

NORDIC CIRCUS SURVEY

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1. INTRODUCTION

A new concept of circus began to take shape in the USA and France in the early 1970s. The change was linked to the birth of new institutions, developing out of a combination of new infrastructure for education and rising levels of public support for the production of new circus. The operation of new circus companies were key to the development of the art. The essence of the circus art form is integration: it originates from the dialogue and synergy between popular and high culture, different art forms, traditions, nationalities and cultures.¹ The special strength of circus art is its versatility of physical expression that is not based on any spoken language. Today, the terms ‘new circus’ and ‘contemporary circus’ are used in parallel. The use of the terms varies among the Nordic countries depending on the development and status of circus in each country. The attraction of traditional, touring tent circuses has remained strong in the Nordic countries.

The Nordic Circus Survey provides an overview with the aim of facilitating a better understanding of the current situation regarding circus art in the Nordic countries. The study examines the educational, artistic, social, culture-political and research-based dimensions of the circus art form. The themes examined in the survey are youth circus activity, professional circus education and training, professional circus artists and companies, and circus research. The youth circus activity section examines the circus activity provided for children and youth in the Nordic countries. Social circus and its on-going projects are also presented in this section. Questions related to the availability and quality of professional circus education and the number of circus students are examined under the topic of professional training and education. Matters relating to the number of professional artists and companies, and their operational conditions are viewed under the section on professional circus artists and companies. Forms of funding related to circus art are also examined here. In addition, existing circus-related research and institutions that conduct circus research have been introduced. Besides these themes, a brief introduction to the main international networks and Nordic cooperation is provided.

This survey is a part of the *Nordic Circus Year 2011*, a project that is carried out by the central Nordic circus organisation, namely the **New Nordic Circus Network (NNCN)**. NNCN is a partnership established with the aim of placing contemporary circus on the Nordic cultural map and creating an overall development programme to improve conditions for the circus sector. NNCN was established in 2007 and is organised by the

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1 Purovaara 2011a.

Copenhagen International Theatre (KIT) in Denmark, the **Finnish Circus Information Centre** and the **Cirko Center for New Circus** in Finland, **Circus Village Network** in Norway, and **Subtopia** in Sweden. The Finnish Circus Information Centre acts as the coordinator for the *Nordic Circus Year 2011*.

The method of the survey work is based on mapping and collecting existing information regarding the circus art form in the Nordic countries. Both new/contemporary and traditional circus are included in the survey. Because the number of publications (surveys, statistics) is limited, the existing information has been compiled based on interviews and e-mail correspondence with the central actors in the field of Nordic circus art, representatives of the schools and officials from the National Arts Councils.

While the scope of this brief paper does not permit a comprehensive study of the field of circus art in the Nordic countries, it provides a summary and a tool for further reflection for administrative use and for the development work of the NNCN. The survey aims to provide proposals on how circus art in the Nordic countries should be developed and supported and how Nordic cooperation in the field of circus art could be enhanced in the future. The proposals have arisen from the seminars, interviews and the research work conducted during the Nordic Circus Year and are based on the New Nordic Circus Network's view of how circus art should be enhanced.

It is the first time that this kind of mapping has been conducted in the field of circus art in the Nordic countries. The survey results are not only significant in the Nordic countries but also in a wider European perspective. Some results of the survey work were presented on May 6th, 2011 in the seminar *New circus as a strength in society – Ny cirkus some kraft in samhället*. This event was co-organised by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture as part of the Finnish 2011 presidency programme of the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Finnish Circus Information Centre as part of the Nordic Circus Year.

Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 present the main findings regarding the policies of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden under the themes of youth circus activity, professional education and training, professional artists and companies and circus research. The countries are examined individually in order to identify their characteristic features and thereby provide a wider understanding of the current situation. Chapter six examines the situation in Iceland and the Nordic region's autonomous territories. Information regarding Iceland and the territories is very limited because circus art is still a young art form in those areas. The seventh chapter presents the main international circus networks and takes a closer look at Nordic cooperation. Finally, the main findings regarding the policies in the Nordic countries will be summed up and proposals for future development work and further research will be presented. The conclusions of the survey are examined according to the themes of the survey in order to enable comparisons between countries. In this way the similarities and differences as well as the future development needs can be recognised.

2. DENMARK

2.1. YOUTH CIRCUS ACTIVITY

There are approximately 10 organisations providing circus activities for children and youth in Denmark. Activity is usually based on individual initiatives.

The main providers are the two associations located at the **Academy of Untamed Creativity (AFUK)** premises in Copenhagen; **Foreningen Ørkenfortet**, a youth association for theatre, dance, new circus and the art that encourages cross-discipline activities and **Innercirq** which offers circus training for children, adolescents and adults at all levels from beginner to professional. The teachers and students of the **Circus Performers School** in Copenhagen (now AFUK) founded the former in 1993 and this association has nearly 500 members.² Innercirq provides the opportunity to work within many different disciplines: acrobatics, Chinese pole, juggling etc.

In addition, there are youth clubs that include circus in their activities. Municipalities usually fund the activity. One of the oldest and most established is **Circus Flik-Flak** in Odense, on the island of Funen. Since 1995, Flik-Flak has offered children weekly possibilities for training in the circus arts, often assisted by professional artists. In addition, the **Circus Museum** in Hvidovre offers courses for schools and organises birthday parties for children. The museum has one of the largest circus artistry collections in Europe.³

The schools **Performers House** in Silkeborg and **Odsherred Theatre School** offer occasional courses and workshops for children.⁴ Some youth work has also been done at the **Danish Gymnastics and Sport Association (DGI)**.

Professional new circus companies also provide activities for children. Danish-based company **Cikaros** organises performances and workshops for both children and adults. In 2008 Cikaros and the **TinCanCompany** started *Project Cirkuskanonen*, where artists spend one day at a school, participating in a programme that includes both performances and workshops for children. From late 2008 until now, Cikaros has visited approximately 60 schools all over Denmark.⁵

2 Academy of Untamed Creativity 2011a. See more on AFUK: www.afuk.dk.

3 Cirkusmuseet 2011. See more on the Circus Museum: www.cirkusmuseum.dk.

4 Interview with L. Nyhuus and K. Verwilt, Copenhagen International Theatre. 2011-03-31.

5 E-mail correspondence with S. L. Anderskov, Cikaros. 2011-04-14.

According to the actors in the field of circus art who were interviewed in Denmark,⁶ one of the aims regarding youth circus activities in the country is to introduce circus as a type of physical education, or sport, for young people. The final goal of this development work is to include circus as part of the sports curriculum in elementary schools. Another way to enhance youth circus activities would be to include circus as part of the public leisure education through music leisure schools. One important goal would be to provide youth circus teachers with necessary information about safety requirements. An example of this could be a safety course or a diploma offered to circus teachers to ensure that they are familiar with basic safety requirements.⁷

2.1.1. Social circus

Few initiatives are underway with regard to social circus in Denmark. One institution and a theatre are including social circus as a part of their activities. In Bælum, a socio-educational institution, **No name**, provides circus as part of their youth-crime aversion activities. In addition, in Helsingør, the local **Helsingør Theatre** has approached circus as a supplement to social work. Circus has been used in congested residential areas, for example, with the contemporary circus company **Teatro Glimt** participating in the *Gettohood* project.⁸

2.2. PROFESSIONAL CIRCUS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Despite a strong tradition of traditional circus there is no formal circus education provided in Denmark. There are several training opportunities in the field of new circus in the country, however all are of short duration.

Denmark's two circus performance schools (*gøgler-skoler*) were founded in Copenhagen in 1986 and Aarhus in 1989. In the early 1990s the two schools expanded the scope of their education. In Aarhus the **Clown and Circus Performance School** was established as an opportunity for further training. It received municipal and county funding and produced graduates for three years until 1998.⁹ **Gøglerproduktionsskolen** in Aarhus is currently running a one-year artistic course for young people under 25 years old who have not completed secondary level education.¹⁰

In 1996 the Circus Performers School in Copenhagen changed its name to the Academy of Untamed Creativity (AFUK). AFUK consists of a number of independent schools and

6 Interview with S. Degerbøl, The University of Copenhagen and D. Vincentzen, The Danish Artists Union. 2011–03.

7 Ibid.

8 Nyhuus 2009, 24-25.

9 Degerbøl & Verwilt 2011, 177.

10 Gøglerproduktionsskolen 2011.

associations: **Daghøjskolen**, **Produktionsskole**, **Association Ørkenfortet** and **InnerCirq** as well as the association **Professionelle Artister i København** (PAK). Most Danish artists who work professionally in new circus have a background in AFUK, which blends a variety of forms of youth education, including vocational and high school education.

There are in total 45 students studying circus at the Circus Performer Department in AFUK.¹¹ Depending on the skills of the individual at the time of enrolment, students are placed in one of the three levels. Approximately 17 students are admitted at the first level, 17 students at the second and 10 students at the third. Students studying circus originate primarily from the Nordic countries.¹² AFUK is considered a preparatory school: a full-time training programme preparing a student to enter a professional school, or to enter the job market.¹³ The recent big leap for AFUK has been membership of the European Federation of Circus Schools (FEDEC), which resulted in international recognition for AFUK. The school cooperates also with the **State Circus School** in Kiev and the **University of Dance and Circus** (DOCH) in Sweden.¹⁴

New opportunities for circus education have appeared in recent times. Some educational institutions have also acknowledged their interest and implemented contemporary circus into their curriculum. These include the **Odsherred Theatre School/Danish Development Centre for Performing Arts** and a folk high school, **Performers House** (Institute of Performing Arts).

Odsherred Theatre School provides a short-term circus education, in the form of courses and workshops, to all groups of professional performing artists.¹⁵ Performers House is a non-formal school under the framework of the Danish folk high school. It is a boarding school for adults and admits students from all over Europe. Twelve to sixteen students study circus each semester and students stay 1-3 semesters.¹⁶ Performers House provides preparatory training and auditions for further education. The school co-operates with Rotterdam Circus Arts, the bachelor study programme offered by **Codarts – University for the Arts in Rotterdam** (NL).¹⁷

In 2007 the Danish Ministry of Culture rejected the City of Copenhagen's proposal for a circus performance education programme to be situated in Copenhagen. Today the **Danish Artist Union** (DAF), together with AFUK and **Copenhagen International Theatre** (Københavns Internationale Teater) (KIT) are lobbying for a state-supported circus education.¹⁸

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11 E-mail correspondence with K. Thomsen. The Academy of Untamed Creativity. 2011-09-06.

12 Interview with R. Aitouganov, The Academy of Untamed Creativity. 2011-04-01.

13 European Federation of Professional Circus Schools (FEDEC) 2008.

14 Academy of Untamed Creativity 2011b. See more on AFUK: www.afuk.dk

15 Interview with L. Nyhuus and K. Verwilt, Copenhagen International Theatre. 2011-03-31.

16 E-mail correspondence with A. Agerbo, Performers House. 2011-03-15.

17 Performers House 2011.

18 Degerbøl & Verwilt 2011, 191-195.

2.3. PROFESSIONAL CIRCUS ARTISTS AND COMPANIES

2.3.1. Professional artists

There are approximately 50 professional circus artists in Denmark.¹⁹ However, there is a lack of professional circus artists who could establish and direct their own production.²⁰ Most professionals work a large variety of jobs such as performing, teaching, performing in other theatres or companies as freelancers, touring and consulting. Many circus artists are involved with theatre or dance performances and are working as actors or dancers. Some artists use circus as social work with children in day-care centres.²¹

Sources of income are multiple, sometimes including unemployment benefit. Some artists earn their living out of commercial work. AFUK organises and mediates commercial shows for students and professional artists. Circus artists also apply for production grants. There are few facilities for training and creating productions for Danish circus artists. Furthermore, there are only a few venues that are fit for circus performances. Contemporary circus artists are forced to work within these limitations and to be creative in order to survive as professional artists in Denmark. Many artists move abroad to study and work.²²

The Danish Artist Union is a union for professional performers, with its own unemployment insurance department. The circus arts are included in the union's membership.²³ No information or statistics are available on the educational background of the artists in Denmark.²⁴ Neither has data been gathered on the rate of employment of circus professionals.²⁵

2.3.2. Companies

There are approximately ten contemporary circus companies in Denmark. Influential companies include: **Cikaros**, **Circostancia**, **Company Jean**, **Kompagni Kimone**, **Multi-cirkus**, **Rapid Eye**, **Royal Bones**, **Teatro Glimt**, **TinCanCompany** and **X-act**.²⁶ Traditional circus is strong in Denmark. There are seven traditional touring circuses in Denmark.

