

- **CIRCE (Cooperative for Information and Research of Circus Education)**
Joint Staff Training exchange – Circus in Bewegung 13.05.19 - 20.05.19



1.- Participants

Barbora Adolfová – project coordinator (CIRQUEON, Prague)

Gina Triikka – educator, aerial teacher and circus artist (MONOKYKLO, Thessaloniki)

Reka Zetelaki – aerial teacher (INspirál Circus Centre, Budapest)

Paul Green – Circus artist and historian (Invisible Circus, Bristol)



Having a coffee with Rika in the city

2.- Programme Activities

13.5 – In the morning, we met with Rika, the amazing founder of “Circus in Bewegung” for introductions and a brief history of the circus school and its many social circus projects.

In the afternoon, we observed some of the weekly workshops, including high school students who take circus as their Physical Education elective. We also watched the family acrobalance workshops as parents and children rehearsed gentle acrobalance routines for their presentations at Leuven’s circus festival the coming weekend.

In the evening, some of us participated in the Group Acro class.



Kids are practicing for the performance

14.5 – In the morning, we met with Rika who led us on a tour of the city of Leuven and told us some of its stories, like ‘Proud Mary.’

In the afternoon, some of the group attended the Parkour workshops where groups under the age of 12 and over then over the age of 13, warmed-up and trained with TV presenter Nico who led the boys and girls through a course designed and built by the instructors.

In the evening, some of us participated in the aerial workshop led by Marth and Esteban, including a playful warm-up and instruction on static trapeze and silks.

15.5 – In the morning we had the option of free training.

For lunch, we met with the team of teachers and observed a weekly meeting.

In the afternoon, some of the group attended the Circus Theatre workshop at a nearby school, the Appeltuyn, to see kids working in pairs with basic movements building towards improvised routines.

In the evening, some of us participated in the circus creativity ‘Creatieles’ workshop where we engaged in movement exercises and the regular students rehearsed their routines for the upcoming festival.



Beautiful city of Leuven

16.5 – In the morning, we observed the circus workshop for people with disabilities. The group engaged in a gentle warm-up, and all were encouraged to work together in preparing the space for the workshop by rolling out the mats. The group played games and rehearsed their routines for the upcoming festival.

For dinner, we met at Hal 5, where the Parkour workshops take place, for a low-cost meal prepared by the local community.



Acrobatics class at the Hal5

17.5 – In the morning some of the group began loading vehicles with equipment from the circus school for use at the circus festival, while Gina helped prepare one of the circus tents for the festival.

While the other's helped prepare the festival site, PG attended a workshop at the psychiatric ward of the Children's Hospital. Rika led 2 groups, first boys, then girls in juggling exercises, stilt walking and unicycle. The children's confidence clearly benefited from these workshops.

In the late afternoon, the group attended the music rehearsal by the circus orchestra made up of circus youths as they practiced the songs they would perform at the festival. Following the rehearsal, Bara left to return home.

In the evening the remaining attended our first performance of the festival by professional circus group CIRKL for their incredible show 'Circus I Love You' followed by the exciting high-wire show 'Sodade' by Cirque Rouages.



Building up the festival. The equipment of the Sodade performance

18.5 – In the morning, we attended the performances devised by the various workshops from Circus in Bewegung, which were attended by many families in the community and included some beautiful performances with parents and children together, juggling, diablo, parkour, acrobalance, stilts, walking on oil barrels and more.

In the afternoon and evening, we attended more performances at the festival. Gina also assisted in the free children's aerial workshops.



Building up the chinese pole

19.5 – In the morning, we attended more performances by various workshops from the “Circus in Beweging” school, including performances by the group with disabilities and the Circus Orchestra ‘Circorkest’.

In the afternoon, we attended more performances at the festival and Gina helped again at the free children’s aerial workshops.



Gina is helping at the aerial workshop



The parkour performance called "Follow us"

20.5 – In the morning, we helped volunteers and staff take down some of the stalls, booths, stages from the festival site.

In the evening, we attended the wonderful performances of the aerial and acrobatics workshops devised and costumed by the students. After the performances, we joined the teachers for a lovely meal and learned more about their hard work.



Aerial performance

Circus in Beweging:

“Cirkus in Beweging” (Circus in Movement) offers an open house for circus education. They create artistic and social circus activities, developing the whole person. The CIB staff, instructors, volunteers, students and local community work together in developing a new form of art education.

Philosophy and Main Goals of the Organization:

“Cirkus in Beweging”(meaning Circus in Movement) challenges children, youngsters and adults to learn about and experiment with circus arts. CIB uses circus play to stimulate the individual growth through social, physical and creative development.

