:

“ *It's necessary to choose the right [directors and festivals] and I think the speed meeting would be a good idea. This is not about giving a general idea of a certain theatre national situation, but to create the bridge with [people who] can be really interested in the Fabulamundi project.*”

BARCELONA PARTICIPANT

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme



MobPro Participants Feedback: Professional meetings (n=55)

One difficulty was simply practical: who was available and willing to come and meet the playwrights. As in all such situations, the offer was uneven. Some speakers were generous with their time and knowledge, above all curious to meet the playwrights; others gave the impression of fulfilling a tiresome duty. A wide variety of approaches to facilitating these exchanges were tested in different MobPros, including more or less formal presentations, speed-dating in small groups, visits to theatres or publishers' offices, and post-show discussions; in Vienna, the meetings were organised around an evening in a restaurant. Even so, none of these different approaches was fully satisfactory and some of the writers felt frustrated by the encounter:

“

The only activity [that was not] inspiring to me was the speed date with professionals. I felt a lack of organicity and I felt a little uncomfortable perhaps a different form can be found less focused on self-promotion.”

PONT-À-MOUSSON PARTICIPANT

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

Overall, the playwrights had very different feelings about the opportunity presented by these professional meetings. Some were keen to make contacts, happy to promote their work to potential new partners. Others found it embarrassing to speak about themselves in this quasi-commercial context. Their very different professional situations also created problems. Some had years of success and were familiar with working internationally; others were earlier in their careers, and simultaneously hopeful and unsure about what they could expect. That diversity largely accounts for the less positive assessments than in other areas. The Fabulamundi team were very conscious of the difficulties, hence the variety of approaches adopted, but did not find a solution that met everyone's needs or expectations.

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

4.2.7 GROUP DISCUSSION

“ *What I realised in the discussions was the great quality of the debates, the comfortable atmosphere, the relevant questions that emphasized the necessity of debating ethical issues, political and social ones.*”

BARCELONA PARTICIPANT

The group discussions were one of the principal successes of the MobPro approach. They were semi-structured, and carefully facilitated, but not being thematic they allowed the writers to bring their own concerns and ideas forward. Consequently, they were always very different, reflecting as they did the personalities and interests of the group, as well as their responses to the physical, emotional and intellectual impressions made on them by the MobPro. Factors such as the weather, the location of the meeting or even the size of the meeting room (huge in Berlin, intimate in Prague) could have a big influence on the atmosphere and group dynamics. It is notable how often the participating writers spoke of warm feelings towards the rest of the group and the team of facilitators.

“ *I am really grateful that I got to know these playwrights (and not only the playwrights but also other people from the staff).*”

WARSAW PARTICIPANT

“ *I liked a lot the way Cristina and François made us come together as a group – with sensitivity and a lot of understanding which helped make each individual feel accepted and good.*”

PONT-À-MOUSSON PARTICIPANT

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme



MobPro Participants Feedback: Group discussion (n=52)

This was the second area where there no participants ranked the activity below the mid-point of the scale; it also scored the highest number of 5 or 'very good' rankings.

People liked the open nature of these discussions, although, in fact they were quite carefully steered to ensure they were productive and connected with Fabulamundi aims. Care was also taken that everyone should participate and no one should dominate the discussion. Since the conversation was consciously personal – it is hard to speak about creative writing without treading on such ground – it was also necessary to take care not to stray into undue intimacy. What united people was their professional work: friendship might grow out of that but it must never be forced or manipulated.



[I'll remember] the personal stories of people I got to know. Everybody is fighting an inner fight; everybody has problems that torture them. If we would understand this from the beginning, our interactions would be more polite, gentle and empathetic."