19 E-mail correspondence with L. Gregersen, Teatro GLIMT. 2011-03-09.

20 Interview with L. Nyhuus and K. Verwilt, Copenhagen International Theatre. 2011-03-31.

21 Interview with S. Degerbøl, University of Copenhagen and D. Vincentzen, Danish Artists Union. 2011-03-31.

22 Ibid.

23 DAF has approximately 80-100 members who are working as circus artists, including students at AFUK and magicians. E-mail correspondence with D. Vincentzen, Danish Artists Union. 2011-04-26. See more on DAF: www.artisten.dk.

24 E-mail correspondence with L. Gregersen, Teatro GLIMT. 2011-03-09.

25 Interview with S. Degerbøl, University of Copenhagen and D. Vincentzen, Danish Artists Union. 2011-03-31.

26 Nycirkusdk 2011.

The largest ones are: **Circus Arena**, **Circus Benneweis** and **Circus Dannebrog**.²⁷ In Denmark, as well as in other countries, the traditional circus companies are considered to be commercial activity and mostly employ foreign circus artists.

There are no statistics regarding audience attendance at the traditional circuses. KIT is currently gathering statistics from a festival it organises. Every two years the *Ny Cirkus Festival* presents approximately 6 international companies with 30 performances, for around 10,000 spectators.²⁸ KIT has arranged new circus festivals and events since the 1980s and the theatre became a member of the European network, *Circostrada*, in 2005.

Professionelle Artister i København (PAK) was established in 2006. It works to establish better training, rehearsal and production facilities for circus artists. PAK has approximately 20-25 members. To become a member, one must either work as an artist or have completed circus education. At the moment, PAK arranges for artists to train and use the equipment at AFUK's premises. The association is financially linked to *Innercirq*.²⁹

According to actors in the field of circus art in Denmark who were interviewed,³⁰ one of the challenges in Denmark is the lack of a national forum which would gather Danish circus artists together, providing a meeting point for contemporary and traditional circus as well as providing information on Danish circus for national and international actors. At the moment, KIT, AFUK and the DAF are cooperating in order to gain wider recognition and support for circus art.³¹

2.3.3. Funding

At the beginning of the millennium the Danish Theatre Council prioritised obtaining increased funds for contemporary circus in 2003-2007. In 2005 KIT was granted a three-year, 300,000 EUR grant from the Danish Arts Council. KIT was able to implement an action plan for contemporary circus as a new stage art in Denmark. KIT organised a series of annual contemporary circus festivals in Copenhagen. Each year, more of the grant was used for development and exchange projects for Danish artists, resulting in 15 workshops in different circus disciplines, research trips with journalists, artists and presenters, ten travelling grants, three seminars and the launch of a website with information about companies in Denmark (www.ny-cirkus.dk).³²

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27 Circus in Denmark 2011.

28 Purovaara 2009, 3.

29 E-mail correspondence with S. L. Anderskov. 2011-04-22. See more on PAK: www.innercirq.dk.

30 Interview with S. Degerbøl, University of Copenhagen and D. Vincentzen, Danish Artists Union. 2011-03-31. Interview with L. Nyhuus and K. Verwilt, Copenhagen International Theatre. 2011-03-31.

31 Copenhagen International Theatre 2011. See more on KIT: www.kit.dk

32 Degerbøl & Verwilt 2011, 189-191.

In 2007, in the same year as the proposal for circus performer education was rejected, the Danish Arts Council decided to discontinue allocated funding for contemporary circus. As a result of this, the Danish circus environment was united, and in 2008 a seminar focusing on the potential of the art form, *New Circus, New Art* was organised as a collaboration between KIT, AFUK and the DAF. Following this the DAF attained a grant from the Ministry of Culture for the years 2008-2009, for 130,000 EUR to promote the flow of information and communication on contemporary circus in Denmark.³³ The grant was partly used for productions. For the theatres that took on the productions the DAF provided a financial guarantee (*Garanti Ordning*). In addition, DAF created publications about the history and current status of Danish contemporary circus.³⁴

In 2009, great improvements were achieved when the Danish Arts Council's Committee for Performing Arts approved applications and gave grants to contemporary circus productions, thus recognising the art form.³⁵ Today the Committee for Performing Arts includes theatre, dance and circus. It provides funding for the productions of individual artists and companies. In 2011, three companies received, in total, 1.17 million DKK (at the time of publication c.157,000 EUR) for projects.³⁶

Furthermore the Danish Arts Council allocates indirect grants for circus art. KIT receives funding from the Danish Arts Council. For the years 2011–2012 the Arts Council granted approximately 2 million DKK (c.269,000 EUR). In 2012 part of this grant will be used for the production of the *Ny Cirkus Festival*, c.600,000 DKK (c.81,000 EUR) in total. In addition, **Theatre Republique**, includes production and presentation of contemporary circus in its mission and presents at least one circus performance each year.³⁷ Theatre Republique is an independent institution under the umbrella organisation, **Copenhagen's Theatre**. The theatre is state funded.³⁸

2.4. CIRCUS RESEARCH

As a result of the joint work done by KIT, AFUK and DAF, reports and surveys have been conducted regarding contemporary circus. The cooperation of the three institutions has highlighted the need for continuous work and documentation.

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33 Degerbøl & Verwilt 2011, 192.

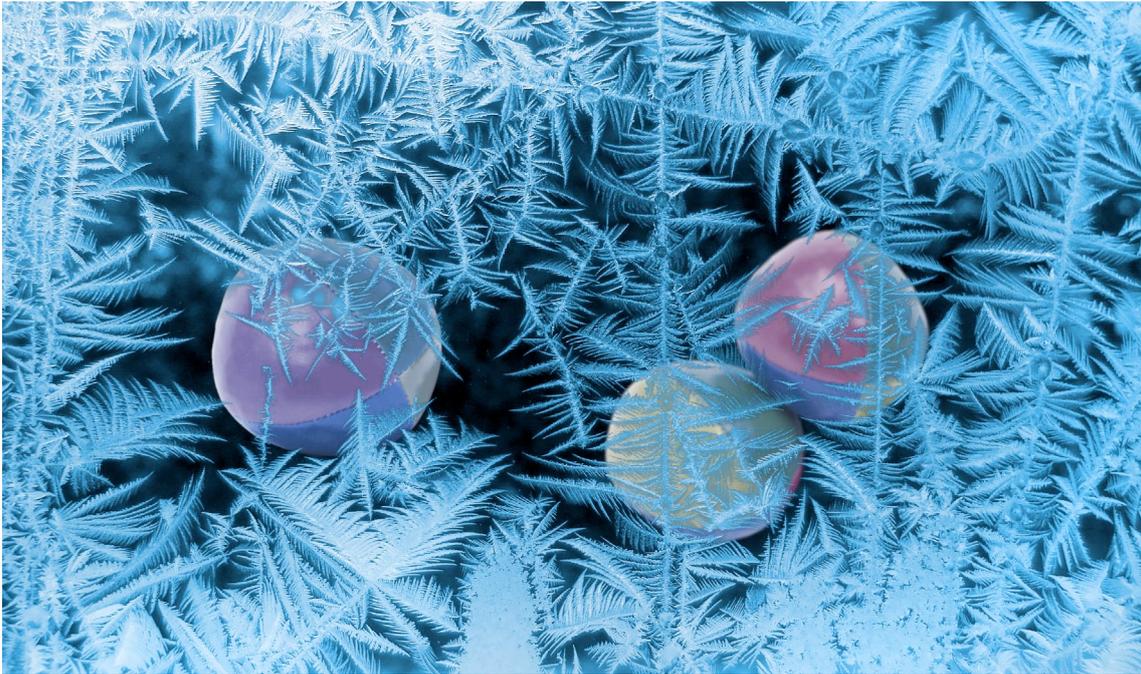
34 Dansk Artist Forbund 2008.

35 Degerbøl & Verwilt 2011, 192.

36 The circus companies that received grants for the Performing Arts Activities season 2011/2012 were: Teaterforeningen TinCanCompany 20,000 DKK, Teaterforeningen GLIMIT 450,000 DKK, Teater Foreningen Cikaros 700,000 DKK. Kunst.dk 2011.

37 E-mail correspondence with K. Verwilt. Copenhagen International Theatre. 2011-05-03.

38 Republique 2011. See more: <http://republique.dk>



A report by the Artist Committee of the Ministry of Culture *Cirkus og artister in Danmark* was published in 1998.³⁹ The very first seminar on *New Circus in Denmark* was held in 2000. It became a general introduction to the new circus concept and the history behind it. The concrete result of this was the first Danish publication on new circus: *Det teatrale circus*, in 2001, edited by Michael Eigtved.⁴⁰

A report of the seminar *Ny Cirkus, Ny Kunst* was edited by Stine Degerbøl and published in 2008.⁴¹ The development of Danish contemporary circus was examined from a historical point of view in the survey *Dansk Ny Cirkus siden '91* by Stine Degerbøl in 2009.⁴² In 2009, another report of the potentials and challenges of Danish new circus *Potentiale og udfordringer i dansk ny circus* was conducted by the DAF and authored by Lone Nyhuus. One of the report's main findings was the need for official education for circus artists.⁴³

In addition, there is some existing academic research on Danish contemporary circus. The Department of Theatre and Performing Arts and the Department of Exercise and Sport Sciences at the University of Copenhagen provide academic research on contemporary circus. Stine Degerbøl is currently working on a PhD in contemporary circus, focusing on the body in aesthetic communication. Besides that there are some individual examples of university theses being made on contemporary circus.

39 Kulturministeriet 1998.

40 Eigtved 2001.

41 Degerbøl 2008.

42 Degerbøl 2009.

43 Nyhuus 2009.

3. FINLAND

3.1. YOUTH CIRCUS ACTIVITY

Finland's first youth circus was **Hamina Teen Circus**, which was founded in 1972. During the 1980s and 90s the number of youth circuses established all around Finland increased dramatically and many of them celebrate their tenth or twentieth anniversaries this year. Circus took a giant stride towards joining the arts scene when the first national circus art event was organised in 1982. The **Finnish Youth Circus Association (FYCA)**, was founded in 1991, when circus clubs and schools around Finland came together.

The next big step was taken in 1992 when circus became a part of basic education in the arts. Circus quickly began to assimilate the attitudes and structures of arts education, which other fields had developed over decades. In 1995 a programme for circus teachers began in the **Arts Academy of Turku University of Applied Science** (originally the School of Arts and Communication), which ensured the continuation of youth circus activity.⁴⁴ Later on, the programme developed more in the direction of artistic education.

According to *Youth Barometer 2009*, interest in circus as a hobby is relatively high among young Finnish people.⁴⁵ There are currently 31 youth circuses with nearly 4,000 circus students in different parts of the country.⁴⁶ Students are between 4 and 18 years old, and they practice 1-5 times per week. Variation between the activities/circus skills taught at the youth circuses in Finland is wide. Six of the youth circuses, **Circus Helsinki**, **Espoon esittävän taiteen koulun kannatusyhdistys ry**, **Lahden Tanssiopisto**, **Sirkus Tuikku – Art School Estradi**, **Sorin Sirkus** and the **Theatre and Circus School of Tikkurila**, provide higher basic art education,⁴⁷ which has been accepted by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

44 Purovaara 2011b, 165; 170.

45 Myllyniemi 2009. The Youth Barometer is an annual publication published since 1994 by the Advisory Council for Youth Affairs, discussing the values and attitudes of young Finnish people between the ages of 15 and 29.

46 See the list of youth circus schools in Finland: Attachment 1. More information on youth circus schools: www.snsl.fi

47 Basic education in the arts is goal-oriented, progressing from one level to another. Participation is voluntary and the education providers may charge moderate fees. The objectives and core contents are determined in national core syllabi devised by the National Board of Education for nine different art forms including circus. Further, public and private education providers receive government grants based on the confirmed number of lesson hours given. Finnish National Board of Education 2010.

