

FABULAMUNDI PLAYWRITING EUROPE NEW VOICES 2023-2025

**D4.3 MENTORING REPORT
year 2**

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This report summarises the actions related to Task 4.3 Mentoring program, carried out between M1 and M16. T4.3 - Mentoring program is a twofold task: on one side, ETC is in charge of following and assessing the introduction of transversal themes of professional workshops in the AEP, while on the other, CAE is responsible for monitoring of the overall activity and stimulating debate with youngsters through a seminar per country, as well as assessing AD processes.

Project Outline

With Fabulamundi New Voices, a vibrant community of European playwrights has been created that is empowered by a shared goal to raise awareness of contemporary dramaturgy among younger audiences. Through the workshops, these audiences are introduced to playwriting as a profession and are able to expand their forms of expression on topics that are relevant to them. The workshop designs are highly diverse, targeted at different groups of participants and focusing on local themes and challenges. To guide this process and to take full advantage of the scope of the European playwright community, each local playwright is twinned with a foreign playwright from another country. In the mobility scheme, the foreign playwright visits the local playwright onsite to support them in the conduction of the workshop and to offer broader perspectives. All playwrights are trained in the peer-to-peer mentoring scheme on the transversal themes, with topics focused on Green Theatre, Gender Balance and Inclusion, and Digitalisation. In dedicated meetings after the workshops, playwrights are able to coordinate their methodologies and share their experiences, while being supported by professional guidance.

ETC successfully introduced its Peer-to-Peer Learning Path and Co-Mentoring Guideline to the Fabulamundi community at Fabulamundi's project meeting in Rome in May 2023. With its detailed overview of the benefits of co-mentoring, and a precise toolkit to facilitate meaningful collaboration both among the playwrights and with the workshop participants, alongside a glossary to define key terms, ETC's Peer-to-Peer Learning and Mentoring Guidebook offers fundamental support for an inspiring and fruitful co-mentoring journey.

Evaluation Method and Interview Adjustment

In dedicated interviews with five playwrights from five different countries, ETC has now evaluated the Co-Mentoring scheme, identifying the benefits and challenges of the co-mentoring process as well as the practicability of the Co-Mentoring Guideline. The interviews were carried out using set questions in order to create a systematic and comparable evaluation. Due to a number of factors relating to the complexity of the New Voices project, it was collectively agreed to carry out the first round of interviews in a digital setting.

First and foremost, this adjustment to a digital setting respected the needs of the artistic workflow within the workshops, given that collaboration efforts had to be communicated and structured at the very beginning of the project. With fewer in-person meetings onsite, the playwrights were able to focus more on their creative work. Furthermore, by conducting the evaluative interviews on the workshops afterwards, the playwrights were invited to reflect on the entire co-mentoring journey, which sometimes carried on even after the interaction with the participants onsite had finished. This decision was also taken in line with ETC's and Fabulamundi's sustainability goals and the rising costs due to the energy crisis, reducing the project's carbon footprint and increasing its cost-effectiveness considerably.

Key Learnings from the Evaluative Interviews

1. Co-Mentoring Experience

None of the playwrights had been part of a co-mentoring scheme with a colleague from the same profession before. Some had been involved in co-mentoring with someone from a different profession. For those playwrights, it was valuable to share work with someone in the same field of work, to be able to “connect on an intellectual level” and to “complement each other’s work”.

All playwrights met online at least once, usually twice, in addition to the group meetings. None of the playwrights met in person outside the project meetings, which is likely due to the high logistical and monetary costs. Most playwrights found the frequency of their meetings sufficient, but would have liked more time as co-mentors when meeting in person. They all appreciated the opportunity to meet in person regularly in the project meetings.

