LIGHTS AND SOUND WORKSHOP 8th January – 27th February 2014

Minutes and recommendations, Rudolf Netzelmann (2nd March 2014)

Participants (Internship)**:** Amani A. Lukuli and Frank P. Samatwa

FACILITATORS; Ralf Frank: Sound Technician and Engineer / Christina (Tina) Wolf: Light Designer and Engineer

Project coordinator/co-moderator: Daniela Titze DT

Moderator/ evaluator: Rudolf Netzelmann RN

Interpreter (from Kisuaheli): Lise Hoffmann

A = Answer
Q= Question

Q RN: 7 weeks internship how was it, how was it, what was most important to you

A Amani: - …was a happy time, successful, we did many small steps. Main things were: knowing technical equipment, manner of how to care for it in great detail, was a great advantage. Will be challenging for Parapanda theatre to transfer knowledge – it will take time to transfer it all, to implement it. The opportunity depends strongly on whether project can continue after expiring "fit for life".

A Frank: important was to learn how light on stage works, different types of lights, care, maintenance, important also knowing in advance how it works, same with sound. Mixing sound and light, stage box, all the related steps; it was really a school phase, not just a trip, learned a lot in detail.

A Amani: when I started in 1998 our teacher was from local community, we handled with technical devices from local environments, e.g. dimmer switch etc. we made it all by ourselves. In 2000, digital devices were introduced, was difficult and intimidating (in sense of unknown, challenging) then. Here in Germany, the system is completely new. Fantastic to learn scientifically: what is what, all the digital stuff. Learning, why is what applied...functions, reasons, places...
In Tanzania there are many people who attend stage presentations, but there are very few who can handle the technical things. It's all learning by doing there. Here it was more scientific, professional, school-like.

Q RN: school-like? -Wasn't it learning on the job here?

A: I mean school reduces ignorance e.g. here it's normal to test wires before you employ them, for us it's new. 'School' meaning that it was here very practical, you could do things by yourself. We could apply knowledge here. Good school in this sense. Also in another meaning: Female technicians are not known in Tanzania. We like to promote women in technical fields.

Q DT: As regards Parapanda theatre as well as you, the facilitators: what were you expecting, how did you master the challenge, there were no possibilities to plan any....?.

A Ralf: I was afraid because of the language - to teach, to show. We were lucky then, English of participants was good, better than mine, so no problem. As for me, I asked myself about handling projectors, micros, how to do and to convey it: I thought: Better to just doing

and then teaching/ explaining. I would be giving an example and ask to copy (repeat) it. And then doing a controlling. Main Topics: safety, careful handling (Sorgfalt), also for audience. Checking, whether everything is "cool"...everything save.
Important to work together and share things, so living a kind of "brotherhood". Participants are kind people, able to dothings together. We could learn from each other. I didn't know anything about theatre in Tanzania, now I know.

A Tina: I was curious, didn't have experience in facilitating. Wanted to learn also about Tanzania. Find out then what is their (participant's) condition, also what do they know. My Question to myself was how to teach to impart, make them do things themselves, being the challenge: We deal with dangerous things: e.g. going up the ladder when handling with projectors: he (Frank) is a bit seasick ... – I decided that I go up the ladder and he helps. Another point of departure is: We were in the middle of something when they (participants) came. My intention was then: they should know, get involved in what I was doing. Then we put some devices on stage (for exercise purposes) and tried out. So they could check on the ground what I was doing above. Point was: To ensure that they could do as much as possible.

What was really good: they had a lot of questions, we could answer. Sometimes we hadn't any idea about what their questions really were. Good was also that they started soon doing practical things. So it was a mutual way: they put all their questions and we brought our questions regarding their background, knowledge etc. After that we managed to do the maintenance tasks. They did it all alone then. The end was a theatre piece where they were involved.
Summarising the method: It was about asking, explaining, doing exercises, and then doing alone.

Q RN to facilitators: how did you understand what they knew, and how (against which criteria) did you decide where to bring them. You didn't know their point of departure, requirements on the spot at home, pre-existing knowledge.

A Tina: light /sound: the aim was teaching the basics. Additionally: they wanted to learn something enabling them to deal with their equipment at home.

Ralf: as regards of techniques we have state of the art here. Digital equipment is kind of magic black box. I tried to show them the link to analogue devices. What you have to do with devices is principally the same. You can do the whole work without expensive digital devices. So the aim was for me: use analogue devices, take what you have on the spot and do it, it works. The point is, (and this applies also to other participants in internships): They have to ask their questions, be curious, and open up.