The largest youth circuses provide shows several times per year. Some of the teenage students perform even more than the professional circus artists. Cooperation between the preparatory circus schools and local city theatres provides valuable practical experience for the students.⁴⁸

The forms of funding vary according to the size and activity of the youth circuses. Funding is also dependent on how the youth circuses define their activity, in the sense of whether they consider it youth work, physical exercise or art. For those youth circuses that provide a basic arts education, the Ministry of Education and Culture allocates state subsidies. Youth circuses can also apply for funding for their activities from the Ministry of Education and Culture. In addition, youth circuses may receive funding from the city, the Regional Arts Councils of Finland and different cultural funds. The grants applied fall mostly under children and youth culture.⁴⁹

The FYCA has expanded significantly in recent years. It organises educational courses, events, festivals, summer camps and competitions for its members. In addition, the FYCA publishes a magazine, *SirkusPyramidi*, for its members. The members of the FYCA are not only circus schools and clubs but also companies and associations. The activity of the FYCA is based on funding received mainly from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.⁵⁰

The aim of the FYCA's activity is to promote circus as a hobby as well as to give a better chance for Finnish children and youth to take part in circus activities. One of the major goals is to develop and enhance the quality of education in youth circuses in Finland. The role that the FYCA has in supporting local youth circuses in their activity is significant. Besides providing information, the FYCA provides small grants for circus schools, e.g. for arranging teaching.⁵¹

The FYCA is one of the five founding members of the European Youth Circus Organisation (EYCO), which was founded in 2009. The FYCA is also an active member of the Network of International Circus Exchange (N.I.C.E.).⁵² The FYCA cooperates actively with the **Finnish Circus Information Centre**.

Increasing activity among amateurs has created a solid foundation upon which the Finnish circus culture can build. Youth circus activity plays an important role in Finland. It creates the need for pedagogical education and professional circus teachers. Youth circuses around the country provide children and youth with good skills, which

48 Åstrand 2010, 12.

49 Interview with A. Mäntynen-Hakem. The Finnish Youth Circus Organisation. 2011-02-11.

50 In 2010 the FYCA received 60 000 euros. The FYCA is considered as youth organisation. Interview with A. Mäntynen-Hakem. The Finnish Youth Circus Organisation. 2011-02-11. See more on the FYCA: www.sns.fi

51 Interview with A. Mäntynen-Hakem. The Finnish Youth Circus Organisation. 2011-02-11.

52 N.I.C.E is a network established with the aim of enhancing international collaboration in terms of circus teacher and student exchange.

give them the opportunity to continue as professionals. According to Anita Mäntynen-Hakem, Managing director of the Finnish Youth Circus Association, one of the challenges for the future is to promote circus teacher training. Besides the great emphasis on promoting the social circus and basic arts education, the youth circus in Finland can expand its core activities, organising workshops and employing youth for its projects.⁵³

3.1.1. Social circus

In 2009, the **Centre for Practice as Research in Theatre** at the University of Tampere began to run a nationwide *Social Circus Project* with the support of the European Social Fund.⁵⁴ The **Lapland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment** funds the project. Already before the *Social Circus Project* some youth circuses in Finland have participated in social circus as a part of their activities.

Social circus is seen to include an ability to offer meaningful, empowering experiences that develop both self-confidence and teamwork skills. Circus provides a diverse field of experiences through which people who might not enjoy other art forms have a chance to express themselves. Social circus is seen to be particularly well suited to children and youth who have special needs in learning, physical mobility and/or social growth who are in danger of social exclusion.⁵⁵

Pilot projects in seven different circuses in Tampere, Helsinki, Vantaa, Espoo, Oulu, Lempäälä and Orivesi teach social circus to different groups with special needs. The circus lessons were held from fall 2009 until the end of the spring 2011. The main goal of the Social Circus project is to help circus organisations produce high quality social circus for special groups and to give the organisations the necessary marketing tools to turn social circus into a product to be used in welfare services. This will help make social circus a permanent part of the Finnish circus scene and welfare services.⁵⁶

In September 2011 the Social Circus project published a guidebook, *Good practices on Social Circus*, aimed at circuses that are starting or planning social circus activities.⁵⁷ The guidebook consists of the observations of circus teachers and project managers who were part of the 2-year project. The guidebook is available in both Finnish and English.

53 Interview with A. Mäntynen-Hakem. The Finnish Youth Circus Organisation. 2011-02-11.

54 Social Circus Project 2011. See more: <http://sosiaalinenirkus.fi>

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Hyttinen, H., Kakko, S-C., Karkkola, P. & Åstrand R. (2011).

3.2. PROFESSIONAL CIRCUS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

From the late 1990s circus education has grown from nothing to the point where it now covers all levels of education, from extra-curricular to further education. In many other countries circus education is provided outside of the state's official education system. In Finland, the development of training has made circus a part of the state's art and education administration.⁵⁸

Salpaus Further Education provides vocational circus education in Finland. The circus education at Salpaus began as an experimental school in 2002 and was established as a provider of second level circus art education in 2006. The goal of the three-year programme is to provide circus artists with a diverse set of performance skills. The main focus of the education is on practicing circus techniques. Every other year 18 students are accepted into the school and the whole education takes three years.⁵⁹ However, the total number of students at the time of this report is 32.⁶⁰ The education prepares students to start as circus artists or continue studies in the higher vocational school or at university.⁶¹

The **Arts Academy of Turku University of Applied Science** (originally the School of Arts and Communication) established a circus degree programme in 1995 to alleviate the shortage of youth circus teachers.⁶² The school provides a 4-year circus-training program, which consists of elements relating to performing, teaching and directing. The final certification is a Bachelor of Cultural Studies.⁶³ Every other year 15 students are accepted into the school. The scope of supplementary education is relatively small. The Arts Academy provides weekend long thematic courses and occasional specialised study courses.⁶⁴

According to a recently published study on Finnish circus graduates,⁶⁵ the Finnish circus education does not yet meet the needs of working life, i.e. the circus employers. To increase the opportunities for students to gain experience in their field by providing internship places was considered to be the main challenge for the circus education provided by Salpaus Further Education. In contrast, in the education provided by Turku

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58 Purovaara 2011b, 165-167.

59 An exception was made in 2010 when the school admitted students both in 2009 and 2010 in order to harmonise the intake of students with that of other international schools (e.g The University of Dance and Circus, Sweden). E-mail correspondence with P. Heikkilä, Salpaus Further Education. 2011-09-09.

60 Every year 2-3 students will cancel their studies and 1-2 students are admitted to international circus education before they have graduated from Salpaus Further Education. Ibid.

61 Åstrand 2010, 9.

62 Purovaara 2011b, 170.

63 European Federation of Professional Circus Schools 2011a.

64 Åstrand 2010, 9.

65 A survey on Finnish circus graduates (Sirkusalan ammatillinen koulutus ja työelämä) was conducted by Riikka Åstrand in 2010. The publication examines the circus education and work life through the eyes of the Finnish circus graduates and employers.

Polytechnic School the main challenge was regarded to be that the education provides students with only a vague professional identity. The education was not seen to provide them with specialised skills in either of the two main occupations: artistic work or teaching. The result of the survey indicates that one of the main problems with the professional circus education in Finland is a lack of education that would focus only on pedagogical circus studies.

To alleviate this lack, the FYCA coordinates a circus trainers' schooling programme in cooperation with the **Educational Association and Citizens' Forum (SKAF)**⁶⁶ for circus teachers and trainees working in youth circus schools and clubs. The first part of the project concentrates on providing schooling in circus pedagogy for those youth circus club trainers who are willing to organise courses on teaching for other circus club trainers in the future. In 2011, 10 circus art professionals were admitted to the programme, which will end in January 2012. The programme consists of 3 ECTS. In the second part of the programme, the actual schooling on circus teaching will be organised. In other words, the aim of the project is to establish a syllabus that can be used for educating youth circus club trainers.⁶⁷

In addition, the study on Finnish circus graduates⁶⁸ showed that there is an increasing demand for circus artist education in Finland. Discussions about establishing university level professional education for circus artists at the **Theatre Academy of Finland** began in spring 2005. The Theatre Academy provides the highest level of education in performing arts, including theatre and drama as well as dance degree programmes.⁶⁹

Undergoing studies abroad has been common among young circus professionals. The main reasons for this have been the lack of professional schools or a lack of high quality education in their home country. The number of students studying abroad represents 20% of all Finnish circus students graduating annually.⁷⁰

Earning one's living from circus productions alone is a challenge in Finland. Less than one-third of circus students who graduated in Finland earn a majority of their living from artistic work. Those educated abroad usually have a better chance at full-time employment in artistic work, because foreign-trained students have larger professional networks and resources at their disposal.⁷¹

66 SKAF is an institution for non-formal education.

67 Interview with A. Mäntynen-Hakem, FYCA. 2011-08-25; Opintokeskus kansalaisfoorumi 2011.

68 Åstrand 2010.

69 Theatre Academy of Helsinki 2011.

70 The most popular schools that provide degree in the circus field have been among others the French circus schools National Centre for Circus Arts (CNAC), École Nationale des Arts du Cirque de Rosny-sous-Bois (ENACR), Académie Fratellini, Lido – Circus Arts Center, and École Supérieure des Arts du Cirque (ESAC) in Brussels, University of Dance and Circus (DOCH) in Stockholm and Circus Space in London. In addition, schools in Moscow and Kiev, which provide only supplementary education, are popular among Finnish circus students. (Åstrand 2010, 11.)

71 Åstrand 2010, 83.

3.3. PROFESSIONAL CIRCUS ARTISTS AND COMPANIES

3.3.1. Professional artists

The rapid development of circus education in Finland has increased the number of professional artists. There are around 300 professional circus artists and teachers working in the field.⁷² Most of the circus professionals hold a degree from one of the schools providing circus education. However, there are many circus artists that do not have a formal education within the field in Finland, because the formal circus education is still in development. Most of the circus professionals are engaged in artistic work or are pedagogues in youth circuses around the country.

Many of the professional artists earn their living by performing abroad. One reason for this is that the opportunities for performing are relatively narrow in Finland.⁷³ Circus artists are often self-employed freelance workers who practise in contemporary circus productions, theatres, private company events and traditional touring circuses.

The work assignments are often multiple: teaching, organising, producing and directing. It is also common that professionals work as freelancers by creating and performing their own productions or performing their own showcase. Permanent employment opportunities are rare and in order to earn a living, professionals must often take on other jobs, for instance teaching and corporate events. There are no statistics regarding the rate of employment of professional circus artists.⁷⁴

The *Incubator for Nordic Contemporary Circus* project, created by contemporary circus group **Circo Aereo**, is an example of one method for supporting emerging and established professional circus artists. The project continues nationally established work within the Nordic framework by offering artistic mentoring and production counselling, with the aim of providing employment opportunities both nationally and internationally, improving production conditions and establishing new contemporary circus companies. Circo Aereo's project partners include Nordic artist residence centres, networks, schools, information centres and other circus organisations.⁷⁵ In addition, the **Cirko Center for New Circus** will be developing its own artistic research support programme in coming years.⁷⁶

The Finnish Union of Dance Artists welcomed circus artists to join the union in October 2005. Circus art now has its own section within the union, which promotes its members' needs and desires. Circus was for the first time part of the historic three-

72 The number is an estimation based on the survey (Vapaan kentän ammattilaisryhmien toimintaedellytysten parantaminen) conducted by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture in 2011a.

73 Åstrand 2010, 25.

74 Åstrand 2010, 8-11.

75 Circo Aereo 2011.

76 Interview with T. Purovaara. Cirko Center for New Circus. 2011-08-09.

year theatre, dance and circus field working terms and conditions contract that was agreed in autumn 2007.⁷⁷

3.3.2. Companies

There are approximately 20 professional circus companies in Finland. The internationally best-known contemporary circus groups are the country's oldest company **Circo Aereo** and **WHS**. The **Race Horse Company** is an example of the next circus generation's breakthrough. Other contemporary circus companies include **Agit-Cirk**, **Art Teatro**, **Circus Ruska**, **Circus Uusi Maailma**, **Jakob's Circus**, **Kallo Collective**, **Kuopion Sirkus**, **Sirkus Aikamoinen**, **Sirkus Komponentti**, **Sirkus Supiainen**, **Sirkus Unioni** and **Taikateatteri 13**. Some of the contemporary circus companies operate with governmental support and some without it.⁷⁸

Finnish contemporary circus is characterised by international touring. The internationalisation of contemporary circus has been particularly fast – the amount of performances given abroad by leading groups has risen greatly in recent years. Attendance at overseas performances comprises nearly half of Finnish contemporary circus attendance. During 2010, ten Finnish circus companies visited a total of 20 countries.⁷⁹

In 2010 the aggregate attendance of Finnish contemporary circus companies was 82,776 spectators in Finland – two-thirds higher than the previous year – and 64,822 spectators abroad – a quarter more than the previous year. The number of contemporary circus performances recorded in the statistics of 2010 was 829 performances in total. Compared to the figures of the previous year the number of contemporary circus performances has increased by 34 %.⁸⁰

There are three traditional circuses in Finland: **Circus Finlandia**, **Circus Caliba** and **Circus Florentino**. Circus Finlandia is currently Finland's only international-class circus. It was founded in 1976 as a family business and is a member of the **European Circus Association** (ECA). It received the State Art Prize in 2002.⁸¹ The attraction of traditional touring tent circuses has remained strong in Finland. For example, Circus Finlandia performed 256 times in 2010 for a total of 200,000 people.⁸²

77 Purovaara 2010b, 171.

78 Finnish Circus Information Centre 2011a.

79 Finnish Circus Information Centre 2011a. The Finnish Circus Information Centre began compiling statistics on professional Finnish circus performances in 2006.

