

Feedback Report
Kigali development work
2nd - 6th October 2018
BOP hosted by British Council Rwanda

“I thank you that we are able to make something beautiful and something great” –
Anisia



Image of Parfaite Mugisha developing movement

At the start of October 2018, BOP were supported by the British Council to return to Kigali to work with the disabled artists they had met in February 2018. During that initial visit the aim of the work had been to deliver capacity building workshops as part of the ongoing development work of East Africa Arts; a project working with artists and companies from across East Africa with a focus on cross-artform practice and disability equality.

During BOP's initial visit to Kigali we worked with a larger group of disabled and non-disabled emerging artists and practitioners over three days of workshops to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to co-devise work, informed by BOP's own processes of devising/storytelling/movement. BOP worked to improve participant's knowledge and confidence in making work, whether as a non-disabled person collaborating with disabled people or as a disabled artist working solo or in collaboration.

BOP also gently challenged the group to think about disability equality - to step away from 'helping' disabled people but instead to think about how to empower them as individuals to make work. For BOP a

major outcome of this period of work was the disabled artist's realisation that they wished to make work on their own terms.

Between BOP's two visits to Kigali one of the artists – Anisia Byukusenge – came to the UK. This came about in part after an initial suggestion by BOP that a trip to the Unlimited Festival in London in September 2018 and time with BOP and other artists in Glasgow could have a big impact on the development of the artists. Initially Valentine was also due to travel but sadly his Visa application was denied and Anisia was the only artist to come to the UK.

This evaluation report looks specifically at what BOP did during its return to Kigali in October 2018, following Anisia's trip which is documented separately.

What was the aim of the week?

"I had feared people speaking my poem" Anisia

The final aim of the week was to work with 5 developing disabled artists, including Anisia, to create a performance using her poem "My Journey is a Sign of Hope". When initially discussed with the British Council in planning stages the aspirations for the week were not so clearly focused and started with more of a remit around professional development. This morphed and became clearly focused over the summer, and following working with Anisia in Glasgow, and the British Council being able to find funds to bring Rachel out with Mairi and Robert. This allowed the BOP team of three to work very intensely over the 5 days and to push everyone involved to realise the beginnings of a final performance.

There was an overarching aim of consolidating all that had gone before - pulling together threads and themes from across performances and with past fashion work being involved in the wider BC Rwanda "Telling Stories' project. There were some challenges in this for the BOP team as documentation of previous work was lacking. However, we entered the five days with a lot of knowledge and ideas regarding Aanisia's work and the knowledge of the other artist and their skills from February.

What happened?

Robert Softley Gale (Artistic Director), Mairi Taylor (Executive Producer) and Rachel Drazek (freelance Movement Artist) worked over five days with:

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| 1. Anesie Byukusenge | (Poet performer – Performed in June and July)
+ PA (Umuhiza Clarisse) |
| 2. Valentin Dusabe | (Performer; performed in the last year, June, July) |
| 3. Parfaite Mugisha | (Dancer, singer, Performed in Last year's play and June play) |
| 4. Emilienne Muhawenimana | (Performer, performed in Last year's performance) |
| 5. Claire Mukanganizi | (Performed in Last year's play, and June) |
| 6. Niyokwizerwa Jean Bosco | (Pianist & performance – Played the music/piano in July play) |
| 7. Sallomon Dushimimana | (Guitarist & performance : played guitar in July Event)
+ (PA Nyirahabimana Louise) |
| 8. Cedric Mizero | (Fashion designer and Performer, directed the June Play) |

9. Simon Iyarwema
- Performance Coordinator.
 - (Choreographer Theatre: He co-choreographed the July play)
 - Interpreter
 - Director following BOP's departure

The core material of the performance was Anisia's poem and from this alongside ideas and images developed in Glasgow we started to work swiftly on exploring themes in the work, drawing from the skills and interests in the room to create a schedule that would result in a performance for sharing at the end of the five days. We wanted to leave a structure that could be developed but ensure that the whole piece was mapped out and that those being left to oversee and perform it were confident in the content and the intent.

It must be noted that five days in a very short time to create new work and that the need for translation meant that we effectively had half of this time to make the work. We did have an excellent dedicated translator who was then going on to be the rehearsal director and this approach worked well given the time and resource constraints.

At the end of everyday the BOP team would plan the next day in response to what was developing in the room and with the final performance in Uganda very much in mind. A schedule was provided every morning so that everyone knew what was planned for the day.