WARSAW PARTICIPANT

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

4.3 SUMMARY EVALUATION DATA

RANKING	1	2	3	4	5
INTRODUCING THE GROUP	0	1	1	16	33
n=51	0.0%	2.0%	2.0%	31.4%	64.7%
THEMATIC DISCUSSION	0	0	8	15	27
n=50	0.0%	0.0%	16.0%	30.0%	54.0%
AUDIENCE DISCUSSION	2	1	11	10	26
n=50	4.0%	2.0%	22.0%	20.0%	52.0%
CITY WALK	0	2	12	12	24
n=50	0.0%	4.0%	24.0%	24.0%	48.0%
PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION	5	9	11	6	24
n=55	9.1%	16.4%	20.0%	10.9%	43.6%
GROUP DISCUSSION	0	0	6	9	37
n=52	0.0%	0.0%	11.5%	17.3%	71.2%

4 EVALUATION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

INTRODUCING THE GROUP



THEMATIC DISCUSSION



AUDIENCES DISCUSSION



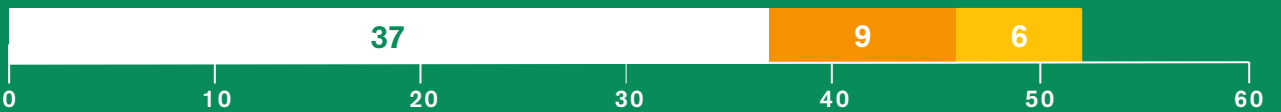
CITY WALK



PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS



GROUP DISCUSSION



“The most valuable aspect, now begins. I always find it interesting when it seems that something ends and, on the other hand, a new one begins. Now the writing begins, but also the consequences of this encounter.”

VIENNA PARTICIPANT

5 CONCLUSION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

5.1.1 SUCCESSES

Overall, feedback from the participating writers, the Fabulamundi partners, and the team involved in running each MobPro is very positive. It is clear that the programme responded to a real need among writers for theatre and that the approach that it took, prioritising the autonomy and responsibility of all the participants was welcomed by them. Almost all reported that the experience was rewarding, professionally and personally, enlarging their experience and giving them perspectives on their own theatre culture from other parts of Europe.

“ *I feel it is very important to establish and nurture these European cultural networks. To give creators time together to discuss matters and discover each other’s work. I have fond memories of our discussions on Europe and how to write that reality/utopia of a New Old Continent for the stage. There’s this Portuguese word, ‘saudade’. It means nostalgia, homesickness, longing... Fernando Pessoa wrote about having ‘saudade do futuro’ (being homesick for the future). I guess that comes close to what I feel about the MobPro experience.”*

VIENNA PARTICIPANT

New friendships were made and several participants have continued their dialogue after the sessions. In some cases, new opportunities to work together emerged naturally from the relationships that were forged in the MobPro.

“ *My play 111 was staged in Calabria in Italy at the Primavera Teatri Festival in Castrovillari by Emilia Brandi. I wrote a text for Wiener Wortstaatten in Vienna on ‘End of Tolerance’. I wrote the text ‘Michelangelo’ commissioned by the La Mousson Festival in France. Of course, the meetings in Warsaw, Prague and Vienna were amazing.”*

PRAGUE PARTICIPANT

5 CONCLUSION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

However, as discussed below, such possibilities were not the direct aim of the sessions, and should be considered a bonus to the central purpose of the MobPro, which was to strengthen the writers, as writers, within a wider family of European theatre. On that basis, the programme can be counted a strong success.

5.1.2 POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT

The aspect of the MobPros that was most often raised by the participating writers was the opportunity to exchange about their own writing. Many suggested in the feedback that they would have welcomed the chance to read each other's work beforehand. Sometimes work has circulated – for instance the two plays that were subject of sessions at Sala Beckett were sent to the participants in advance – but this was not standard. The possibility was discussed when the sessions were planned, but we were concerned that this might make it harder for the writers to meet one another with an open mind, and even encourage unhelpful competitiveness. It is also questionable how representative a single text can be of a writer's work.

Instead, it was decided that they would be invited to speak about their work in the MobPro itself, which would leave them in control of what texts they wanted to share, when and how. In some MobPros, the participants were invited to share or write a short text (e.g. on a theme such as memory), and that was a good middle ground. Some playwrights suggested the possibility of writing together or workshopping ideas:



Maybe we could have some sessions to write a text together, in that English that we all practice and destroy – to produce a kind of theatrical poem together, introducing words, sentences in other language – a European text. We can imagine some rules and protocols to produce that kind of work.”

BARCELONA PARTICIPANT

5 CONCLUSION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

In Vienna, the MobPro was structured not around producing a collective text, *The End of Tolerance*, but a play that the writers would compose in the months after the session to be staged in 2020 (the pandemic has forced the suspension of the project for now).