80 Finnish Circus Information Centre 2011a.

81 Finnish Circus Information Centre 2010, 36.

82 Ibid.

During the years 2006-2010 the number of circus performances has nearly doubled and the aggregate attendance of circus performances has increased by over 130,000 spectators.⁸³

The **Cirko Center for New Circus** started the promotion of Finnish contemporary circus in 2002. In the summer of 2006, the **Finnish Circus Information Centre** was established. A centre for contemporary circus was opened in Suvilahti, Helsinki, in May 2011. It offers training, residencies, and performance and festival opportunities for circus professionals at its 2,500m² premises. The Finnish Circus Information Centre, the FYCA, Circo Aereo, the Race Horse Company and Taikateatteri 13 are located in the CIRKO Center.⁸⁴

3.3.3. Funding

The Circus Subcommittee of the Arts Council of Finland was founded in 2000, placing circus on an equal footing with other genres. It distributes grants to artists, productions and groups and pays out artist pensions to circus artists. The amount of funding has risen annually. For the years 2011-2012 circus art does not have its own subcommittee, but is instead represented by an expert group within the National Council for Dance.⁸⁵

The Ministry of Education and Culture granted the first discretionary support grants for contemporary circus companies in 2006.⁸⁶ The promotion of circus art received its own budget in the State budget in 2009.⁸⁷ In 2011 The Circus Subcommittee granted in total 450,000 EUR for artistic activity.⁸⁸ In addition, the Arts Council allocates state grants for artists for safeguarding their working conditions. For the year 2011, the Arts Council awarded state grants for circus artists in total of six and a half award years.⁸⁹

In 2004, the Ministry of Education and Culture set up a project devoted to the promotion of Finnish cultural exports. In 2011 two contemporary circus companies and the **Cirko Center for New Circus** are flagship cultural export projects and received in total of 155,000 EUR.⁹⁰ The **Finnish Circus Information Centre** coordinates the circus field

83 Ibid.

84 Cirko Center for New Circus 2011. See more at www.cirko.net

85 From early 2011, The Arts Council of Finland closed down all existing subcommittees. Arts Council of Finland 2011.

86 Purovaara 2011b, 170.

87 Purovaara 2009, 2.

88 Grants for artistic activity were granted to 17 companies, in total 400,000 EUR. The number of applications was 19. Circus Subcommittee 2011.

89 Arts Council of Finland 2010.

90 Associations WHS received 60,000 EUR, Circo Aereo 50,000 EUR and Cirko Center for New Circus 45,000 EUR. Ministry of Education and Culture 2011b.

export project as part of the Finnish cultural export strategy. The Information Centre receives support from the Ministry of Education and Culture for its activities.

In addition, cities and municipalities, regional art committees and private trusts also support circus. Finland's first organisation to support the production of circus art was the Cirko Centre for New Circus. Cirko has granted different kinds of production support annually to a number of groups and projects, offering them rehearsal space, marketing assistance and artistic residency possibilities in Helsinki city's cultural centres.

3.4. CIRCUS RESEARCH

The **Finnish Circus Information Centre**, founded in 2006, provides services and advice, gathers and documents information about Finnish professional circus, compiles statistics on professional Finnish circus performances, makes reports to support political decisions in the field and arranges meetings, seminars and public events featuring circus. The Centre's members are circus companies, production organisations and associations.

The Finnish Circus Information Centre maintains an online database of performing Finnish circus professionals, circus works and groups in both Finnish and English.⁹¹ The Centre collects a reference library on Finnish and foreign circus literature and performance files. The reference library will open to the public in the CIRKO building in Suvilahti at the beginning of 2012.

The first report on circus and stage artists *Sirkus- ja estraditaiteilijat. Raportti kyselytutkimuksesta* was conducted by the Arts Council of Finland and authored by Merja Heikkinen in 1999.⁹² The first survey on circus education and work life *Sirkusalan ammatillinen koulutus ja työelämä*, authored by Riikka Åstrand, was published in 2010.⁹³ Books about contemporary circus have also been published in Finnish in recent years.

The University of Helsinki accepted circus research as part of its optional theatre research studies in 2009. The University of Helsinki and the Theatre Academy in Helsinki both offer circus-related lectures and workshops. The first Master's theses have been completed and the first doctoral dissertation is underway.⁹⁴

91 Finnish Circus Information Centre 2011b. See more: www.sirkusinfo.fi/sirkka

92 Heikkinen 1999.

93 Åstrand 2010.

94 Interview with T. Purovaara. Cirko Center for New Circus. 2011-08-09.

4. NORWAY

4.1. YOUTH CIRCUS ACTIVITY

The number of schools in Norway has increased since the beginning of the 2000s. Today there are approximately 15 leisure schools and clubs that provide circus activities for children and youth in Norway.⁹⁵ The six schools, **Cirka Cirkus** (Bærum), **Sirkus-Smulene** (Oslo), **Kulturskolen** (Trondheim), **Nysirkus Bjerke** (Oslo), **Kulta** (Tromsø), **Kulturskolen** (Karmøy) and **Kulturskolen** (Fredrikstad), can be considered the main actors in the field. With Kulta as an exception (founded 1992) all of them were established 2000–2007. Most schools teach a wide range of circus disciplines which vary according to locality and teachers.⁹⁶

The education is provided both as an independent initiative, for example through Rudolf Steiner Schools, and as public leisure education through youth clubs and culture schools.⁹⁷ In 2001, The Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Art invested in new circus teaching and was awarded funding from the European Union for this work. Eight communities were chosen for a 5-year run. Today several of these culture schools still teach circus.⁹⁸

It is estimated that almost 500 children and youth have access to circus as part of the culture schools program. Circus's total share in the programs of culture schools is less than 5%.⁹⁹ These schools offer circus as one of the subjects taught and often the education is offered once a week, 1-2 hours at a time. Most of the schools do not follow any curriculum. Some of the youth circuses do not have circus teachers on a regular basis, but they hire teachers every now and then to teach groups. In addition, there are cultural schools that occasionally provide circus courses at weekends, for example weekend workshops for those who attend the theatre courses.¹⁰⁰

95 See the list of organisations that provide youth circus activities in Norway: Attachment 1.

96 Interview with V. Broen, The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-06; E-mail correspondence with V. Broen and S. Waage. The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-25.

97 The culture schools (kulturskole) are municipally owned music and art schools. Norsk kulturskoleråd 2009.

98 E-mail correspondence with S. Waage. The Circus Village Network. 2011-03-23.

99 Approximately 100,000 students are participating in the culture school education in total. The culture schools that provide circus education offer also education in other field of arts: music, dance, theatre, painting, and drawing. Rishaug, H. 2009.

100 Interview with V. Broen, The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-06.

Public and private youth clubs also provide circus training. The private clubs fund their activity through study fees and official funding received from the region or municipality. There is no umbrella association for private and public leisure circuses for children and youth in Norway.¹⁰¹

4.1.1. Social circus

Relatively few initiatives have been taken regarding social circus activity in Norway, although some organisations are doing work in this field. Since 1992 the company **Sirkus Sibylla** has developed its own educational method for children, using new circus as a tool. The company tours in schools with their circus performance workshops and arranges workshops for teachers, stage events and presents their own performances. The public leisure circus school, **Nysirkus Bjerke** is using circus as tool in a social way in their activity with the local surroundings. Swedish circus company **Cirkus Cirkör** was the primary source of inspiration for the activity. Nysirkus Bjerke receives official funding for its activity.¹⁰²

4.2. PROFESSIONAL CIRCUS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In Norway, unsuccessful attempts at starting professional circus education at upper secondary school level have been made in recent years. **Tromsdalen Upper Secondary School** provided education in cooperation with the culture centre KULTA during 2007-2009 for five students for five hours per week. Circus was offered as a speciality for students in the sports class. The school was forced to close down the circus education, due to lack of students. In 2008, another attempt to start a professional education at upper secondary school level was seen in the **Skarnes Upper Secondary School**, however, the programme failed to get off the ground due to a lack of applicants.¹⁰³

Today there is only one school that provides circus education. In 1997, **Cirkus Agora**, then one of the four traditional circuses in Norway, took the initiative of establishing a one-year circus-training course at **Fjordane Folk High School**.¹⁰⁴ Soon the school started to focus on new circus, and they began to engage teachers connected to **Cirkus Cirkör**. Since then the school has had a class with approximately 10 students annually. The students are not required to have previous skills in circus and therefore the skill level varies. The variety of circus disciplines is dependent on available circus teachers.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

103 Interview with V. Broen, The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-06.

104 Folk high schools are considered to be one-year boarding schools.

Every year there is one main teacher and several guest teachers.¹⁰⁵ According to the school, every year 2-4 students use their year at Fjordane as a springboard to further circus studies either in Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium or Sweden.¹⁰⁶ Many of the Norwegian circus artists that later went on to professional studies abroad have come from the Fjordane Folk High School. The education is funded through a combination of student fees and public funding.¹⁰⁷

Global Balancing, a circus event company founded by the circus entrepreneur, artist and teacher Eskil Rønningsbakken, started a Nordic Circus Festival in 2008 in Oslo. Here, aspiring young circus artists could present their acts and attend workshops. The *Nordic Circus Festival* was also held in 2009. The Arts Council of Norway funded the event both years. In 2010 the *Nordic Circus Festival* was taken over by Julie Grønnesby Heir (Director of the company Circus Activities) and Lea Moxnes (Teacher at the Trondheim Kommunale Kulturskole) and moved to Trondheim.¹⁰⁸

Most of the young Norwegians who desire a circus education continue circus studies at secondary school level at **St. Botvid's Secondary School** or at the **Vasa School** in Gävle, Sweden. At the higher level there are many possibilities for professional circus education around the world.¹⁰⁹ In general, the number of circus students in Norway is very low. One reason for that could be the lack of high-level education possibilities in central cities.¹¹⁰

4.3. PROFESSIONAL CIRCUS ARTISTS AND COMPANIES

4.3.1. Professional artists

There are approximately 10-15 professional circus artists working in Norway. Many of these circus artists earn their living by performing at events and/or teaching circus. However, according to the main actors in the Norwegian circus art field¹¹¹ there is a lack of professional circus artists, such as there are in Sweden and Finland, that is, artists are solely dedicated to the development of circus art and who apply for funding to make circus performances.

Some young Norwegian circus performers have gone to professional circus schools abroad. By 2010 around 20 young circus artists from Norway had been professionally

.....
105 Ibid.