2. Benefits and Challenges for the Co-Mentors

The playwrights listed many benefits of the co-mentoring process for their careers and personal development. Most frequently mentioned was the opportunity to learn from another perspective and background, and to expand their toolbox of exercises. This was also echoed by the workshop participants: by bringing another playwright into the room, from a different country and usually with a different mother language, the participants benefitted from an international perspective and a second professional background of exercises and opinions. Especially in times of increasing nationalism on a political level, the playwrights underlined their need and wish to build and expand a sustainable European artistic network.

Some playwrights embraced the possibility of sharing the full responsibility of devising and conducting the workshop, through deep collaboration. Others felt validated by being able to share their own field of work with someone working in a similar area. In cases where the co-mentors visited each other’s workshops within a short time span, they were able to see close connections within the groups, even from different countries, opening up an international level of shared themes and emotions.

At the same time, the international dimension to the collaboration created challenges that are often encountered in similar settings. A frequent response was the language barrier that the playwrights and the workshop participants faced during co-mentoring. The feeling of not being able to fully understand the nuances of each other’s work at times hindered open and complex feedback, either between the co-mentors or with the workshop participants. Foreseeing this, one playwright deliberately chose to work with a co-mentor with the same native language. Some playwrights would have found a translator or interpreter useful for the collaboration.

One playwright mentioned funding limitations as a challenging aspect for their co-mentoring journey. When they found that their workshop groups had very similar concerns and questions, the co-mentors tried to bring them together in person for a joint session.

3. Experience with the Co-Mentoring Guidelines

While the co-mentoring scheme and peer-to-peer learning sessions proved invaluable for the playwrights on a practical level, the theoretical background that the co-mentoring guidelines provided was perceived as less necessary in the interviews. The playwrights stated that they didn't consult the guidelines after they were introduced to them at a peer-to-peer learning session in Rome. The main reason given for this was the very dense programme onsite, which included a multitude of topics and focus areas. Among this flow of information, the co-mentoring guidelines were easily overlooked. Here, a more specific focus on the guidelines during this meeting (as was implemented in later meetings) could have helped participants to come back to the document -- as would have more regular reminders.

In general, all playwrights found the guidelines a good theoretical overview of the co-mentorship, even if at times it was considered too extensive in its explanations. However, they stated that the document mainly communicated information on methods that they had already had sound knowledge of and used regularly throughout their careers. Some stated that the guidelines could be more useful to emerging or less experienced playwrights. This feedback could also form the basis for an expansion of the guidelines to include more exercises and methodology targeted at more experienced playwrights. Potentially, the methodology manual currently being devised within the New Voices project could serve as a source of input for these purposes.

One tool that many playwrights identified as especially helpful in the guidelines was the Feedback Method for Artists, which was also focused on in more depth during a session at the in-person meeting in Rome. Some had used parts of the method before but found it useful to expand on this knowledge in a conceptualised way and be able to immediately put the method into practise at their peer-to-peer meetings.

4. Impact of the Co-Mentoring and Scope within Fabulamundi New Voices

All interviewed playwrights underlined that they very much enjoyed being a part of the co-mentorship, even listing it as one of the best parts of the Fabulamundi New Voices project. Specifically, they highlighted enjoying getting to know new methods and group exercises through the co-mentorship. Some playwrights' co-mentoring journey had direct impact on their work, as they exchanged thoughts and ideas about the specific area of work they are focusing on. That way, they are now able to take new directions within their own work and to approach it with a fresh mind. For some pairings, the co-mentorship was so successful that they are planning to continue their collaboration even after their Fabulamundi New Voices journey.

