

MYRITH

Myths, Rituals & Theatre

A Partner Driven Cooperation Project

Teater Sagohuset & Natana Kairali
Sweden & India
2012 – 2013

REPORT

MYRITH 2012 – 2013 SUMMARY

Teater Sagohuset, Sweden, and Natanakairali, India, have implemented the Partner Driven Cooperation Project MYRITH – Myths, Rituals & Theatre, in India and Sweden 2012 – 2013.

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs writes in the report, "Human Rights in India 2010": *"People with disabilities have a very difficult situation. According to a report by the World Bank in 2007 between 40 and 80 million Indians are suffering by some form of disability. Access to education, health care and jobs are limited for these people, as well as convenient access to public buildings and transportation. Many disabled people are subjected to extensive social and societal discrimination."*

It was within this framework Teater Sagohuset and Natanakairali implemented the Partner Driven Cooperation Project MYRITH – Myths, Rituals & Theatre. Teater Sagohuset primarily works with dance and drama in the form of newly written and topical works. Natanakairali primarily works with traditional dance and drama with ancient roots and traditions.

The project's focus was to develop, enhance and disseminate methods and knowledge about how children and youth and people (children, youth and adults) with disabilities can be included in cultural activities with an emphasis on dance and drama.

The objective of the MYRITH project was to strengthen the cooperation within the field of culture between Teater Sagohuset and Natanakairali and other parties in Sweden and India.

In May 2012 the project started in Lund with steering group meetings. Natanakairali performed the play Sita. A workshop was conducted by Ms. Margareta Larson about Teater Sagohuset's working experience with disabled children. Work continued with meetings on project goals, target groups, gender mainstreaming methods and action plan.

Natanakairali conducted a detailed survey on various centers working on disabled children and adults in Trichur and Ernakulam Districts in Kerala.

In December 2012 Teater Sagohuset staged the play Vargens Öga at Ammannaur Chachu Chakyar Smaraka Gurukulam and Pratheeksha Training Centre.

In January 2013 Teater Sagohuset conducted a two-day workshop at Pratheeksha Training Centre. Natanakairali conducted a Kutiyattam workshop for members of Teater Sagohuset.

During this first phase of the project Natanakairali presented Pavakathakali (Traditional Glove Puppets of Kerala) for disabled children and youth at Adarsh Charitable trust Near Skyline Apartments, Raksha Society for the Care of Children with special Needs, Pratheeksha Training Centre School for mentally Challenged Children, and Sreeparvathi Janasevasamithi Chulissery.

In the second part of the project Natanakairali presented Pavakathakali at Reach – Swasray Special Child development and training centre for the differently abled, Snehadepthy Special school for mentally challenged children, Pope Paul Mercy home, Sneharam training centre special school for the mentally

challenged, Cyrene special school for the mentally handicapped, Asray Bhavan training centre for the mentally retarded children, Jai Christo Sadan special school for the mentally challenged children, St. Joseph's school for mentally challenged, Thanal Balasramam, Sadasiva Madava Seva Trust, and at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in Delhi.

Teater Sagohuset performed Max - the play about the ball, the car and the lamp at Don Bosco Sneha Bhava (with a workshop for children), St. Joseph's school for mentally challenged and at Natankairali.

Steer group meetings, evaluation meetings and work with report took place in December 2013.

May 2012 – November 2013 Teater Sagohuset worked with a series of dance and drama activities for and with children and youth with disabilities in Sweden.

The project has reached the following target groups:

Children and youth with disabilities, India: 1843

Professionals, India: 297

Children and youth with disabilities, Sweden: 355

Professionals, Sweden: 48

General public, India: appx. 1040

General public, Sweden: 736

Through the MYRITH project Teater Sagohuset and Natanakairali have strengthened the cooperation within the field of culture between our organizations and other parties in Sweden and India.

The MYRITH project has developed, enhanced and disseminated methods and knowledge about how children and youth and people (children, youth and adults) with disabilities can be included in cultural activities with an emphasis on dance and drama.

Through creative and artistic work the project has given children and youth with disabilities, girls and boys in equal numbers, access to traditional and other cultural expressions in India and Sweden. New and sustainable cultural relations, networks, activities and projects are established between Teater Sagohuset and Natanakairali on both personal, professional and organizational levels.

New structures for communication and exchange of artistic needs, ideas, positions and possibilities are established between our organizations. Artists, actors, dancers, musicians, puppeteers, stage designers and producers in our organizations now are familiar with methods on how to work with inclusive cultural and creative activities for and with children and youth with disabilities. New mutual cooperation projects, for and with children and youth with disabilities in India and Sweden, are planned, including new partners such as a teachers training centre in Kerala and a puppet theatre group in Sweden.

The MYRITH project has contributed to long term development objectives regarding poverty reduction through development, enhancement and dissemination of locally adopted methods and activities giving children and youth with disabilities access to and participation in cultural and creative activities.

It has also contributed to democracy and human rights, in particular Article 27: Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Also according to Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 2, ensuring a life without discrimination and protection against all forms of discriminations, and Article 31, safe-guarding the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

Using cultural expressions and activities the project has stimulated children and youth with disabilities to use their rights to express their opinions and thoughts within and outside their communities and social contexts.

The project has used gender-mainstreaming methods on all levels (target groups, staff, management, distribution of means and resources, activities and thematic perspectives) explaining and using equality between women and men in every aspect of the project.

Finally, the MYRITH project stimulates sustainable development by using cost efficient, socially inclusive and environmentally friendly methods that changes attitudes towards children and youth with disabilities in a positive way, creates new plans of actions including children and youth with disabilities in cultural activities and give children and youth with disabilities a better start in life.