106 Fjordane Folkehøgskule 2011.

107 Interview with V. Broen, The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-06.

108 Waage, S. 2011, 208.

109 Ibid.

110 E-mail correspondence with V. Broen and S. Waage. The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-25.

111 Ibid.

educated in England, France, Belgium, New Zealand, Germany, Italy, Ukraine, Sweden and Denmark. Most of them earn their living abroad, and between them their work covers the entire spectrum of the genre, from classical circus to new and contemporary circus, to events and educational circus.¹¹²

4.3.2. Companies

The serious development of circus art and new circus companies and projects started in the first decade of 2000, with the exceptions of **Pain Solution** (1993) and **Sirkus Sibylla** (1988). In 2010, there were eleven active circus art or new circus production companies: **Cirkus Khaoom**, **Circo Herencia**, **Circus Laboratory (Circus Helax)**, **Circus Xanti**, **Flaks**, **Kulta Productions**, **Milla Entertainment**, **Pain Solution**, **Rudi Skotheim Jensen Works**, **Sirkus Sibylla** and **Teater Okolo**. Four of these are situated in or around Oslo.¹¹³

Traditional circuses are strong in Norway and they are popular with audiences. Today, there are three traditional circuses in Norway: **Circus Arnando** (1949), **Cirkus Merano** (1975), and **Cirkus Zorba** (1992).¹¹⁴ However, the traditional circuses do not receive any public support. Furthermore, many restrictions and regulations, increasing costs and fewer appropriate locations for circus are making it harder for the traditional circuses to survive.¹¹⁵

The *Project Development Group for a New Circus Hall at Hausmania* (PUG) was established in 2005. PUG was awarded a grant from the Art Council of Norway to make a feasibility report for a project to build a new circus hall. In early 2006 the Art Council of Norway suggested that PUG's application for funding for activities and Cirkus Xanti's application for a 'Circus Village' in Oslo should merge into one project. The council provided a grant over two years for developing circus art activities, but the project was never realised. However, as an indirect result, the new circus and circus art scene in Oslo found their own network organisation, **Sirkunst**.¹¹⁶

The Sirkunst - New Circus Network, was founded as an independent organisation working for the development of circus art in Norway through networking, information dissemination, lobbying and collaboration. Its aim was to build an infrastructure to support production, training facilities and funding. The Arts Council of Norway awarded a grant to Sirkunst to establish and build an organisational structure in 2007 and to look for possibilities for a circus center in Oslo. In 2008 Sirkunst delivered a report on the situation of new circus in Norway to The Arts Council, together with a new

112 Waage, S. 2011, 207.

113 E-mail correspondence with V. Broen and S. Waage. The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-25.

114 Waage, S. 2011, 200.

115 Waage, S. 2011, 211-212.

116 Waage, S. 2011, 209.

application for support. The Arts Council turned down the application and the organisation activity of Sirkunst came to an end.¹¹⁷ In 2010 Sirkunst was restarted formally, reorganised as a network organisation and the goals of the original organisation were substantially changed.¹¹⁸

The major breakthrough for circus art in Norway was when the Arts Council finally granted Cirkus Xanti a funding for their concept of a 'Mobile Circus Village' in 2009. Cirkus Xanti received a three-year funding package of approximately 2,600,000 NOK for building and development of the Circus Village.¹¹⁹ Several circus tents and wagons provide space for training, teaching, workshops and the presentation of performances and acts. Cirkus Xanti produced the first Circus Village in Torshovparken, Oslo, in August the same year. Over forty arrangements, including twenty presentations of six different circus shows, were presented.

The Circus Village 2010 presented a broad programme for education and workshops for children, youth and professional circus artists, and several Norwegian performances in Kristiansand, Sarpsborg and Oslo. The Circus Village in Oslo developed in 2010 into a fairly large international circus festival.

Today, the Circus Village offers the only fully rigged circus space in Norway in which circus artists can train and companies can produce and present. During the Circus Village in 2010 a network, the Circus Village Network, was established. This new network is organised by the companies **Vilderness Production**, Pain Solution and Cirkus Xanti. The Network will work for the benefit of circus art primarily through the development of The Circus Village, but also on a national, Nordic and international level.¹²⁰

According to Sverre Waage, artistic director of the Circus Village,¹²¹ there is need for a solid infrastructure, built with government funding, that has regard to all the elements of the art form: education, production and performance. Circus art productions need longer rehearsal time and rehearsals that have different structures comparative to dance and theatre productions. These conditions and spaces have not been available in Norway so far, but nonetheless, a few productions are still made and presented.¹²²

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117 E-mail correspondence with V. Broen and S. Waage. The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-25.

118 Ibid.

119 Cirkus Xanti/The Circus Village received the following grants under the programme Rom for Kunst during 2009-2011: 400.000 NOK (2009), 1,500,000 NOK (2010) and 700,000 NOK. e-mail correspondence with Y. Svarva, The Arts Council of Norway. 2011-02-01.

120 E-mail correspondence with V. Broen and S. Waage. The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-25.

121 Waage 2011, 233.

122 Ibid.

4.3.3. Funding

On the national level, the government intervenes through the Arts Council of Norway for the production and programming of performances. The new circus companies can apply for project funding from the Arts Council of Norway. The Arts Council of Norway does not provide statistics per genre concerning the grants for performing arts projects.¹²³ In 2011, **Cirkus Xanti** received 700,000 NOK (at the time of publication c.90,000 EUR) for the Circus Village as a part of the three-year funding package under the programme *Rum for Konst*.

There is funding for Norwegian and international guest performances to be invited to theatres and festivals. There is also funding for Norwegian productions to travel abroad to perform. The grants come mainly from The Arts Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Fund for Performing Artists (Fond for Utøvende Kunstnere), The Fund for Sound and Picture (Fond for Lyd og Bilde) and spenn.no (Den Kulturelle Skolesekken/Scenekunstbruket) are governmental funding institutions giving out possible grants to circus art and new circus projects.¹²⁴

The government supported the new circus art for the first time in 2001. Since then, nine out of eleven companies mentioned above have received funding from one or more of the funding institutions. Several of the companies also partly finance their artistic work with commercial events and teaching.¹²⁵

4.4 CIRCUS RESEARCH

In the past years, two surveys have been made on circus research. In 2006 The Arts Council funded a study of the possibilities of building a circus hall in Hausmaniakvartalet in Oslo. The survey: *Sirkushall Oslo – fra drøm til virkelighet. En utredning av mulighetene for å bygge en nysirkushall i Hausmaniakvartalet*, edited by Elisabeth Magnus, was delivered to The Arts Council of Norway the same year.¹²⁶ In 2007 The Arts Council granted a fund for a new survey. **Sirkunst** delivered the survey: *Nysirkus i Norge – med vekt på nysirkus som scenekunst*, edited by Vilde Broen, to The Art Council in 2008.¹²⁷

In addition, Hermann Berthelsen published a book on Norwegian circus history: *Sirkus i Norge – gjøglernes og sirkusenes historie* in 2009.¹²⁸ He has also published other books and articles about circus, variété and sideshow and has his own archive, *Det Glade*

123 E-mail correspondence with Y. Svarva. The Arts Council of Norway. 2011-02-01.

124 E-mail correspondence with V. Broen and S. Waage. The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-25.

125 Broen (ed.) 2008, 16.

126 Magnus (ed.) 2006.

127 Broen (ed.) 2008.

128 Berthelsen 2009.



Arkiv.¹²⁹ Photographer Torbjørn Flo has been documenting circus activity throughout the last decades and has a large archive of circus photos, programmes and history.¹³⁰

In addition, there is some previous circus research done at a university level. At the University of Trondheim, Sverre Waage delivered a Bachelor's paper on circus history and dramaturgy in 1982, and a Master's paper on contemporary circus in 2008. Siw Aduvill Pedersen, at the University of Oslo and Vilde Broen, at The University of Bergen, both delivered papers at Bachelor level, in 2003 and 2004 respectively.¹³¹

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129 More information on Det Glade Arkiv: www.detgladearkiv.no.

130 E-mail correspondence with Waage & Broen, The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-25

131 E-mail correspondence with S. Waage, The Circus Village Network, 2011-04-25.

5. SWEDEN

5.1. YOUTH CIRCUS ACTIVITY

There are eight youth circus schools¹³² in Sweden. In addition, organisations and institutions of different sizes, such as culture schools (kulturskola) arrange circus courses and training for children and young people.

The contemporary circus company **Cirkus Cirkör** provides circus training from early school age to upper secondary school level. In total twenty-five courses are offered annually in Botkyrka. Another big part of the educational activity of Cirkus Cirkör is to go and meet people around Sweden. The company provides, for example, shows and workshops for schools. In 2010, Cirkus Cirkör visited forty municipalities all over Sweden. In addition, the company has operated a long-term collaboration with three municipalities and worked with circus in the schools there.¹³³ Ung Cirkör (Cirkör Youth) is Cirkus Cirkör's Youth Performance Group. The group is composed of twelve youngsters between the ages of eleven and sixteen years. Ung Cirkör has collaborated with some youth circuses in Finland and Germany.

There are no statistics on the total number of children and young people participating in circus courses and training in Sweden. However, Cirkus Cirkör's trainers meet around 20,000 children and youth annually through their activities.¹³⁴

The sources of funding are various. The youth circuses may receive funding from the municipality, city and the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research as a youth organisation. Furthermore, the youth circuses organise much funding by themselves by selling shows and gathering fees from their members.¹³⁵

5.1.1. Social circus

Clowner utan Gränser (Clowns Without Borders) work with children and families living in difficult circumstances around the world. The organisation's activity is based

132 Muukkonen (ed.) 2011, 5-6; E-mail correspondence with Å. Karlsson. Norrköpings ungdomscirkus. 2011-02-21. See the list of youth circus schools in Sweden. Attachment 1.

133 Interview with M. Crusoe and A. Frennberg, Cirkus Cirkör. 2011-04-08.

134 Ibid.

135 E-mail correspondence with Å. Karlsson. Norrköpings ungdomscirkus. 2011-02-21.

on social work.¹³⁶ In addition, Cirkus Cirkör has been providing courses for disabled children and youth for over ten years. They organise on-going courses and projects during the semester in Botkyrka. In addition, Cirkus Cirkör offers courses for disabled children and youth in special schools, associations and organisations nationwide.¹³⁷

5.2. PROFESSIONAL CIRCUS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There are three secondary schools with programmes in circus for students aged 16–18. The programmes last for three years and all part of the public Swedish secondary school system.

The circus programme of the **Vasa School** in Gävle, was founded in 1988. The education was first provided as a two-year programme, but was later established as a first upper-secondary school education in circus in the Nordic countries. The education is focused on a “traditional circus” perspective.¹³⁸ **Cirkusgymnasiet** has educated many of the active professional artists in Sweden.¹³⁹ The school admits sixteen students annually, but at the moment there are eight to ten students in each class.¹⁴⁰

In 1997 **Cirkus Cirkör** started Cirkuspiloterna with European funding. Combining education and training in their activity from the very beginning has been central to the institution’s success in Sweden.¹⁴¹ The circus programme (*Nycirkusprogrammet*) in Botkyrka was started in 2000 as cooperation between the municipality and Cirkus Cirkör. The circus syllabus is administered from **St. Botvid’s Secondary School** at Hallunda, however the actual circus education takes place at Cirkus Cirkör in the Circus Hall at **Subtopia** in Botkyrka. The circus programme syllabus has a three-year orientation within the aesthetics program, which gives a broad educational base for further artistic studies as well as the university qualification.¹⁴²

Students come all over from Sweden. Twenty students are admitted annually and the number of students is approximately sixty in total. Most of the students have been to leisure school and some of students have a background in gymnastics, diving or parkour. Most of the graduates look for another school within which to continue studies: approximately three students are accepted into the **University of Dance and**

136 See more on the Clowner utan Gränser: www.skratt.nu/cug

137 Cirkus Cirkör 2011, 11.

138 Cirkusgymnasiet 2011. See more on Cirkusgymnasiet: www.cirkusgymnasiet.se

139 Muukkonen (ed.) 2011, 20.

140 E-mail correspondence with A-C Sundling, Cirkusgymnasiet. 2011-09-26.

141 Interview with M. Crusoe and A. Frennberg, Cirkus Cirkör. 2011-04-08.

142 See more at Cirkus Cirkör: www.cirkor.se

Circus (DOCH) every year while many go to other preparatory schools and universities abroad.¹⁴³

Besides these, **Jämtlands Gymnasium** provides an upper secondary school programme for winter acrobatics, which was founded in 2004 with the support of Cirkus Cirkör. The education is given at two schools in Östersund and Åre. Jämtlands Gymnasium has been annually admitting two classes of 16 students to the winter acrobatics programme. However, this year the school decided to put the education on hold due to a decreasing number of students. At the moment, there are 46 students in total. Winter acrobatics is considered a winter expression of the circus art form. However, the education is considered more an artistic education than a circus education.¹⁴⁴ Studies and training include drama, downhill skiing, acrobatics, performance production and various artistic pursuits.¹⁴⁵ Most students continue to higher education studies outside the field of circus.¹⁴⁶

In 2005, a three-year degree course in contemporary circus was launched at the University of Dance and Circus (formerly the University College of Dance). The Circus Programme at DOCH¹⁴⁷ is the only higher-level education school for circus in the Nordic countries. The programme leads to a Bachelor of Arts in Circus, 180 ECTS.¹⁴⁸

The circus education at the DOCH provides basic knowledge in four different circus disciplines: acrobatics, equilibristics, aerials and juggling as well as further training at least in one elected discipline. Besides the BA, the Circus Department offers independent courses, which focus on entrepreneurship and marketing as well as assisting alumni students to develop their artistic work over a period.¹⁴⁹ The circus education takes place in Subtopia, Botkyrka, but the DOCH is building a new circus rehearsal hall in Stockholm. The hall will be ready in December 2011.¹⁵⁰

Eighteen students are admitted to the circus programme every second year. For many of the students, DOCH is the third school after upper secondary school (3 years) and the preparatory programme (1-2 years).¹⁵¹ Dance, music and theatre are integrated

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143 Interview with W. Ferrero, Circus Programme, St. Botvid's Secondary School and University of Dance and Circus. 2011-04-07.

