

GETTING STARTED

CHAPTER THREE: GETTING STARTED

KEY QUESTIONS

POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNERS

KEY QUESTIONS

It might be useful start to spend some time answering the following questions. You should be able to summarise in a page: what your rural touring agency plans to do, including its aims and objectives, priorities and key targets. You might not have all the answers at this stage but it helps to look at the broad issues involved.

Please note both Shoshin Theatre & Control Studio Association have offered initial replies to the following questions. Their responses can be made available on request.

1. Why are you setting up a Rural Touring Network?

- Is it something you'd like to see happen in your area?
- Is it part of your job?
- Is it to meet demand? If so, can you demonstrate that demand / support?
- Does it contribute to local strategy or priorities? If so, whose?
- Is it to broaden access to the arts?
- Is it to help the artists and companies to get work?
- Is it to provide a service to a local rural community?
- Is it to build on existing activity in a more organised way?
- Other reasons?

2. What is the purpose of the Network?

- Try and describe in a paragraph the purpose

3. What are the project aims?

Elaborate on the purpose above by setting 3 or 4 key aims, e.g.

- To bring professional touring performances of dance, theatre, music to rural venues
- To create a sustainable local network of promoters and venues
- To provide a series of workshops and participatory activities linked to performances

4. What are the project objectives?

Identify the key milestones to achieve your aims above, e.g.

- To stage xxx performances in xxx venues by xxx
- To host xxx training sessions for local promoters by xxx
- To organise xxx workshops linked to performances by xxx

5. What geographical area will your network cover?

- Is it clearly defined?
- Is it easy to explain the area you are

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covering and who is eligible to take part in the network?

- Does it follow a distinct regional boundary?

6. What activities already take place in this area?

- Have you carried out a local audit of performances and activities?
- What type of performances take place?
- Who organises them?
- What are the venues / spaces?
- What times of year do they happen?
- Are there established links between venues / organisations?
- Do you know of volunteer promoters who would like to be part of this network?
- What sort of venues / spaces could be used?
- Are there existing audiences for this type of performance?

7. Who is involved or could be involved in the rural touring agency?

- Who are the organisations who might be involved in your network?
- Who are the potential funders?
- Local Authorities?
- National / Regional Arts Funders?
- Local funders? Others?

8. Have you thought about funding?

- What do you already have?
- Have you identified any other possible sources of funding?
- How much money do you need?

9. Roles and responsibilities for those involved in the network.

- Do you know how your network will be run / managed?
- What is the structure of the organisation, e.g. independent arts organisation, charity, informal group?
- Have you thought about the legal constitution or legal framework of the organisation?
- Have you thought about what you as a network will and won't do?
- Have you thought about what local volunteer promoters will be expected to do?

10. Do you have appropriate policies in place?

- Do you know how you are going to publicise and market it?
- Are you going to run training sessions?
- Are you going to offer workshops and educational activities linked to performances?
- Have you thought about equal opportunities, health & safety, disability discrimination policies?

11. Have you got a clear timetable for launching and running the programme?

- Do you have a fixed deadline to work towards?
- Have you broken this down into key stages?
- Are you aware of the timeline to complete each stage?
- Is the timescale realistic?

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RIOTE Project. Photo Credit: Rumann Gábor

POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNERS

Who might be your funding partners in Hungary & Romania?

We asked our partners from Control Studio Association in Hungary and Shoshin Theatre in Romania to consider who might be the local funding partners in these countries.

HUNGARY

From Control Studio Association

To support a rural touring network in Hungary in the future, Control would need to count on the National Hungarian Found (NKA) through the project area called 'distribution'. We would also require the support of local and/or regional authorities.

Currently Control with Spec.Street (Utcaszak Színházi Alkotóközösség) are applying for a Creative Europe funded project but private

sponsors could be interested as well in the development of adult education in the Hungarian countryside.

Pro Progressione

Pro Progressione based in Budapest is an agency for cultural management. As an umbrella organisation, they support artists and partners in national and international involvement. Below Fanni Hajdú describes one of their current international projects.

"Play! MOBILE, an international cooperation initiated by four partners from Hungary, Romania, Serbia and France aims to encourage cultural participation in the micro regions of Europe. We believe that participatory-art should be accessible to everyone regardless of gender, economic status, age or geographical position. This currently running Creative Europe project of Pro Progressione, wishes to offer an alternative, making contemporary art available anywhere to anyone."

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Our project is planning to turn towns into stages and exhibition spaces or squares and streets of fiction, where anything can happen by the tools of art. The game as structure will determine the position of the viewer as an active, undetermined one, allowing them to perceive art in a non-direct way. Therefore, the international team of artists, together with locals from visited towns, will create a site-specific interdisciplinary and participatory game, which will be adopted to the partnering countries' different small settlements, thus bringing contemporary art closer to its audience. We believe that this approach will not only bring people closer to contemporary art in the remote areas, but will also generate discussion between cultural operators on the issue of access to culture.