“ *It is also interesting to talk and negotiate a common project, when you usually work from individualities (writing) with the rigidities that exist and to negotiate the concept of creation and imagination.*”

VIENNA PARTICIPANT

This was an interesting idea, but it left those who were not able to contribute on the edge of some discussions. Still, many of the writers would welcome more engagement with one another's texts and so we suggest the possibilities should be reviewed in any similar programme in future, though care should be taken in how this is done.

Lasting connections?

Some of the writers who participated in the MobPros have been disappointed that the connections they made during those intense days together have not been sustained, or blossomed into professional collaborations. This begs the question: whose responsibility is it to make that happen? The only realistic answer must be the playwrights themselves. The MobPro was a chance to spend time with peers from other European countries. That was a value in itself, but turning that into new work or friendships was beyond the power of Fabulamundi.

The contact did lead to new work for some people, as the Spanish writer Ferran Joanmiquel Pla reported:

In November 2018 I travelled to Palermo and we worked together with the Sicilian author Giuseppe Massa for one week in the Teatro Libero. We worked on a new play about the city and its limits as a concept, we were discussing the subject and writing different fragments. Besides, Divina Mania produced a reading of my play, 'El rey del Gurugú', in a Red Cross Festival in the Anfiteatro of Lucera last August.

5 CONCLUSION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

This was not the only example of collaborations that came out of the MobPro, but such success is largely a matter of work, character and luck. Through the MobPro and its other work, Fabulamundi can facilitate and support those connections, but they can only be developed by the individuals themselves. Many of the MobPro authors do report that they have made new friends and stayed in touch with some of the people they met through the programme.

5.2 FINALLY



It has contributed a lot to my development, because I had the opportunity to get acquainted with European colleagues and exchange thoughts, tastes and writing techniques. The cool thing is that it felt like we were one team playing to one goal.”

VIENNA PARTICIPANT

In gathering 80 playwrights from different European countries and with very different artistic careers, practices and personalities, the Fabulamundi Mobility Programme took a calculated risk. Would these writers have enough common ground to make their exchanges productive? Could we establish a learning culture and methodology to ensure that the people who took part would really benefit from the experience?

This report, drawing on a thorough and multidimensional evaluation process, concludes that the answer to those questions is a definite affirmative. The playwrights benefited substantially from an experience that demanded a considerable investment of time, care and risk on their part, but rewarded that investment well. Indeed, those who were most engaged got most from the experience, and a high proportion would have come on a second MobPro if there had been sufficient capacity. The small number who did attend two – normally because someone else had dropped out at short notice – were at least as positive about the repeat session as the first.

5 CONCLUSION

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

Theatre is an ancient art form at the foundation of European culture. It is also a multi-billion-euro industry that nourishes even larger TV, film, and media sectors. All that creative work, so central to the richness of Europe's national and continental identities, begins with the writers who dream the stories we want and need to share. And yet, they are too often the least recognised and rewarded creative actors in theatre. Spending a little on their development is good in itself. It is also a wise investment in the future of the whole theatre ecology.

NOTES

Fabulamundi Mobility Programme

1.
<https://www.fabulamundi.eu/project/>
2.
Creative Europe is the EU programme fully dedicated to supporting the audiovisual, cultural and creative sectors (https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe_en)
3.
The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020, and will no longer be able to participate in Fabulamundi on the same basis as before.
4.
Actually, the MobPro have been 9, including a pilot one that took place in London and was designed and implemented by former partner Creative Skillset.
5.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000110364>
6.
<https://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/Profiles/Pages/TheLisbonStrategyinshort.aspx#:~:text=The%20aim%20of%20the%20Lisbon,jobs%20and%20greater%20social%20cohesion%22>
7.
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/2007-2013/lifelong-learning-programme_en
8.
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32011G1220%2801%29>
9.
https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en
10.
[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01)&from=EN)
11.
An example of that was the LLP funded project 'LLM – Lifelong Learning in Museums' whose main output was the handbook 'Lifelong Learning in Museums – A European Handbook' (<https://online.ibr.regione.emilia-romagna.it/1/libri/pdf/LifelongLearninginMuseums.pdf>)
12.
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/1_call_notice_eacea_32_2017-culture-ce-2018_en.pdf