144 E-mail correspondence with D. Oja, Jämtlands Gymnasium. 2011-08-25.

145 Muukkonen (ed.) 2011, 20. See more the Secondary school programme for winter acrobatics: www.jgy.se/gymnasieprogram/estetiska/vinterakrobatik

146 E-mail correspondence with D. Oja, Jämtlands Gymnasium. 2011-08-25.

147 There are three departments at DOCH: dance, dance pedagogical and circus.

148 University of Dance and Circus 2009.

149 Interview with W. Ferrero, Circus Programme, St. Botvid's Secondary School and University of Dance and Circus. 2011-04-07.

150 See more at DOCH: www.doch.se.

151 DOCH is gathering information on the students' background education. Interview with W. Ferrero, Circus Programme, St. Botvid's Secondary School and University of Dance and Circus. 2011-04-07.

components of the Circus Programme. Applicants come from all over the world. Approximately 25% of students have originated from Scandinavia, the rest of them come mainly from Europe. According to Walter Ferrero, Head of the Department of Circus, one of the aims of the Department in the future is to increase the number of Scandinavian, particularly Swedish students.¹⁵²

Two classes have graduated, with a 100% access rate.¹⁵³ From the last class, 75 % of the graduates are working full time in various capacities; either they have created their own company, they work as freelancers, or they have been able to join an existing company. The rest of the graduates are also working but not with a full time schedule: they complement performance and production work with teaching and small events with for, example Cirkus Cirkör. The Master's programme in Circus Art will be launched in 2013.¹⁵⁴

In January 2011, the **Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts**, in collaboration with **Clowns Without Borders** (Sweden) started the Master's programme 'A Year of Physical Comedy'.¹⁵⁵ Ten skilled performers are trained in techniques and thinking developed by clowns touring throughout the world in areas of crisis. The students go on tour to places like Rwanda, Burma and Palestine.¹⁵⁶

A new educational project will soon be launched by the municipality of Botkyrka. Alby Folk High School will provide education for circus directors and producers, as well as providing courses in health issues, safety and rigging.¹⁵⁷

According to Walter Ferrero, Artistic Director of the Circus programme at St. Botvid's Secondary School and Head of the Department of Circus at the University of Dance and Circus,¹⁵⁸ more collaboration among the schools that offer circus education will be needed in the future. Teacher development work is seen to be a way to contribute to the cooperation between leisure schools, secondary school level and university level. Progress could be gauged in terms of the number and the quality of Swedish applicants. The DOCH has started to provide teacher development by offering schooling to leisure and secondary school teachers.¹⁵⁹

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152 Interview with W. Ferrero, Circus Programme, St. Botvid's Secondary School and University of Dance and Circus. 2011-04-07.

153 The number of enrolled students divided by the number of graduates.

154 Interview with W. Ferrero, Circus Programme, St. Botvid's Secondary School and University of Dance and Circus. 2011-04-07. DOCH has started to compile statistics about the employment rate and situation of the graduates.

155 Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts 2011a.

156 Muukkonen (ed.) 2011, 19.

157 Interview with K. Lekberg, Subtopia. 2011-04-08.

158 Interview with W. Ferrero, Circus Programme, St. Botvid's Secondary School and University of Dance and Circus. 2011-04-07.

159 Ibid.

5.3. PROFESSIONAL CIRCUS ARTISTS AND COMPANIES

5.3.1. Professional artists

The Swedish circus field is characterised by problems with defining professional circus artists to a similar extent as in other Nordic countries. An estimated 200 circus professionals are operating in Sweden.¹⁶⁰

Based on the field study in 2008,¹⁶¹ for approximately 25% of the professionals performing was their sole employment activity, another quarter of the professionals combined performing and events and nearly half of the artists combined performing, corporate events and teaching. Eight per cent of the professional artists have had to take on other jobs in order to earn their living.¹⁶² Teachers in the upper secondary school circus programme are mostly artists as well as graduates and students from the DOCH.¹⁶³

Most Swedish professional artists have gone through the educational path provided by the circus schools in Sweden. Some of the professionals have also studied abroad, especially between the upper secondary school and the DOCH, or even at the tertiary level. Usually artists work in different companies, and in several companies simultaneously. Most artists work and tour abroad frequently, some having longer contracts with companies mainly in Canada, Spain, Finland and France.¹⁶⁴ About 15% of the “Swedish” artists have originated abroad, but moved to Sweden for education and work, and stayed there or still consider Sweden to be their base.¹⁶⁵ There is no information available on the educational background of the circus professionals in Sweden, but the Circus Department at DOCH has started to compile statistics regarding graduate circus students.¹⁶⁶

Very few artists in the contemporary field apply for grants in Sweden.¹⁶⁷ According to the field survey in 2008, 60% of respondent circus professionals have never applied for any kind of grants, funding or allowance.¹⁶⁸ There are no published statistics on rates of employment among circus artists.

160 Most of the clowns in Sweden are not included in this count. The number consists only of those professionals who are connected to and work in the contemporary circus field. E-mail correspondence with K. Muukkonen. 2011-03-08.

161 Muukkonen 2008: Branchundersökning 2008. Manegen - Federation for circus, variety and street performers.

162 The questions were asked of 200 professionals and 40 companies. The study resulted in 40 responses.

163 Interview with W. Ferrero, Circus Programme, St. Botvid's Secondary School and University of Dance and Circus. 2011-04-07.

164 Ibid.

165 E-mail correspondence with K. Muukkonen. 2011-03-08.

166 Interview with Walter Ferrero, Circus Programme, St. Botvid's Secondary School and University of Dance and Circus. 2011-04-07.

167 E-mail correspondence with K. Muukkonen 2011-03-08.

168 Muukkonen 2008: Branchundersökning 2008.

5.3.2. Companies

There are around 45-50 contemporary circus companies in Sweden.¹⁶⁹ During the 2000s a number of new companies have been established and a growing number of individual artists are working in different constellations. Some of the new companies formed in this decade are **Balagas, Fan-Atticks, Naked Ape, Ruby Rose, Swebounce, Cirkus Saga, Idiots Savants, Vifira** and **Zin-Lit**.¹⁷⁰

Cirkus Cirkör began as an independent contemporary circus group in Stockholm in 1995. In 2000 Cirkus Cirkör moved to Botkyrka, and since then they have had status as a regional institution. Today, as the biggest circus company in Sweden, their work comprises of touring performances in Sweden and around the world as well as running events, courses and an internationally recognised circus education. Cirkus Cirkör conducts the most tours relative to other small companies in Sweden and it reaches annually approximately 100,000 spectators, 30-40,000 of whom are outside of Sweden.¹⁷¹

There are 7 active traditional tent circuses in Sweden.¹⁷² There are no official audience numbers for contemporary circus, but the traditional circuses gather statistics: around 400,000 people attend traditional circus shows every year in Sweden. The season is 6 months per year and each circus usually visits 150-180 locations in a season. In some small towns and villages a travelling circus is the only live entertainment ever offered. Traditional circus does not usually receive any state or regional funding but is completely self-financed.¹⁷³

Centres for supporting creation in the field of circus and street arts hardly exist in Sweden at the moment. Residency systems are rare and co-producing and commissioning are not common ways to work in the Swedish performing arts. Some institutions, e.g. **DOCH** and **House of Dance in Stockholm**, every now and then offer residencies for circus companies.¹⁷⁴

Subtopia is a centre of contemporary circus in Sweden located in Botkyrka, housing several circus companies alongside the **DOCH** and **St. Botvid's Secondary School**. Subtopia supports creation, research and artistic development by providing, for example, an incubator for artists, residencies and workshops and information and advice on

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¹⁶⁹ Roughly 50% define themselves as circus companies, 25% as both circus and street companies. The rest speak of their work in terms of clowning and/or variety. Muukkonen, K. (ed.) 2011, 6.

¹⁷⁰ Damkjær & Muukkonen 2011, 248-249.

¹⁷¹ Interview with M. Crusoe and A. Frennberg, Cirkus Cirkör. 2011-04-08.
See more on Cirkus Cirkör: www.cirkor.se

¹⁷² Cirkus Brazil Jack, Cirkus Madigan, Cirkus Maximum, Cirkus Olympia, Cirkus Scott, Cirkus Skratt and Cirkus Wictoria.

¹⁷³ Muukkonen (ed.) 2011, 16.

¹⁷⁴ Muukkonen (ed.) 2011, 23.

circus. A part of Subtopia's work for supporting Swedish artists is a yearly showcase of circus, variety and street arts, *Subcase Subtopia Circus Fair*, to which bookers and presenters from all over Sweden and Europe come each year.¹⁷⁵ In 2012, the Subcase will focus on the Nordic contemporary circus. **Hangaren** is a venue for contemporary circus situated in Botkyrka. One of Subtopia's goals is to receive a regional and national assignment to present national and international circus in Hangaren.¹⁷⁶

There are also two organisations that work consistently to advocate for circus and street arts, in order to develop state, regional and municipal policies that affect conditions for artists and companies working professionally in this field: **Manegen – Federation for circus, variety and street performers** and **Cirkusakademien**.

Manegen - Federation for circus, variety and street performers was established in 2008 as an initiative of several independent organisations, artists and producers, and was supported by the municipality of Botkyrka, Subtopia and the Swedish Arts Council as a pilot project. This was the first time in an official state document that circus and street art were defined as "art forms". Manegen works as a national, grass-roots level network representing the field of artists and companies.¹⁷⁷ Today Manegen is operating on a voluntary basis and their major challenge is attracting funding for their activities, and as a result, stabilising their status as a national federation for artists.¹⁷⁸ Manegen is a member of **Circostrada** and the **European Federation of Professional Circus Schools (FEDEC)** and a partner to the **NNCN**.

Cirkusakademien was founded in 1973 and has mainly worked for and represented traditional circuses. Since 1975 they have built up one of the biggest archives on traditional circus in Europe, containing books, pictures and props from famous acts and artists. Six times a year they publish the magazine *Cirkuslära Notiser*.¹⁷⁹

5.3.3.Funding

There is no cultural policy on circus in Sweden, neither are there any statistics available on the government or regional expenditures for circus art. There is no funding system especially designed for contemporary circus in Sweden. All support and statistics for the contemporary circus art form go under the headings of theatre and dance.¹⁸⁰

Institutions, independent groups or similar are referred to the Swedish Arts Council.

175 Subtopia 2011. See more on Subtopia: www.subtopia.se

176 Interview with K. Lekberg, Subtopia. 2011-04-08.

177 Damkjær & Muukkonen 2011, 266. See also: www.manegen.org

178 Interview with T. Andreassen, Manegen. 2011-04-07.

179 Cirkusakademien - Akademien för cirkuskonstens bevarande i Sverige 2011. More information: www.cirkusakademien.se

180 Muukkonen (ed.) 2011, 3.

The Swedish Arts Council allots grants to groups, cooperative projects, and non-profit organisations. The Swedish Arts Council defines the applicants either as “free” organisation or an institution. Furthermore, it allocates grants to artists’ centres in various artistic areas. Regarding “free” groups, so far for 2011, three groups have been granted in total 350,000 SEK (at the time of publication c.38,000 EUR). Seven groups applied for grants.¹⁸¹

In 2011, **Cirkus Cirkör** received a grant of 4,173,000 SEK (c.456,000 EUR) from the Swedish Arts Council.¹⁸² Cirkus Cirkör also receives funding from the municipality of Botkyrka, the city of Stockholm and the county of Stockholm. Cirkus Cirkör’s budget consists of 30% external funding and 70% own funding (incl. ticket sales, education, collaboration etc.).¹⁸³

The Swedish Arts Grants Committee allots grants to the performing arts. The Arts Grants Committee allocates travel grants, project grants, or stipends for one year or more. All support awarded by the Swedish Arts Grants Committee is for individual, professional artists who are resident of, or have their main artistic activity in Sweden. Circus does not have its own category when it comes to funding in the Swedish Arts Grants Committee, it goes mostly under theatre or sometimes dance. Circus artists can also apply from the International Dance Programme. The Swedish Arts Grants Committee allots grants for individual, professional artists. In 2011 the Committee’s working party for theatre, dance and film artists has so far allocated approximately 535,000 SEK (c.58,000 EUR) for circus artists including within the categories of mime, clowns and “stage artist” (skådeartist).¹⁸⁴

5.4. CIRCUS RESEARCH

In recent years there have been two, state funded, long-term artistic research projects in the field of circus. Tilde Björfors, founder and artistic director of **Cirkus Cirkör** as well as a guest professor at the **DOCH** in Stockholm, runs the four year research project *Circus breaking boundaries in arts and society 2008-2011* with support from the Swedish Research Council. The international project involves circus artists from around the world, as well as researchers from other fields of science: economics, pedagogy, ethnology, psychiatry, and performance studies.¹⁸⁵ The 2-year research project *Beyond and Within 2008-2010* was conducted by Åsa Johannisson at the **Dramatic Institute** in Stockholm with the support from the **Knowledge Foundation**.¹⁸⁶

181 E-mail correspondence with J. Landin. The Swedish Arts Council. 2011-02-22.

182 Ibid.

183 Interview with M. Crusoe and A. Frennberg, Cirkus Cirkör. 2011-04-08.

184 E-mail correspondence with T. Pettersson. The Swedish Arts Grants Committee. 2011-04-28.

185 University of Dance and Circus 2011.

186 Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts 2011b.