5. Suggestions for Improvements

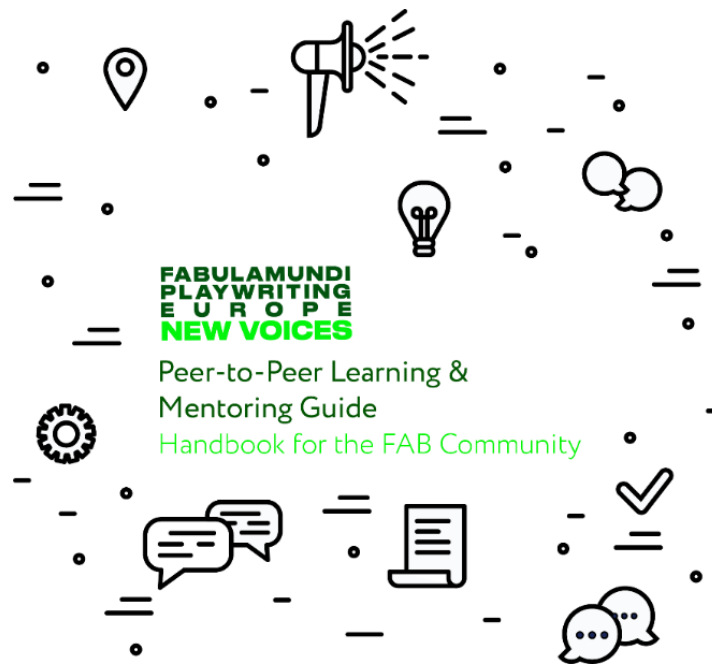
While the playwrights were very happy with the co-mentorship in general, there was a sense that more structured and individual guidance would have helped to closer define their collaboration. The co-mentoring agreement offered in the guidelines could have come in useful for this purpose, however, due to their full workload, the playwrights did not consult the guidelines after their introduction. Here, a more condensed and focused programming of the event as well as more reminders afterwards would be useful for future editions. In addition, it might have been beneficial

to programme a dedicated meeting for the two co-mentors, in which they could define their joint goals and workflow.

Another suggestion from a playwright was to invite a translator or interpreter to the workshops to facilitate the sessions. While this would help to be able to access the full potential of each other's language, the playwright did highlight that speaking in a third language instructed the participants to use very precise and straightforward language, which they perceived as an asset.

When asked for further feedback on the Fabulamundi project in general, the playwrights stated that they enjoyed being part of the project, specifically because its aim is to create a friendly atmosphere among a community of playwrights. One mentioned that it could be useful to communicate clearly which audiences the project tasks are targeted at. Another stated that for future editions, it could be useful to think about connecting the participants of all workshops in on-site meetings, to expand the creation of a European network.

ETC Co-Mentoring Evaluation



Key Figures

Date of interview:	
Interview conducted by:	
Local playwright/interviewee:	
Twinned playwright:	
Workshop Organisation:	
Workshop Country:	
Workshop Dates:	
Workshop Title:	
Workshop Description:	

Co-Mentoring Questionnaire

Please focus only on the above-mentioned workshop and twinning scheme.

Co-Mentoring Experience

- 1) Have you been involved in a co-mentoring before?
 - a. If yes, how did your experience with the Fabulamundi New Voices differ from your previous experience?

- 2) How often did you meet during your Fabulamundi New Voices co-mentoring?
 - a. Online:
 - b. In-person:

- 3) Would you have liked more/less meetings? (More/Less/Just right)

- 4) In which ways did you benefit from the co-mentoring?

- 5) Which parts of the co-mentoring did you enjoy most?

- 6) Which parts of the co-mentoring did you find most challenging?

- 7) Can you provide specific examples of how the co-mentoring has influenced your work?

- 8) Which resources or tools would have helped you to benefit more from your co-mentoring?

Co-Mentoring Guidelines for Fabulamundi – New Voices

Please review the Co-Mentoring Guidelines as introduced by ETC.

- 9) Did you consult the co-mentoring guidelines during your co-mentoring journey?
 - a. If yes, how regularly did you consult the co-mentoring guidelines?
 - b. If yes, did you consult them together or individually?
 - c. If not, why did you not consult the co-mentoring guidelines?
 - d. If not, what would have helped you to consult the guidelines?

- 10) Which improvements would you suggest for the co-mentoring guidelines or the way that they were introduced?