In 1993 “Cirkus in Beweging” was founded as the first circus centre in Flanders, with a small number of circus courses each week, some workshops and also performances. In 2009, CIB restructured the organization with three coordinators to share the workload with positive results.

Today CIB have over 1500 students and a large artistic range. They maintain a great educational home for circus with well-structured artistic practice. They also continue to improve their facilities and refine their methods for developing an appreciation of circus.

In the future, we expect CIB will continue to move, change and evolve. CIB is a beautifully dynamic organization that benefits many within the community. They have worked very hard for a long time to build something very special.

Venues:

“Cirkus in Beweging” runs circus, parkour and music classes in six venues in Leuven. Their headquarters, main circus hall, smaller halls, costume and prop workshops, storage spaces, garage and meeting and chill-out rooms are located in a former chapel close to the city centre. CIB shares the building with arts and music school. The building is owned by the city and rented to CIB for a friendly price and will be renovated between 2020-2022. During the renovations CIB would like to use a church in the city centre where they host events for their weekly classes.



The main hall: circus school in the old church

Apart from the main building there are parkour and acro classes offered in Hal 5. This space runs in cooperation between CIB and 10 other organisations. CIB is in charge of the parkour hall which was designed and its components built by the parkour tutors themselves.



The unique parkour place: Hal5

Percussion and juggling classes take place in Zevensprong school gym, performance groups and theatre classes are in a gym of Appeltuyn school, unicycling classes in Rijschool and acro-parkour classes in Heverlee sport hall.

Organizational Information:

“Cirkus in Beweging” is an NGO. In 2018 their annual turnover reached 900 000 EUR. They get 80% of their yearly income from teaching classes and providing workshops. The other 20% comes from the Flemish Region Funding and City of Leuven. The city supports the circus with a little funding but they are partners offering low rent of their venues and organising events together.

Other funding is project-related and comes from other national and European sources. CIB has been a partner or coordinator in many Erasmus+ projects for young people and tutors.

The organisation has over 100 tutors and assistants. There are 13 people employed (2 full times, other part-time), and other freelancers. They have a large group of interns and volunteers which allows them to provide classes and workshops and organise events.

Weekly classes are attended by 1 300 students, 500 of them attending parkour classes. Other people in Leuven have a chance to meet CIB tutors through almost 400 yearly workshops.

Classes:

The circus school has nearly 70 classes per week, at 6 locations. The system is really well organised: The families apply to the classes in the beginning of the semester. As they have number limits, they have a waiting list for the classes.



The teenager aerial group is practicing

The circus school has several disciplines: multicircus with juggling and circus equipment, acrobatics, balancing, aerial acrobatics, parkour, theater techniques and they have percussion class as well. Every day they have one main class type, for example Tuesday is the aerial day.

Numbers:

Depending on the teacher, “Cirkus in Beweging” have 8 or 12-16 kids per adult in the classes. They work together with young class assistants, volunteers and future circus teachers to have enough attention and safety for every kid.

Passes:

“Cirkus in Beweging” operate with 10 class passes. With their new system they could register every present and absent pupils at a tablet in the beginning of the class, making easier to call over the roll. To be more strict with attendance, they are planning to install a one-semester pass starting from the next school-year.

Creativity:

“Cirkus in Beweging” not only teach how to make the movements and how to use the circus equipment, but to build creativity.

Examples:

- Giving a juggling equipment and asking them to figure out different ways to use it
- Cutting pictures of figures from newspaper and copying the poses on aerial equipment
- Giving a position and ask them to try to reach it 3 different ways
- Teach a trick and ask them make it in an alternate way
- Make a well-learned trick with closed eyes



Well organized circus equipment

Age groups:

The groups cover nearly every age: from elementary school pupils to adults

They adjust the exercises to the group's age, the little kids have more games, often involving balls, and only endurance training (running around).

Teenagers and adolescents can have more strengthening exercises, and use the equipment with better techniques.

The warming up becomes really important at the older ages.

At the weekend they have the circomotoriek classes, where they have the youngest: kids over 3-years old can attend with their parents.

Group Performances: the main goal is to enjoy

Get used to the stage

- Every year after the first 4 weeks they have an open class, where the kids can show their parents what they have learned.
- They build a little stage to get used to moving in front of an audience.
- That class is open for the parents, so they could try and enjoy too using the circus equipment.
- Keep it optional: it is not obligatory to perform.