The DOCH provides artistic research education. The first six doctoral students are currently employed through agreements with the **University of Stockholm**, the **Royal Technical University** and the **University of Lund/National School of Artistic Research**. The disciplines represented are choreography, circus and dance pedagogy. One of the students is doing his doctorate in circus.¹⁸⁷

In 2010 the first international conference on *Circus Artistic Research Development*, CARD, took place at DOCH in Stockholm. The conference reached about 50 participants – international artists, directors and researchers – from 12 countries. The conference was organised in cooperation with **Subtopia** and **Manegen**.¹⁸⁸

187 Interview with W. Ferrero, Circus Programme, St. Botvid's Secondary School and University of Dance and Circus. 2011-04-07.

188 Muukkonen (ed.) 2011, 29.

6. ICELAND AND THE NORDIC REGION'S AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIES

The field of circus art is still young in Iceland as well as in the autonomous territories: Faroe Islands, Greenland and Oland, and therefore there is little information available regarding current activities.

In Iceland there are some courses offered for children sporadically but the activity is not organised. A circus group **Circus Iceland** (Sirkus Íslands) in Reykjavik offers a one-week course during the summertime. The course is for children between 7-15 years old.¹⁸⁹ In addition, one of the biggest art festivals for young artists in Iceland, *LungA*, has provided one-week workshops for young people between 16-25 years old, once a year, for 5-6 years.¹⁹⁰ Circus Iceland was founded in 2007 and provides performances with aerial entertainment, acrobatics, juggling, fire shows, stiltwalking and roving entertainers.¹⁹¹

In Greenland, there are currently no circus activities, but according to Andreas Olsen, Head of Department, Ministry of Family, Culture, Church and Gender Equality, there is an interest in creating and developing activity.¹⁹²

189 E-mail correspondence with I. D. Gísladóttir, The Nordic House. 2011-04-26.

190 E-mail correspondence with A. Borgthorsdottir, LungA. 2011-09-12.

191 Performance Arts in Iceland 2011.

192 E-mail correspondence with A. Olsen. The Ministry of Family, Culture, Church and Gender Equality. 2011-05-17.

7. INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK AND NORDIC COOPERATION

The Nordic countries are actively involved in the international networks through their member organisations. The main international networks are the following:

The European Youth Circus Organisation (EYCO) started as a formal organisation in 2010. EYCO is regarded as the European overarching umbrella organisation of the smaller national youth circus umbrellas in European countries. The organisation aims at stimulating and supporting European youth circuses on a national and a European level.¹⁹³

The **European Circus Association (ECA)** was established in 2002 by ten leading European circuses in order to secure the future of classical circus. Today the membership includes more than 80 circuses, festivals and animal training businesses based in more than 18 countries. The ECA has focused, among other things, on promoting increased state recognition of circus as culture, increasing access to artists by simplifying visa and work permit requirements, facilitating circus movement through standardisation of technical requirements and setting high standards for animal care and presentation.¹⁹⁴

The European Federation of Professional Circus Schools, (FEDEC)'s main vocation is to support the development and evolution of pedagogy and creation in the field of circus arts education. FEDEC was founded in 1998. FEDEC is a network of 39 professional circus schools and 13 circus arts organisations located in 24 different countries.¹⁹⁵

The **Circostrada Network** is a European platform for information, research and professional exchange networking related to street arts and circus arts. Circostrada contributes to the open circulation of information and resources within these artistic sectors, favouring actual encounters and cooperation between European professionals. The Circostrada Network's goal is to work on the development and structure of circus and street arts in Europe. The network was founded in 2003 and consists of about 30 members chosen for their knowledge of the sector in their country.¹⁹⁶

193 European Youth Circus Organisation 2010. More information on EYCO: www.eyco.org

194 European Circus Association 2011. More information on ECA: www.europeancircus.info

195 European Federation of Professional Circus Schools 2011b. More information on FEDEC: www.fedec.eu

196 Circostrada Network 2011. More information on Circostrada Network: www.circostrada.org

Jeunes Talents Cirque Europe is a French association for assisting the emergence of authors and creators in the area of circus arts. It was established in 2002 on the initiative of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. Since 2009 the association has taken on a European aspect and received substantial support from the European community. The activity of Jeunes Talents Cirque Europe has arisen from the observation that young artists and companies encounter real difficulties in their creative processes. Considered one of the main support operations for young authors and creators in this field, Jeunes Talents Cirque Europe maintains its objective of supporting creation and giving assistance in public promotion.¹⁹⁷

The establishment of the **New Nordic Circus Network (NNCN)** in 2007, marked the beginning of formal cooperation and networking in the Nordic countries. Besides the five main partners mentioned previously, NNCN has had two associated partners: **Cirkus Cirkör Lab** and **Manegen** in Sweden. The aim of the network of artists/companies, producers, presenters/venues is to improve the conditions and opportunities for the new circus sector in the Nordic countries. The NNCN maintains a website, posts a Nordic newsletter three times a year and organises meetings and seminars.¹⁹⁸

In 2008, *Juggling the Arts* was the first co-Nordic project of the New Nordic Circus Network. The objectives of the project are, among other things, to support artistic research processes within contemporary Nordic circus art, to offer artistic support to young Nordic circus artists and to support the development of professionalism within the contemporary circus field. Another example of joint cooperation is the newly published book by NNCN and Stockholm University: *Contemporary Circus – Introduction to the development of the art form*.¹⁹⁹

The future aim of the network is to build a strong infrastructure and see that every country represented in the network will benefit from the work and projects. In the near future NNCN will focus on the establishment of three new platforms in the Nordic contemporary circus world: establishing a Nordic circus information centre, a Nordic circus subcase and a Nordic Circus Village/touring contemporary circus festival. The need for a **Nordic Circus Information Centre (NCIC)** has been recognised among the network members. The main task of the NCIC would be to follow the development of circus in the Nordic countries closely through surveys, statistics, interviews, etc. It would also be a place where useful experiences and best practices from the circus world could be gathered.²⁰⁰

As a part of the Nordic circus year, the Finnish Circus Information Centre organised a Nordic expert seminar on circus. *New Circus As Strength in Society – Ny circus som kraft i samhället* was held in May 2011 as a part of Finland's presidency programme of the

197 Jeunes Talents Cirque Europe 2011. More information on: www.jeunestalentcirque.org

198 New Nordic Circus Network 2011. More information on NNCN: <http://nordic-circus.org/>

199 Purovaara et al. (2011c): Contemporary Circus. Introduction to the Art Form.

200 Ibid.

Council of Ministers. The target groups of the seminar were Nordic and international actors in the field of circus, cultural administrators and researchers. The seminar attracted 108 participants.

The seminar consisted of presentations and round-table workshops with the Circos-trada European network for circus and street arts. Presentations provided an overview on the situation of Nordic circus. Director of the **Cirko Center for New Circus**, Tomi Purovaara, presented the activities of the New Nordic Circus Network. Project researcher Jutta Virolainen, from the **Finnish Circus Information Centre**, presented the results of ongoing research work on Nordic circus. The moderator, Verena Cornwall from the **Circus Development Agency (UK)**, brought a broader European perspective into the conversation.

The round-table meetings examined effective practices and projects. The workshops were held under two themes; 1) Children and youth; and 2) Mobility. Under the first theme projects and examples regarding youth circus activity were examined and questions relating to social circus and its uses for promoting a sense of community in society were discussed. Under the second theme, touring opportunities for contemporary circus companies in the Nordic countries were examined and establishment of a Nordic residence network was discussed. In addition, effective practises regarding the support and promotion of the work of emerging circus artists were presented and questions and best practises for circus touring were discussed.

On 22nd of August 2011, the *Future Circus Education – Seminar on Circus Pedagogy* was held in Turku in cooperation with the **Turku Arts Academy's Future Circus Project**, the *Social Circus Project* in Finland, **Finnish Youth Circus Association**, FEDEC, the New Nordic Circus Network, **Kulturkontakt Nord** and **Nordplus Horizontal**. The target groups of the seminar were circus teachers and directors, administrators of circus schools, researchers and producers. The themes of the seminar were; 1) Contemporary circus education; circus artists and circus teacher training in Nordic countries and in Europe; 2) Circus artists' work in today's society: what is the future of circus arts in Europe?; and 3) The possibilities for circus artists in working life, nowadays and in the future.

The seminar day was divided into two parts. The first part included presentations on circus education in the Nordic countries, the professional integration of circus artists, and circus teacher training, continuing education and professional development and teachers' exchanges between schools. The second part of the seminar was reserved for working groups. The five groups were formed under the themes; 1) The future of the circus artist; 2) Circus education and needs for the future; 3) Border tensions: What is circus? Who is a circus artist?; 4) Teaching, leading and coaching circus; and 5) Collaboration between different fields. The seminar highlighted the great differences in circus education between the Nordic countries. Recognising the qualifications from the schools that provide circus education, and promoting the flow between different levels of education, including preparatory education, were seen as important factors for enhancing circus art education. Furthermore, the question of how to nurture the



transition from school to profession was seen as worthy of consideration. In addition, providing circus teachers with good pedagogical skills was seen as important for the development of circus education. Social circus and other forms of applied circus were seen as new employment opportunities for professionals in the future.

In October 2011, the Finnish Circus Information Centre organised a Nordic seminar on production in contemporary circus. The seminar was directed at circus producers, circus artists-producers and students studying cultural production. The seminar provided an overview of cultural management education for circus producers in Nordic countries and examined different pathways for becoming a circus producer.

In addition, the Finnish **Linnanmäki Circus School** organised the *Nordic youth circus meeting 2011* in Espoo, Finland during 5th –12th of June as a part of the Finnish Youth Circus festival. There were in total 74 participants from Finland, Iceland, Norway and Estonia. The aim of the meeting was to extend and develop Nordic youth circus activity.²⁰¹

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201 E-mail correspondence with N. Rinta-Opas, Linnanmäki Circus School. 2011-09-09.

8. MAIN FINDINGS

This survey has examined the current situation of circus art in the Nordic countries from different perspectives. It has focused on providing a broad overview rather than a comprehensive analysis of the field of circus art in each country. There is an evident need for more in-depth study in the future in order to provide a more detailed picture of each examined theme. The study shows that both similarities and differences exist between the Nordic countries. The main findings and proposals for further reflection are presented under the following themes: youth circus activity, professional education, professional artists and companies, circus research and Nordic cooperation.

Youth circus activity

- There is a wide range of youth circus activity in the Nordic countries, varying from youth club and leisure school activities based on individual initiatives, to goal-oriented basic arts education based on progression through various levels.
- Based on estimations the number of organisations that provide circus activities for children and youth are in Denmark 10, Finland 31, Iceland 1, Norway 15 and Sweden 8. The content and extent of the education vary significantly.
- Finland is the only country with a national umbrella organisation for the youth circuses, the **Finnish Youth Circus Association**.
- There are no accurate statistics concerning the number of children and youth taking part in circus education. According to the Finnish Youth Circus Association, there are nearly 4,000 circus students in preparatory circus schools in Finland. There is no information on the total number of children participating in youth circus activity in other Nordic countries.
- Cooperation nationally as well as internationally, in terms of benchmarking and sharing best practises, is important for promoting activity in each country.
- There are successful case examples of social circus projects and long-term activity in the Nordic countries. Greater flow of information and sharing of experiences between actors should be promoted in order to develop and enhance the activity.
- There are good examples of youth circus activity and social circus activity among special groups as providers of a sense of community. In addition, the activity is seen supporting social and community interaction.
- According to a study of Finnish circus graduates: a high number of graduates are working as teachers in youth circuses. Youth circus activity and different forms of applied circus will provide important employment opportunities for circus professionals in the future.