Apart from the main partner organisations, our network also consists of local partners from each town the project will visit. These organisations are working with the local communities, in most cases realising cultural, educational and community activities, but with almost no capacity in terms of infrastructure, tools to reach new audiences and networking opportunities. By involving these associations, we are building their capacity in the implementation of an international project and giving them ideas of how to reach out outside the walls of institutions, reach new audiences and be part of a wider network of cultural institutions worldwide, thus fostering their further capacity building."

Fanni Hajdú, Pro Progressione

Spec.Street

Spec.Street (Utcaszak Színházi Alkotóközösség) was established in 2007. The central idea of Spec.Street is the educative force of theatre in geographically segregated communities.

"The main venues for our performances were the community centres, outdoor venues (as with Heroes of Hungary and the

Made in Gypsistan festival) and schools. Our programmes were funded by various bodies (UN, OSI, TÁMOP, EACEA, EMMI, NKA, NORWEGIAN FUND, ERASMUS +, VISEGRÁD FUND, MOL, EFOP, MAGNET BANK). The major danger in this multi-resource funding is that the programme often must be tailored to the actual funding expectation.

We are working in close collaborations with various public and private institutions in Borsod as the National Theatre of Miskolc, having admittance to the headquarter of the Roman- and Greek-Catholic Church, working-relation with the chief officers of Klebersberg Institution Maintenance Centre in Szerencs.

We have worked recently with the following secondary and vocational schools in Miskolc Dr Ambedkar, Debreczeny Márton, Baross Gábor, Gubody and the Abacus seated in Szikszó and Szendrő, with the primary schools Homrogd, Felsővadász, Alsóvadász, Lak, Selyeb, Kázsmárk, Aszaló, Méra, Forró. Fostering work-relationship with local and minority self-governments of the listed villages: Szakácsi, Abaújszolnok, Léh, Rásonysápberencs, Hegymég, Tomor, Kázsmárk, Felsővadász. "

Balázs Simon, UtcaSZAK

Control Studio Association continued

A future rural touring network in Hungary is a great possibility to give space also to independent theatre companies. The National Cultural Found in Hungary (NKA) supports also outdoor theatre festivals in rural environment. Street theatre as a form of art has a great potential to develop new audiences in socially marginalized areas. This point of view is well explained by Horacio Czeretok, in his book, the Theatre of exile, Routledge, New York, 2016:

"People in the street take no interest whatsoever in theatre and are convinced that

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it's nothing to do with them. In our cities and towns, what we know as theatre is reserved for a steadfast minority, most of whom, besides, see it as something cultural rather than artistic, as a social event rather than a personal need.

When we ask the same people the same question after the performance, the answers are marked by a substantial and surprising change of attitude. [...] This immediate and enthusiastic response by a non-audience-made-into-audience to the call of theatre in open spaces, in any city street, should be enough. [...] Our cities and towns need theatre in their streets, as a barrier against the tide of barbarism. But the people who have taken possession of it hoard it jealously, keeping it hostage within the walls of acting museums."

One other already existing rural theatre network in Hungary is the Barn-Theatre Programme (Pajtaszínház Programme).

This programme is a good model, financed by the National Public Art Institution (MNI) and partly managed by the National Theatre of Budapest. It involves 81 villages, 40% have under 1,000 inhabitants but all of them have no more than 4,000 people.

The idea of the programme is to create regional networks which are connected on national level. Every region/province choose 1-2 villages to work with a professional mentor from September to January, who they will meet with a dozen times.

The villages are changed every year, and any village/community can apply with a minimum of ten signed participants. The local community than will receive a theatre mentor/director to create a performance, based on a previously written script or one they write themselves.

In January these villages come together in the National Theatre of Budapest for a meeting, to present what they have created.

A relevant site: <https://nemzetiszinhas.hu/hirek/2018/10/folytatodik-a-pajtaszinhazi-szemle>

The aim is to build theatre making communities that continue to make work after their mentorship and direct involvement in the project is over. So far Barn-Theatre has been successful with 90% of the involved communities still existing.

Information provided by Géza Pinter

ROMANIA

From Shoshin Theatre

In Romania, the Administration of the National Cultural Fund (AFCN) or the Department for Interethnic Relations (DRI) can be an outlet for funding, as well as local or county councils. In a second circle, such activities could be supported by administrations such as the National Program for Rural Development (PNDR).

Some big companies have foundations attached to them, who sometimes give money for culture. But this kind of cultural entrepreneurship should and cannot depend solely on application-based funds, and the laborious process of linking five-six sources together.

It also cannot depend on ticket sales, as it is clear that the income generated will never reach the level of expenses. Therefore, in order to foster a dependable medium in which this branch can grow, attract companies as well as villages and therefore create a thriving rural art scene.

In the long run Romania needs a structure similar to the NRTF in the UK. This structure would need to be recreated and funding allocated at government level, which could potentially be supplemented by application-based funding or local funding.

Information provided by Csongor Köllő

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