# A TURKU learning EXPERIENCE

## PREMEETING:

The EBW starts long beforehand: making appointments, planning itineraries, packing. So the trip itself already becomes part of the story. Via WhatsApp group and e-mail the travel plans are shared and in your imagination you can thus see a whole movement starting up from all corners of Europe towards Turku, the beating heart of the European Bibliodrama Network anno 2023.

At the pre-meeting a day before the real start, bibliodrama teachers from Germany, Sweden, Finland, Poland, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Romania and Belgium meet up. How wonderful it is to dream together and put all those dreams in our midst. This is what it's all about: this shared vision.

In think tanks, we exchanged about our dreams in dialogue with reality.

- How do we see the future of European BD training? Finances are an important question here. A new think tank is put to work. Will it remain as in the past? What do we want to keep? What do we want/need to do differently? Who will coordinate this? What new formulas can we come up with?

- Is there such a thing as an EBN certificate? We conclude that there is only the Charta, once designed many years ago. This text urgently needs an overhaul to include the Interfaith section and should then be linked to the EBN website in English. The EBN is an informal organization. So we don't have real authority. However, the Charta can serve as a guideline for local bibliodrama organizations. We therefore put the responsibility for quality training and certification in the hands of the organizers in different countries. They can use the Charta as a reference. But since bibliodrama is not a protected brand, we cannot give it more weight. . Honour, therefore, is not an EBN certificate. However, if with wants to use the EBN logo in certification, there must also be connections through international programs and teachers and by possibly reporting this also to the EBN secretariat.

- Promoting bibliodrama initiatives remains challenging. Maybe influencer Mari can help with Instagram and TikTok. Maybe it helps to have a more interactive page on our website. Maybe different people could more actively circulate the promo. Maybe an open EBN Facebook group.... would help.

- The interfaith work continues and we hereby promote the EBN Interfaith group.

So much has happened since corona. Although not everything is running optimally, we are seeing greater involvement from more people from various countries and we can only be happy about that.

## THE PROGRAM IN OUTLINE

On Tuesday evening, we got to know the participants and the countries in a playful way. Manneke Pis was allowed to attend.

On Wednesday morning, we were introduced to the background to the difficult text we would be working with.

Then followed the introduction and the first bibliodrama work in our workshop with leaders from Uk and Finland and participants from Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Poland and Belgium. There were 3 other workshop groups with leaders from Estonia/Finland, Poland/Switzerland and Germany/Poland.

In the evening we, Anja(D), Helene(Z) and I, got to lead the EBN meeting. That became very dynamic and full of energy with thanks also to Lotta.

On Thursday, we dived intensively into the text in the workshop with Mandy and Noora.

Then in the afternoon we explored the historical and current background of the region and Turku. Some wandering through a lively city full of art and markets was delightful and we also immediately learned more about Finnish life. ( now in summer)

On Friday, workshop work alternated with a mini pilgrimage to a neighboring church. What an original surprise this little church was and immediately a lively introduction to how Lutheranism gained a foothold in Finland.

In the evening, we celebrated the European bibliodrama fraternization/salvation with a unique musical introduction. A skit on the" Finnish way of being ", by Mari, good food and drink ( with nasty consequences afterwards) and a dance party... Delicious.

On Saturday, the suitcases were packed again. In a closing ceremony we brought together our experiences in the various workshops and then it was time to say goodbye again. Silently our bibliodrama family swarmed out again to all those European countries.

We were left with a gentle farewell with a personalized street concert, an overnight ferry trip to Stockholm and a sick stay. On Monday, we flew home with a stomach ache and belching - was it from the food or from intense missing?

## WHICH LEARNING HARVEST ?

I would like to collect various items here for inspiration.

### LEARNING HARVEST PRE-MEETING

- In dialogue with other European partners, we discovered that we need to develop a new route to give European bibliodrama training a future. After all, those responsible from the previous editions have reached an age where they want to pass on their work. But because the whole organization was mainly in the hands of one person, nobody sees a need to take over because in the same way. Therefore, we are going to start a think tank with 3 people, from Belgium, Sweden and Finland, to see what is possible in the future and how the trainings can be remembered

- I learned that cooperation is essential here, not only for quality training and further education on bibliodrama, but also for mutual understanding and strengthening relationships and exchange with our European partners

- we learnt that interfaith vague a specific approach and that there is a working group of our own looking further into that.

- I learned the importance of properly delineating responsibilities, for example, me in view of certificates. For bibliodrama, who has the authority to outline the conditions for giving a certificate for Basic Training and for specific follow-up training, for example? We learned that a rewrite of the Bibliodrama Charta is in order.