Take a look at the following section:

The Principles of Co-Mentoring.....	12
What is/isn't co-mentoring?	13
Benefits of Co-mentoring and collaborative reflection.....	14
Building an effective co-mentoring relationship.....	15
Confidentiality.....	16

- 11) How would you rate your knowledge about the principles of co-mentoring before being introduced to it by ETC? (1 – low / 10 - high)

- 12) How would you rate your knowledge about the principles of co-mentoring after being introduced to it by ETC? (1 – low / 10 - high)

- 13) Which part of this section did you find most useful in your co-mentoring process? Why?

- 14) Which part of this section did you find not useful in your co-mentoring process? Why?

Take a look at the following section:

Tools for a fruitful FAB trajectory.....	17
The Skill of Active Listening	18
Using the Art of Questioning.....	20
Feedback Method for Artist.....	22
Review Meetings	27
What happens if things go wrong?.....	29

- 15) How would you rate your knowledge about these specific tools for co-mentoring before being introduced to it by ETC? (1 – low / 10 - high)
- 16) How would you rate your knowledge about the specific tools for co-mentoring after being introduced to it by ETC? (1 – low / 10 - high)
- 17) Which part of this section did you find most useful in your co-mentoring process? Why?
- 18) Which part of this section did you find not useful in your Co-Mentoring process? Why?

Further Feedback

- 19) Do you have any further feedback on the co-mentoring in general?
- 20) Do you have any further feedback specifically on the co-mentoring guidelines?
- 21) Do you have any further feedback on the Fabulamundi project?

Evaluation of the workshops: the approach

Regarding the second part of the task, the Mentoring program (online and in situ) entails the monitoring and tailored evaluation of the Fabulamundi workshops. This process includes:

- Selection of an on-site evaluation team by the partner
- Selection of workshops by the evaluation team
- Evaluation of selected workshops
- Impact assessment of workshops against set ambitions
- Drawing conclusions for the future

The task is currently ongoing, and its advancements are reported in the following sections of this report. As presented in D5.1 Monitoring and evaluation plan, the approach for monitoring and evaluating the mentoring program – developed by CAE external evaluators team – is based on a phenomenographic research approach. The phenomenographic methodology is a comprehensive qualitative method that focuses on exploring and revealing the different ways individuals experience and understand a particular phenomenon, in this case, to delve into the diverse perceptions and interpretations of the participants and facilitators about the Fabulamundi workshop experience. For this purpose, three dimensions of analysis were defined, which are currently being addressed through different data-collection instruments:

- Cultural dimension, which focuses on participation in cultural activities and theatre in particular; perceptions and levels of satisfaction with the different aspects of the workshop (topics, methodology, facilitation, final product, etc.) and changes in perspectives and ideas about playwriting.
- Social dimension, exploring the social dynamics and interactions between participants and between them and the tutors; as well as the general atmosphere during the sessions.
- Personal dimension, related to the emotional and creative responses to the process and the impacts they perceived at an individual level after the end of the activities.

Out of the 66 workshops, a sample of 11 workshops, along with their corresponding participants, has been or will be selected. The following qualitative instruments were designed for this phase:

- Semi-structured interviews with professional playwrights: The 19 professional playwrights selected as part of the FABCommunity to guide the creative writing workshops will be interviewed, mostly online, by the external evaluators at the end of their participation in the workshops.
- Non-participant observation of creative workshops: During the 11 selected workshops, subcontracted observers will conduct non-participant observation of all sessions, taking notes and assessing the different dimensions of analysis.
- Online questionnaire for young participants: At the end of each of the 11 workshops, subcontracted interviewers will apply a questionnaire to all students who attended, in order to assess the participants' perspectives on the workshops.

The on-site evaluation team

In order to implement the activity, the evaluation team has asked the partners to provide a selection of professional playwrights available to conduct the questionnaires and observations in each local context. These evaluators are playwrights themselves, who took part in the previous version of the project, have an active interest in it but have not been selected as part of the FABCommunity.