Day 1 Tue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions - name and what do • What have you done since we were last here? • Anisia spoke about UK trip • Read through the poem - Anisia prompted by group as reciting from memory • Structured poem into 11 sections • Established a set of rehearsal room rules (attached at end) • Discussed characters and voices in poem • Discussed ideas for structure and approach • Devising of warm ups to do during the week • Worked on a movement section that Anisia devised in Glasgow - based around the line 'take me to the sun'
Day 2 Wed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm up led by Rachel and Robert • Handed out schedule for the day • Movement devising around the line 'let's back in my childhood..." • Bosco and Sallomon worked on underscore for this section • Rehearsed with movement, lines of poem and underscore • Post lunch warm up - Parfaite • Explored audio description • Bosco and Sallomon taught group a song created from lines within the poem • Movement session with fabric, inc hiding exercise

Day 3 Thu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm up led by artists - Claire • Film crew introduced • Schedules handed out • Run through from top • New song learnt - Hope finale song • Bed images and working with fabric • Lunch • Split up to work - Anisia and Robert to chat about text and translations, Valentin on solo, Claire and Parfait on finale modeling movements, Parfait on creating song • Post break share individual work • Rehearse song
Day 4 Fri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm up - Anisia and Simon • Voice work with Robert • Dividing up final sections of text • Post lunch - movement work and links including lifts and animals • Rehearsing from top
Day 5 Sat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm up • Rehearsing from top and working on final section • Lunch • Final run throughs • Sharing • Interviews filmed in and around day
Day 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with Simon to work through script, ideas and points for development and rehearsal • Agreed to send on materials and offer to work on captions

What were the outcomes?

At the end of the five days we achieved:

- A 20 minute in-progress performance that was ready to share
- A script with blocking, movement cues, and design suggestions
- Increased confidence in artists to contribute to creative and development process
- Set, prop and design ideas discussed and left with Cedric to realise
- Simon left with a rounded understanding of the work with the materials to rehearse and develop

Feedback

There was only time to hold a short feedback session at the end of the final day and the following themes emerged:

- People were satisfied, and sometimes surprised, with how the performance had come together
- Reflection from many that at the beginning of the week they '**...couldn't imagine this is what it would look like!**'
- Anisia was pleased that the work reflected her original vision

- Everyone understood we had all achieved a lot in a short time
- Everyone expressed that they had learnt from each other in the room and would take skills forward
- People spoke about and saw leadership qualities in the artists
- Collective sense that an important story was being shared
- That this story should '**shine out bright**' in Kampala and reflect the hard work of the development days
- Acknowledgement that BOP worked around everyone's skills - '**wise in what they gave everyone to do so that everybody was given movement**'
- Access workers and others - for instance the Psychologist from Bosca and Sollomans' school were exposed to new practice

Challenges and reflection

- Time was very tight and more so due to need for translation. Despite this a huge amount was achieved. More time would allow deeper learning and understanding to go alongside the output. For instance, there would be more time to interrogate if people were truly understanding aims and process.
- Facilities were not great nor accessible for everyone - it was very challenging for Robert to use the toilet on site. This is noted with the caveat that we are very aware of the challenges in finding space and that we know the organisers were aware of the lack of suitability.
- Existing materials were scarce in a scenario where we were being asked to draw a whole project together with little knowledge of past elements. Script and recordings or the sort of documentation that came out of our week would have aided.

Disabled Artists - changes and observations

At the end of our February 2018 report we commented on:

"We would also suggest looking at what the disabled artists may need in terms of training and developing technique. For example, many of them spoke with quiet voices and were clearly not familiar with being assertive within a performance environment. Voice coaching and similar classes would be hugely beneficial to the disabled artists in developing their careers."

We would recommend that translators are used in these situations - there were three plus languages in our workshops and it became a layered process communicating and understanding."

On this visit we noted major changes:

- Confidence - vocal projection and presence in the room had greatly improved
- Articulation - Cedric being clear he wants to support them
- More discernible skills developing - Emeline holding show in her mind and supporting others
- Lack of skills more apparent but at least identifiable so could be more easily supported

The artists are lacking core skills that come with training - for instance the ability to hold and retain movement - but we can see that this is developing.

In conclusion BOP had a wonderful time with the group in Kigali and were very pleased with the processes we used and the journeys that the individuals went on. We feel that we managed to foster an accessible

and creative environment which left everyone with a desire to continue and a passion for the messages we delivered.

A major rationale for the February workshops was to create opportunities for more collaboration and also the space for the disabled artists to develop in a disabled-led environment - on our return we could feel this being realised.

What did BOP learn?

- Timeframes impact on practice and dilute good practice when you are trying to work in an inclusive way
- There are challenges in working across cultures and not knowing what you don't know
- In a situation where you rely on translation you will never fully understand what is going on in the room but this does open up other avenues of communication
- We can work successfully as a creative team in response to intensive conditions



The team, Claire behind the camera, heading to Kampala 31st October 2018