### LEADER TEAMS

I learned that proper consideration around the composition of a guidance team for a bibliodrama workshop requires careful consideration. The richness of an international team may sound very good on paper, but in practice it turns out to be especially important that the two partners can coordinate with each other and respond to each other if a coherent bibliodrama program is to be achieved. Due to previously randomly assembled teams now, cooperation was not always smooth. We have also noticed this in the past. The delicate process of a bibliodrama requires careful preparation and construction. Through interaction with the group, this has to be constantly adjusted and adapted. To do this smoothly, good agreements and good communication between the facilitators are necessary. So I learned that choosing your partner carefully both for live and online work is essential to avoid ending up in confusing or unsafe situations.

Suggestion for the future: let the partners choose each other so that all attention can go to the bibliodrama process and the group and no energy is lost in "tuning in" to each other.

### A DIFFICULT TEXT LIKE ROM 8, 18-28

The text we worked with was a particularly difficult one. It was apparently a text that one of the organisers had a special connection with.

- I learned that it is not a good idea for a larger program in which others also work, such as the EBW, to take a text that one person has a special connection with and has studied very deeply. Because:

- by and special connection you usually have more background and knowledge than the average facilitator and the average participant in your workshop. As a facilitator, you therefore have certain expectations and there is a chance that you lose your "open" mind, that you unconsciously steer certain directions and that you bring confusion to your participants.

- A difficult text brings additional difficulties because we all work with translations . Even the English translations use many different and difficult words. This causes extra confusion which can complicate the bibliodrama process.

Suggestion for the organizing teams: choose a theme in which the facilitators can choose their own text. Or choose an accessible text that is broad enough for facilitators to make their own choices.

### PERSONAL and BIBLIODRAMA LEADING LEARNING

- At the same time, I learnt that it helps to be as open and receptive as possible as a participant. When you do that and engage in the process, you can always discover meaning, even in a text that you don't otherwise connect with or understand much about. Even "not knowing" can thus be a learning point in itself in the total confusion of unclear instructions. It brought me to this important learning point of mine: it is a good mantra to regularly tell yourself "you don't know". Also as an antidote to all the judgements and knowing in e.g. social media. SONO ma NON SO

- I learned again through experience the power of working with dolls, symbols and creative processing, of giving color and working in the material (paint), of putting all the works together , of giving names and thus making a poem ... of contact with nature and just seeing and hearing and smelling and feeling...

- I learnt the power of body movement, of turning your back on what evokes your resistance to then look into the eyes of an "unexpected apparition" and make wordless contact ( Ewa)

- Once again, I learned how important precise instructions are in every step you ask of participants. Unclear instructions that ignore what the previous step was bring confusion and make people drop out. BV You have your own experience in hand and suddenly you get the other person's experience in there... If that is not thoroughly introduced people drop out or get confused.

- I learned the importance of contemplating the play space : where do you allow play? Is there enough space? Where do I put the different groups? What distance is needed to move towards each other? Meanwhile, where are the other participants?

- Order of activities: Do you oblige people to take a first step or invite volunteers? What about immersing and shedding the negative without some form of "healing" afterwards... Where you risk leaving people behind in that negative storm. What kind of healing is appropriate then?

- I learnt the importance of empathizing also as a facilitator in what you see and in what you trigger through your actions. It is not just about observing the outside but certainly also trying to find out what is happening on the inside of each participant with a view to adjusting if necessary. "Don't just enjoy what is happening, but take that step further to check if everyone can move on.

- I learned that a Jewish and Lutheran facilitator can work perfectly well with a Christian text if you proceed with the necessary openness. However, I also discovered the diffidence and personal struggles of the Jewish counsellor. Interfaith work requires a lot of probing and goodwill from all parties.

- I learned the power of inclusion in your program where the same elements recur and strengthen the whole

### EUROPEAN CONNECTION

- Apart from bibliodrama, I learnt about the history and current life of Finland, the origins of the Lutheran Church and the 'Finnish' way of life. The relationship with Russia and the war in Ukraine was also discussed.

- I learned that the EBN is an important network where people from so many different countries connect around their shared passion of bibliodrama, but at the same time strengthen their knowledge and connection with all those different countries from which people participate. It increases mutual solidarity, exercises us in European citizenship, sparks our curiosity in what we share and where we differ, ...

- I learned that by collaborating also in between through digital means and through online bibliodrama, this connectedness is kept alive and further strengthened and refined.

- I learned to look hopefully and confidently to the European (bibliodrama) future and to take up the challenge to participate in it. Connectedness like this is an essential counterweight to divisive and hateful thinking .