Q RN: would it have been helpful to know at the beginning what is the participant's point of departure (knowledge level, technical conditions at home)?

Tina: It's not necessary that we know exactly what they have at home and what's their knowledge, because we asked them and by doing so we learned what is there environment and equipment and we learn also what they know about it. We made exercises in transforming equipment from digital to analogue. And it's moreover similar to our initial situation here: we started also with basic analogue equipments, so we could imagine what they have there in Tanzania. There is also a pedagogic pro (in sense of advantage) in dealing with analogue technique: if you have less sophisticated things, you have really to know what, and how, the essentials (of handling it). With digital things it's easier, you can handle everything nearly without really knowing profoundly what's about.

A Ralf: to have a few initial information is o.k. but if you lack info's, you have to get in touch into a dialogue and find out what you need to know.

Q RN: to participants: how is your view about facilitators, their methods, their way to share with you.

A F: Was a good experience. A lot of learning by doing.

Q DT: to participants: When you return to the Babawatoto centre, when it comes to teaching at home, are you (better) prepared now?

A Am: the participants in the Centre don't know a thing about technical issues. So the challenge is big. The thing is to really check what they know; they may know 1 or 2 things ... but not much.

DT: as regards methods: can we possibly think about an appropriate method, no matter which technique or topic it is about. Is it a method... e.g. that you improvise with what is available. Departing from the fact that I don't need big equipment in order to learn about basic things (as we just heard from the facilitators)…

Q RN (DT's question varied): What you have learned here (also in methodical terms) you may easily offer to those who have the same point of departure in the Centre like you were having when coming here. But would you think the method applied here is appropriate to work with people without any technical knowledge at all?

A's (both): When teaching about sound: people need to know what are the basics, to have curiosity...
(comment RN: this point was not really cleared up, but just touched upon. It seemed that it remains being a challenge that the kids and youth of the courses in the Centre start from Zero (from the scratch, from the ground)

Q Ralf: what did you expect from our side when coming here, and after the internship: what was fulfilled, what did you miss?

A's (both): expectations were mostly technical, e.g. knowing about equipment, how they work etc. Got good answers to all these questions regarding lighting and sound. Now I feel I'm able to get involved at home, not any longer staying apart when it is about setting on the stage, decide on equipments and quality. As we understand it better we'll get most (in sense of the best) out of the equipment on the spot at home.

RN: so you feel fitter for transfer, as I understand.

Q Ralf: what did you miss / what can be improved?

A's (both): Regarding our reports: we had to write (them) early, maybe there are misunderstandings, better to write later. Secondly: language. In the course there was a fascinating book on lighting. Only in German language, maybe there is something in English.

A Tina: Yes, a good book, I brought it, ... I don't have material in English.

A Ralf: one point for next projects: The organisation in Parapanda /Centre should use an Internet connection. Nearly all these technical info is available on Internet. I can support you to find out the right things.

DT: should be part in all project application contexts. Because it is expensive in Tanzania –

Tina: They (participants) could also address us later in order to communicate and clear up things. I know in Tanzania they have very scare equipments. When it comes to teaching courses on lightening e.g. you need a minimum of projectors in order to teach / learn.

Ralf: it would be a pity if you have learned (also with the aim to later convey your knowledge) so many things and you cannot practise at home (due to lacking equipment).

Q RN: how should a further course look like, what should be improved: e.g. session at the end about how to conduct a course at home (kind of a didactic unit)?

A's (both): Facilitators should definitely continue.
Extra didactic sessions? - it was not really missing.
As for the content: was good, can be imparted in the centre Babawatoto - all good.
Method: Improvement could be to explain things through graphics.
What was good and should be continued: The peaceful manner of communicating – that was fantastic.

Q RN to facilitators (regarding improvements):

A Ralf: important to find the right timing for further internships. At the current internship it worked smoothly as they (participants) were kind. We had to do our work during the internship but sometimes, at future opportunities, the pressure may be too high on us, making an appropriate facilitating job impossible.
So, regarding future internships we have to be aware of the timing. This time the internship was really good matched. And moreover: we as facilitators would repeat the experience.

A Tina: I would like to fix information, so that not only the participants would write reports. May be the report translations (done by third party) were not so correct. I would love to have more time to dedicate to this. Fixing (technical) infos has to be concise so that participants at home can use information and knowledge for their teaching at home.

A Ralf: good if there would be (next time) a person of trust, kind of supervisor, supporter, also sometimes interpreter. In our case most things worked smoothly, but in other cases it could have difficulties.

