

**Second Internship LIGHTS AND SOUND WORKSHOP** in the framework of the Fit for Life project. January 5th to February 16th, 2015

Focus Interview on 13<sup>th</sup> February. Interview and protocol: Rudolf Netzelmann

**PARTICIPANTS:**

FRANK P. SAMATWA  
MWANAIDI S. ISIMBURA

**FACILITATORS:**

TINA WOLF; LIGHT TECHNICIAN  
RAIF FRANK; SOUND TECHNICIAN  
MANAGER: DANIELA TITZE  
INTERPRETATION: MBORO

**Core topics for interview:** Internship overall assessment: view from participants, facilitators and organiser: what was the aim, what went good / not so good, recommendations for next course

**Overview:** The internship was in one respect a continuation of the precedent in winter 2014, as Frank Samatwa, from the Parapanda theatre, attended now a second time. It was new for Mwanaida S. Isimbura. She had attended a sewing training offered by Baba Watoto in the precedent course program so far.

For Frank it was important to pick up his experiences from the last year's course and widen his field toward the light area. The fact that a young woman from Baba Watoto took part in the internship was an important feature in itself as for Tanzanian standards (likewise for Germany in former times) it is outstanding that a girl / woman engages in a vocational field being quite uncommon for girls so far, and the fact that she alone as a woman and for her first time did an internship abroad. The project's coordinator / facilitators of the internship had the wish to early include a woman into the knowledge transfer activities in order to set a (feminine) sign for the center's activities (i.e strengthen multiplier effects towards this direction), and this effort was successful. Her practical background in the Baba Watoto is the sewing course but her horizon is broader: she aims at co-working in training activities, performs also as musician and sees her sewing competency in a context of design and performing arts. She and her family /friends understand her invitation to the internship in Berlin as a unique opportunity if not a stepping stone for her future life and carrier building in Tanzania.

The second internship in the frame of the Fit for Life Project at UFA met the aim to conveying core action competencies in the fields of sound and light techniques. It was imbedded in the on-going respective work of the UFA factory's technicians and facilitators Tina and Ralf where they integrated the interns as far as possible into their workflow and conveyed necessary knowledge. Both participants were acting as a team, supported each other and shared their practical experiences wherever possible. They stressed that work knowledge and confidence to own capacities have been build - not least due to the supportive environment and personal engagement of the facilitators /project manager.

As regards the participant **Frank**:

The focus of the internship was in this second stay light techniques though also sound was a theme addressed throughout the internship at various opportunities and he expected to deepen his already existing knowledge, which according to him was successful. Different to last time he could now build on his experiences gained from his precedent Berlin experience as well as the training offered by him at home. So there was better (self)confidence now to handle practical stuff, e.g. regarding electrical / electronic devices, climbing up the latter to installing things etc. Frank says that now he could do many things by his own and facilitators gave him positive feedback and appreciation. The light theme was especially important, as he is not just a technician but a trainer and musician. So for the performance on stage both aspects are relevant, sound and light, in order to create a unique ensemble and get control over the whole technical environment, required in a performance.

As regarding the sound topic Frank mentions a critical point: There was less opportunity than in the former internship to really experiment with /apply theoretical knowledge obtained. The background is that facilitators conveyed to both participants a couple of technical knowledge and facts. This seemed necessary in order to handle the digital mixing console (Digitalpult/Mischpult). The mere handling is not the big challenge; rather the understanding of functions and principles is clue. For a musician like Frank this is a central feature for his own work. So the facilitators focused on "theory", whilst practical experimenting went a bit short.

As regards **Mwanaida**:

She stresses that in Berlin everything was new to her but that she felt backed and appreciated by the facilitators and her colleague Frank. To learn about both sound and light is important to her as her perspective is to become competent in carrying out overall activities within a performance setting, from sound over light to stage and costume design. Given that these topics were not familiar to her so far she underlines that from zero on she could really learn a lot. This applies especially to the light topic. She has no doubt to being able to convey the learned lessons to her peers in Tanzania though technical equipment and general conditions are quite different there. On the other hand it seems a question of not too much time that digital equipment (such as the sound mixing console) is affordable and available at home too. And pursuant competent staff to handle it appropriately is of great importance. She pointed out one challenge nevertheless: language skills. Her English is not sufficient for communicating in the internship's working language. As a consequence she had quite much to stick to her colleague Frank in order to get things translated which was posing two obstacles: Frank has already "advanced" experience which the facilitators knew from before and through the on-going communication with him and were able to address. So there was a translation task and a competence gap to be levelled at same time. Furthermore there is a principal hurdle when it comes to sound devices: There is seemingly a "simple" practical handling but complex underlying principles, which the facilitators tried to bridge with explanations (see above). This was challenging for all involved and Mwanaida pointed out that she sometimes missed understanding at all. The good thing was according to her that she could rely on and share with Frank on the one hand, and get an understanding by observing and learning by doing. She recommended for future internships to have more time for "digesting", i.e. applying and more sharing (also with the facilitators), with more question-and-answer sessions at a slower pace. A general challenge, which was mentioned already

by both participants at the occasion of the first internship, is that technical information is mostly available only in German. Facilitators do their best to translate and convey it to English but it would be helpful to have it documented somewhere to look up independently.

### **Both participants:**

Both pointed out that the general environment for the internship was again (Frank) supportive; the relationship with the facilitators was good and offering a reliable frame for personal exchange, learning and practical experience.

### **As regards the facilitators:**

They set off that compared to the last year's internship, which was falling into the maintenance task of the facilitators' work portfolio, this time there was less room for maintenance and so for didactical and methodical work they would have liked to offer to the participants. Meaning also that they didn't feel free enough and hadn't sufficient time to open up to the participants' needs. They became aware of the different levels of both participants and felt sometimes uneasy vis-à-vis the communication challenge given that a double translation (English and Suaheli) was necessary. But there was also an inter-cultural challenge becoming evident and addressed in the interview: According to the facilitator Ralf he felt sometimes uneasy with Mwanaida, when he expected a direct feed-back from her side, especially after an instruction session and he couldn't "read" her reaction. The "non-reaction" was not just due to the lack of English communication skills but rather that Mwanaida felt it not appropriate to tell her instructor (as an authority) about her technical understanding and perception of his manner or method. This is not just an individual issue but an intercultural, as was cleared up in the talk. Direct and meta communication is not always (in all cultures) regarded as an appropriate means to shape interaction. On the other side: from the facilitator's point of view it was important to have immediate feedback on content/ understanding and method, a view resulting strongly from the interactive and informal teaching approach of the facilitator. This challenge was intensified through the language problem but not caused by it. For a next internship it could be helpful (especially when there are novices) to address this communication issue at the beginning, e.g. the facilitators explicitly encouraging participants to give feedback.

Both facilitators appreciated the extraordinary engagement of both participants and, despite the challenges mentioned here, the readiness of Mwanaida to open up to all challenges and her ability to speedily learning by doing.