Professional circus education and training

DIAGRAM 1. The levels of circus education and the number of students studying circus in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The education is examined according to two levels of education: Higher level education, Secondary level education, and Non-formal education. *The figures refer to the total number of students studying circus in 2011. The figures are based on the number of students the schools are admitting annually. The content and extent of circus education varies with each school, therefore the diagram is only indicative. ** The number regarding the Jämtlands Gymnasium is the total number of students studying winter acrobatics, relatively few students continue studies in the field of circus. *** In the Circus Programme of the Vasa School, the number of students in each class is approximately 8-10. **** In Performers House the number of students is approximately 12-16 per semester.

- Professional circus training and education in the Nordic countries can either be accredited or non-accredited.
- There is a need for an officially recognised professional circus education in the Nordic countries. In Denmark and Norway there is no officially recognised circus education. In those countries circus education is provided through non-formal educational institutions. There is no professional education provided in Iceland or the Nordic autonomous regions.
- Higher education in circus arts is provided in Finland and Sweden. Sweden is the only country with a university level circus education and a degree programme; Bachelor of Arts in Circus. The University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm will launch a Master's Programme for Circus art in 2013. There is no university level education available in Finland. In the Arts Academy of Turku University of Applied Science the final diploma is a Bachelor of Cultural Studies.
- The career of the professional circus artist is highly international. The majority of Nordic circus students continue their studies in international circus schools and work abroad.
- In the home country the circus artist is often employed as a circus teacher. The need for circus pedagogical education should be examined in order to enhance the pedagogical knowledge of circus teachers and thus enhance the level of circus education, including at the preparatory school level.
- The question of safety regulations is a concern both for youth circus education as well as for professional circus activity. A need for common safety regulations for circus activity in the Nordic countries should be taken into consideration.

Professional circus artists and companies

DIAGRAM 2. The number of professional circus artists in the Nordic countries in 2011. *The numbers presented are indicative and are based on the assumed accuracy of information provided by the interviewed actors in the field of circus art in the examined countries. ** The number of contemporary circus companies in Sweden is 45-50.

- How to define a professional circus artist is a question that is relevant to every aspect of this survey. There are no accurate statistics relating to the number of circus artists in the Nordic countries.
- The figures regarding the number of professional artists are based on estimations. There are 50 professional artists in Denmark, 300 artists in Finland, 15 artists in Norway and 200 artists in Sweden. There is no information of the number of professional circus artists in Iceland or the Nordic region's autonomous territories.
- The number of new/contemporary circus companies in the Nordic countries is: 10 in Denmark, 20 in Finland, 11 in Norway, 45-50 in Sweden. In Iceland, Circus Iceland provides circus performances. There is no further information of the number of professional circus companies in Iceland or the Nordic region's autonomous territories.
- The number of traditional circus companies in the Nordic countries is: 7 in Denmark, 3 in Finland, 3 in Norway and 7 in Sweden. There is no information on the number of traditional circus companies in the Nordic region's autonomous territories.
- Permanent employment opportunities for professional circus artists are rare. Sources of income are often multiple and in order to earn a living, professional circus artists must often take on other jobs.
- More in-depth information is needed regarding the status of circus professionals, in terms of their educational background, employment situation and main sources of income. A survey regarding the Finnish professional circus artist and working life was published in Finland in 2010.

DIAGRAM 3. Direct state subsidies for professional circus companies and artists in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. *The diagram describes state support for artistic activity allocated by the National Arts Councils, the Arts Grants Committee (Sweden) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (Finland, cultural export). The diagram shows the total sum of subsidies for artistic projects and productions, as well as operating support for the companies. The sums do not include the subsidies for artistic work (such as grants for several years) or travelling grants. The direct state support systems differ according to each country and therefore the diagram is only indicative. The sums have been converted into euros.²⁰²

- The level of allocated grants for professional circus companies and artists varies greatly between Nordic countries.
- In the future, the artistic laboratory for the young circus artists, Juggling the Arts will be developed. Furthermore, the mentoring project for young circus artists established by Finnish contemporary circus company, Circo Aereo, will be extended as an incubator for Nordic contemporary circus.

Circus research

- In Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden there is some previously existing circus research at university level. In Finland, Sweden and Denmark some circus-related dissertations are underway.
- There is a call for more research on the development and aesthetics of contemporary circus. Enhancing circus research is an essential part of the development of the circus field as a whole. Opportunities to create cooperation between the departments of art studies at universities in the Nordic countries should be examined.
- Finland is at the moment the only country with a national information centre. It gathers and documents information on Finnish professional circus and, among other things, gathers statistics that provide direction for developmental work.

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202 Euro foreign exchange reference rates (2011-09-16): SEK 9.1610, NOK 7.7380, DKK, 7.4479. European Central Bank 2011.

Nordic cooperation

- Despite some great differences, there are also similarities in circus activity among the Nordic countries. Nordic cooperation should be enhanced in order to enable the flow of good practises between the countries. This is essential to the development of key infrastructure in this artistic field.
- The status of circus as an art form and as a profession should be enhanced at the Nordic level. The need for a Nordic circus information centre has been recognised. Preconditions for establishing a Nordic circus information centre should be examined.
- Compilation of statistics should be developed, enhanced and increased in order to provide valuable information on the situation of Nordic circus art. Some subjects of statistical importance would be: circus art funding, international touring and the number of performances and aggregate attendance. The Nordic circus information centre would gather the statistics.
- Nordic circus art is characterised by high international mobility. Nordic circus is strongly connected to and subsequently highly influenced by the whole European circus community, in terms of international touring activity, networking, residence programs and education. Close cooperation with international networks contributes to the development of circus art in the Nordic countries.
- The need for a higher-level Nordic professional circus artist education should be examined. Nordic cooperation regarding professional education would stimulate the mobility of students and teachers and raise levels of expertise in the countries.
- The **New Nordic Circus Network**'s projects for the year 2012 are: the *Nordic Circus Village*, Nordic residence network among the members of the New Nordic Circus Network and the *Nordic Circus Subcase* in **Subtopia**, Stockholm.

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Thorsten Andreassen, Chair, Manegen. Sweden. 2011-07-04.

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Vilde Broen, The Circus Village Network. Norway. 2011-04-06.

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Ilmur Dögg Gísladóttir, Project manager, The Nordic House. Iceland. 2011-04-26. (E-mail correspondence).

Lars Gregersen, Artistic director, Teatro GLIMT and Member of the Board of the Danish Artist Union. Denmark. 2011-03-09. (E-mail correspondence).

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Åsa Karlsson, Chair, Norrköpings ungdomscirkus. Sweden. 22-01-2011. (E-mail correspondence)

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Jochum Landin, Administrator, The Swedish Arts Council. 2011-02-22. (E-mail correspondence)

Karin Lekberg, Manager, Subtopia. Sweden. 2011-04-08.

Kiki Muukkonen, Artistic programming director of Hangaren in Subtopia, Sweden. 2011-03-08. (E-mail correspondence)

Anita Mäntynen-Hakem, Managing director, The Finnish Youth Circus Association. 2011-02-11; 2011-08-25.

Lone Nyhuus, Freelance Journalist & Katrien Verwilt, Artistic director, Copenhagen International Theatre (KIT). Denmark. 2011-31-03.

Daniel Oja, Teacher / Circus artist, Jämtlands Gymnasium. 2011-08-25. (E-mail correspondence)

Andreas Olsen, Head of Department, Ministry of Family, Culture, Church and Gender Equality, Greenland. 2011-05-17. (E-mail correspondence)

Tina Pettersson. Administrator and secretary of the working party for theatre, dance and film artists. The Swedish Arts Grants Committee. 2011-04-28. (E-mail correspondence)

Tomi Purovaara, Director, Cirko – Center for New Circus. Finland. 2011-08-09.

Niina Rinta-Opas, Performances / Production, Linnamäki Circus School. 2011-09-09. (E-mail correspondence)

Anna-Carin Sundling, Artistic director and Teacher in air acrobatics, Cirkusgymnasiet. 2011-09-26. (E-mail correspondence)

Yrjan Svarva, Section Chief Performing Arts, The Arts Council of Norway. 2011-02-01. (E-mail correspondence)

Kresten Thomsen, Supervisor, The Academy of Untamed Creativity, Denmark. 2011-09-06. (E-mail correspondence)

Sverre Waage, Artistic director The Circus Village, Norway. 2011-03-23. (E-mail correspondence)

Sverre Waage, Artistic director & Vilde Broen, The Circus Village Network. 2011-04-25. (E-mail correspondence)

Dorte Vincentzen, Redactor and Assurance Coordinator; Head of the project www.ny-cirkus.dk, Danish Artist Union, Denmark. 2011-04-26. (E-mail correspondence)

Katrien Verwilt, Artistic director, Copenhagen International Theatre, Denmark. 2011-05-03. (E-mail correspondence)

ATTACHMENTS

Organisations providing circus activities for children and youth in the Nordic countries.

DENMARK

Cikaros (Copenhagen)
Circus Flik-Flak (Odense, Island of Funen)
Circus Museum (Hvidovre)
Danish Gymnastics and Sport Association (DGI) (Vejle)
Foreningen Ørkenfortet (Copenhagen)
Innercirq (Copenhagen)
Odsherred Theatre School (Nykøbing Sjælland)
Performers House (Silkeborg)
TinCanCompany (Copenhagen)

FINLAND

Youth circus schools providing basic arts education:

Circus Helsinki (Helsinki)
Espoon esittävän taiteen koulun kannatusyhdistys ry (Espoo)
Sirkus Tuikku - Taidekoulu Estradi (Lappeenranta)
Sorin Sirkus ry (Tampere)
Tikkurilan teatteri- ja sirkuskoulu (Vantaa)

Other organisations:

Eira Nevanpään Taideliikuntakoulu (Kurikka)
Hakasirkus ry (Hyvinkää)
Haminan Teinisirkus ry (Hamina)
Joensuun Katajan Sirkuskoulu (Joensuu)
Kaavin Nuorisosirkus ry (Kaavi)
Kulttuuriyhdistys Väristys ry (Jyväskylä)
Kuopion Lastensirkus ry (Kuopio)
Lahden Tanssiopisto (Lahti)
Linnanmäen Sirkuskoulun kannatusyhdistys ry (Helsinki)
Monitaideyhdistys Piste ry (Rovaniemi)
Mäntän Nuorisosirkus ry (Mänttä)
Nuokun Sirkus ry (Lahti)
Oulun Tähtisirkus (Oulu)
Pukimäen Sirkuskoulu (Helsinki)

Sirkuskoulu ARX (Hämeenlinna)
Sirkuskoulu Bravuuri (Kuusankoski)
Sirkuskoulu Keikaus (Espoo)
Sirkuskoulu Rainbow (Kotka)
Sirkus Magenta (Helsinki, Vantaa)
Sirkus Sirius (Ohkola)
Sirkus Soihtu (Imatra)
Sirkus Supiainen ry (Eräjärvi)
Sirkus Taika-Aika ry (Rovaniemi)
Turun taideakatemian sirkusopiskelijat ry (Turku)
Tykkimäen Sirkuskoulu (Kouvola)
Ylivoli Sirkus (Ylitornio)

ICELAND

Sirkus Íslands (Reykjavík)

NORWAY

Cirka Cirkus (Bærum)
Karmøy Kulturskole (Karmøy)
KULTA Undervisning (Tromsø)
Kulturskole Kongsvinger (Kongsvinger)
Kulturskolen i Fredrikstad (Fredrikstad)
Kulturskolen i Trondheim (Trondheim)
Kulturskolen på Hå (Hå)
Nysirkus Bjerke (Oslo)
Stella Polaris (Fossnes)
SirkusSmulene (Oslo)
Sirkus Svalnardo (Svalbard)
Sirkus Svev (Nesodden)
Vrimmelvinge (Oslo)

SWEDEN

Bragehallens Barncirkus (Stockholm)
Furuviks Ungdomcirkus (Gävle)
Ludvika Minicircus (Ludvika)
Norrköpings circus and variete (Norrköping)
Norrköping ungdomscirkus (Norrköping)
Ung Cirkör (Botkyrka)
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