Between November 2023 and April 2024, CAE external evaluators prepared and facilitated five online capacity building sessions, aimed at presenting the workshop evaluation plan and at training nine professional playwrights on the application of data-collection instruments and systematisation of data. Local external evaluators are responsible for translating these tools into local languages, for applying them correctly and sending the data translated to English in the specified format, for the external evaluators to analyse. The external evaluation experts supervise the data-collection process, being available for questions and solving potential issues that arise during data-collection. Subcontracted evaluators of the on-site evaluation team deliver:

- An observation report for each workshop, summarising their observations for each of the three dimensions of analysis for the duration of their visit;
- An Excel file with the responses to the questionnaires, according to a previously defined format.

The engagement of these playwrights as on-site evaluators is not only extremely beneficial to the project, since they are able to follow the workshops in their local languages, understanding all the different shades of the participants' engagement and of the relationship between them and the playwrights leading the workshops; furthermore, it is also a very valuable experience for them in terms of lifelong learning experience, since they are learning evaluation methodology and techniques which could be applied in their field of work also in the future. Beyond that, they are also getting familiar with the topic of audience development, intended as a process which aims at putting people at the centre of the work of cultural organisations, taking into account not only the issues related to the technicalities linked to their profession but also the very delicate matter of understanding people motivations and expectations in actively participating in cultural activities.

The assessment of the workshops

As summarised in the following table, as of July 2024, all 10 local evaluators have been selected and trained on data collection and systematisation. Out of the 11 workshops, 5 have been assessed, and their corresponding outputs have been delivered, with a total of 44 questionnaires applied. As for the remaining workshops, their implementation or selection is pending and will be defined in the following months. The table also shows the names of the local tutors who facilitate the sampled workshops, as well as the actual or expected audiences of these sessions.

Nº	Name of evaluator	Organisation	Country	Workshop observation dates	Name of local tutor	Expected audience	Observation report and questionnaires delivered	Nº of applied questionnaires
1	Cristina Da Milano	Culture Action Europe	Italy	October 2023	Eva Geatti	Theatre/Acting school students/general public	Yes	16
2	Erell Blouët	Théâtre Ouvert	France	Autumn 2024 (dates tbc)		Theatre/ Acting school students	-	-
3	Erell Blouët	La Mousson d'été	France	Dates tbc			-	-
4	Tara Manić	Heartefact Fund	Serbia	19, 26 and 28 April 2024	Patrik Lazić	High school students	Yes	8
5	Anne-Sylvie König	ITZ Berlin	Germany	2-6 September 2024		Theatre/ Acting school students	-	-
6	Ita Krajewska	SisterInArt	Poland	4 February, 17 June, and TBC date in November 2024		High school students	-	-
7	Victoria Schopf	Wiener Wortstaetten	Austria	8 March, 19 April and 17 May 2024	Alexandra Koch	High school students	Yes	9
8	Xavi Buxeda	Sala Beckett	Spain	4 March, 15 April and 9 May 2024	Oriol Morales	High school students	Yes	4
9	Bianca Elena Buta	Odeon Theatre	Romania	9 September and 6 November 2024		Young professionals	-	-
10	Pavla Klouzalová	Divadlo Letí	Czech Republic	21 and 22 April 2024		Theatre/ Acting school students / Young professionals	No	-
11	Vlad Hanes	University of Arta Targu Mures	Romania	4 8 and 9 June 2024	Elise Wilk	High school students	Yes	7

Finally, the 19 interviews with the professional playwrights selected as part of the FabCommunity to guide the creative writing workshops will be interviewed, mostly online, by the external evaluators at the end of their participation in the workshops.

Data analysis

Once all the data is correctly delivered by the local evaluators, the following analysis will be conducted by the external evaluators:

- Interviews: Thematic codification and comparative analysis, based on dimensions
- Observations: Comparative analysis of the observation reports, based on dimensions
- Questionnaires: Codification and analysis of open-ended questions and descriptive analysis of closed- ended questions.
- Triangulation of data
- Elaboration of final evaluation report