Q RN to participants: Can you tell us up to three points most important for recruiting next participants and facilitators:

A Tina: most important: >> language, >>willing to learn. >> readiness to share (a bit) leisure time.

A Amani: most important >> that someone really wants to come >> that one is ready to continue at home.

DT: What's your opinion about the plan that the core group (A and F) continues for the next course, plus two newcomer. (That) would be more sustainable as at the end we (will) have 4 experts.

Tina: really important that when they (A and F) come again they make an entire project, a show. Now they made some particular things already. They could bring in ideas and do more things than was possible so far - they have all the potential to do more.

Ralf: try to bring a female candidate! It's important. Tina: would be good to see more ladies in this field. It was also difficult in Germany when I started in this male domain.

(RN)

Core topics for interview:

1 internship/training overall assessment: view from participants, facilitators and organiser >> what was the aim, what went good / not so good, recommandations for next course

2 could the course pick up existing knowledge/qualification of participants?

3 Will the competency obtained here probably enable participants to offer training at home?

4 Recommandations: should the next course be shaped differently, regarding: technical topics, methodology (handbooks, language, Q&A, learning on the job...)

(Referring to 1+2) The internship fulfilled the aim, meeting both requirements and expectations by conveying core action competencies. Future internships could be improved if the planners draw attention to themes such as:

Competency assessment and target definition. Strong: the facilitators assessed state of knowledge, backgrounds by dialoguing and interactive teaching process and by monitoring during the ongoing work. Thus they established not only a relationship between both sides but at same time stimulated motivation, encouraged actions, questioning and bringing participants ahead through kind of continuous back-up.

- The definition of targets/objectives (for the 7-week course) could be enhanced through internship evaluation sessions, e.g. after the start, by mid-term, and towards the end.

- A didactic unit could be offered regarding each core topic, e.g. security or care. Example: how can I (as trainer at home) convey these topics to starters in a course, how to advanced?

Though the facilitators have convincingly been able to establish both a relationship to participants and a solid knowledge base combined with action competency a further support could be to have:

- two, three times someone (coordinator, evaluator) offering moderated feed-back sessions, (possibly with interpretation support) in order to check course success so far, improve processes. Examples: the lack of English technical information, the reporting matter, the use of internet could have been addressed and effectively solved early.

Reporting: On the intern's side (see participant's reports) an improvement could be:
- less formal formats with more space (attention) drawn to questions, challenges, wishes so that facilitators can pick up ongoing feed-backs (witch despite a good communication could slip away in the working situations).

On the facilitator's side:
- Useful seems a *trainer log* with relevant personal and task related notes/inputs on: methods and work techniques used, reflection on their implementation into the practice, improvement suggestions (e.g. once a week). Refers to Tinas wish to fix her experience. Furthermore: many valuable methodical and content related points were developed on the job and will be transferable to future facilitators and trainers, e.g. the assessment method, determination of learning routes and topics, supporting additional information (from learning material), use of internet and knowledge transfer (e.g. digital to analogue).
- All these things are worth to be fixed. This could be contributing as cornerstones to a *flexible internship module* with relevant supporting information for both trainers and trainees/interns and become a sustainable means for future facilitators.

Transfer (3, 4): In terms of basic didactics and methods it seems that the general learning situation in Tanzania and the practice of internship has one common ground: There: learning

by doing, here (also) learning by doing on the job. The equipment is quite different but the action-driven approach is similar. This contributed to an effective learning in the internship and high motivation. Additionally the facilitators were in a position (a bit like trainer) to offer back-up with "scientific" information to support practical competencies and to enhance knowledge regarding current techniques.

(4): A potential is to draw further on the key theme "transfer", including sustainability

- <u>translate digital equipment to analogue</u> which means essentially supporting participants to apply their technical knowledge acquired here to equipment and conditions at home.
Could be helpful to:

- provide more <u>basic/preliminary information</u> about devices and general equipment in the Babawatoto centre (e.g. by taking photographs, technical information sheets).
Facilitators would be able with these data to refer and help translating from one technological level to another. For future trainings in the Babawatoto centre this equipment is a central means for further training and practical work.

- <u>add a didactic unit</u> with the aim to support interns for their future trainings at Babawatoto, dealing with starters (see above): defining targets, activities, methods

- establish an <u>internet based communication platform</u> to provide for exchange of information, explanation regarding technical, methodical etc. issues; a database regarding sound, lighting and training with e.g. skype-based/phone call possibilities.

- (ideally) organise a <u>trip of facilitators to Babawatoto</u> to offer a support for capacity building on the spot (train the trainer, foster capacity building structures).