Building the choreography

- During the year they practice a lot of techniques: not only tricks with the circus equipment, but character-building and movement techniques as well. These exercises help the teachers to see what kind of performances could fit the group.
- At the end of the year they give them recommendations, but they let the group decide what they want in terms of the style, music, and equipment.
- To set a limit: especially with small kids, the teachers offer only a few pieces of equipment to use, so not to have a chaos at the stage.

Keep the flexibility

- They start to practice for the performance only 4 weeks before going to the stage.
- Possible problems: several times the kids don't appear at the rehearsal at the final classes, they skip the performance, or they appear only there. To keep them feeling good about it, the performance, and the teachers must be really flexible, and prepared for any situation.
- Example: one kid was missing from one of the groups, although he was really needed. Isabel replaced him at the performance and acted the kid's part to save the whole thing.

It is not a problem if it's not perfect, the goal is to enjoy

- The goal is not perfection, but how they enjoy what they do. The music should be something with good rhythm, but it is not necessary to follow it.
- Teachers can also help the kids during the performances.
- This also helps maintain flexibility.



Le P'tit Cirk Tent

CIRKL - Circus Festival Leuven (17.05-19.05.2019):

CIRKL is a three year old circus festival, whose goal is to "bring together the circus of today and tomorrow". Until this year, it was located in a big and beautiful park, the Sluispark in the Vaartkom area of Leuven, and its surrounding buildings and squares. This location offered direct access to the citizens, as it was not far from the city center.

At CIRKL festival audiences witness international, high skilled performances, innovative work from young, talented, local and international artist as well as special shows. In addition, the festival provided workshops for young and older people: some for free and others for payed entrance.

30CC cultural center, partnering with Circus in Beweging and the city of Leuven, were the organizers of this big festival, along with the support of the Flemish government, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Brussel, Ruimtevaart, OPEK, and many others.

Shows and performances of CIRKL 2019 included:

*the first two shows were performed in their own circus tends

**most of the shows and performances were played more than once during the festival

- LES DODOS [Le P'tit Cirk, FR]
- CIRCUS I LOVE YOU [Circus I love you, SE]

- SODADE [Cirque Rouages, FR]
- BELLY OF THE WHALE [Ockham's Razor, UK]
- NO/MORE [La Tournoyante Production, FR]
- SPLIT [Cie Scratch, BE]
- PIT [TENT & Zinzi Oegema, NL]
- BANKAL [Pueril Peril, FR]
- BOATE [Cirque Rouages, FR]
- CHIRINGUITO PARADISE [Sitting Duck, BE]
- STICK-STOK [TeaTime Company, BE]
- FOLLOW US [Be Flat & Circus in Beweging, BE]
- KABBAL [Circus Rotjeknor, Codarts & Rotterdam Circusstad Festival, NL, Circushumaniora Leuven, BE]
- CALCULATED RISK [MOVEDBYMATTER/Kasper Vandenberghe, BE]
- BRACE FOR IMPACT [Knot on Hands, BE]
- COMMON GROUND [Common Ground, BE/DE]
- CARRYING MY FATHER [THERE THERE Company, BE]

We should also mention the CIRCLORAMA [Panorama Kino Theatre, CH], the LUC EN LUC animating act [Productions en Zonen, BE], the two-day circus workshops and the lovely shows of the kids, parents and kids, teens, people with disabilities, and the Circus Orchestra - all students of Circus in Beweging.



From our point of view:

CIRKL was for us three days full of love for circus, spectacles, excitement, joy, colours, sounds, movement and people. We had the chance to be involved in building and taking down circus tents, performance stages. We met circus people from all over the world, got information of how to organize and run a big festival.

Our minds and souls were nourished by the workshops and performances. We spent our time with excited smiles on our faces, overwhelmed by so many impressive activities and fantastic worlds.

Everyone in “Cirkus in Beweging” is so friendly and happy to share their experience. They are used to having visitors and everyone is able to explain things in English.

The staff and volunteers mainly consist of former youth circus members which creates a family-like atmosphere and a feeling that everyone in Leuven does circus.

Their main tutors are true professionals and inspiring people.

We were very impressed by Annelies and her administrative talent with charts. It is great to see that there can be a system to things in the world of circus. The same goes for their internal databases and apps operated by Tobias.

We like the concept of having music classes being part of the school curriculum.

And also like the idea to open the specialised classes to both children and adults because it allows parents and children to come train together.

Rika has a wonderful energy and we admired her subtle way of pushing you to do things you might not dare to without that (personally and as a school).

Many thanks to everyone involved for sharing their work with us during such a busy time!

