



The Indra Congress

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Newsletter

April 2011
Issue No 2

Dear friends

We are now on the way! The Indra Congress is a formerly constituted Community Interest Company and we are gathering momentum to develop an exciting programme of activities and events together. To get the company on its feet it was agreed that Dawn Melville and I would be the initial Directors. We have now been joined by Prof Tim Prentki.

Tim wrote the Impact Study of ARROW, 'A Mile in My Shoes', and organised the 2009 Symposium, which was attended by practitioners from around the world. Tim continues to be a great supporter and friend for the work and we are delighted and privileged that he joins us at such a grassroots level. The next formal, constitutional stage is to devise ways in which all the partners can be integrated into the processes of wider decision making.

Website

We now have a website – www.indracongress.net We currently have very limited resources so Dawn has created a basic site to get us started. It is still in its infancy and would benefit from more information regarding our partners and centres. If you



could therefore send through a few paragraphs, any links and a couple images regarding your group or centre that would be great, I can then add it into the website.

There is also scope to add or amend sections within the site, should anyone have any suggestions on what they think is missing or should be changed or replaced.

The news blog will be updated as and when you send through your news. This is an important feature to keep updated as it demonstrates activity is occurring weekly amongst the group. Please send any news updates to dawn@indracongress.net

Finally the facebook group is still going strong, so if you haven't already joined please check it out here - www.facebook.com/indra.congress

Derry 2013

The 2010 Global Congress enabled us to identify an emerging pattern that would help to define what Indra is and does in practice. This pattern involves young people and their co-ordinators in Indra hubs undertaking conflict related projects in their own communities, and then sharing their experience both virtually and live with their peers across the world. This ongoing activity is linked to programmes of academic teaching and research. Evidence from this activity and research forms the basis of material to be used for advocacy to governments, NGO's and other agencies. Periodic Global congress events will provide a platform for the expression of this aspiration and an opportunity to share achievements to date.

Mary Duddy is keen to host the next Congress in Derry for 2013. We expect the event to take a broadly similar form to the previous Congress:

- each group will have an opportunity to share and present the work they do in their own communities
- the whole Congress works collectively with a company of artists towards a spectacular event at the end of the week, possibly in the streets of Derry
- we host a Symposium or similar event during the week for hub co-ordinators to discuss underlying ideas in dialogue with practitioners and academics from the wider field of practice
- cultural sharing activities and visits to Derry provide space for informal communication.

2013 may seem a long way away but previous experience warns us that we should be planning, organising and fund raising as soon as possible.



Trading

The Indra Congress is a social enterprise company. In the difficult financial climate of today it will be difficult to sustain our activities on grant support alone. We will need to sing for our suppers in a range of ways. The development of ARROW was helped by my own security of being a lecturer at UCP Marjon and monies from my National Teaching Fellowship. From September we will be launching a couple of initiatives.

Indra Theatre: Albert and Equiano

I will be touring the one man show, 'Albert and Equiano' by Jayne Newton-Chance to small scale theatre venues, community centres, universities, colleges and schools across the UK from September 2011. The play tells the story of the remarkable 18th century Nigerian Olaudah Equiano through the eyes of a disenchanted museum caretaker in South West England. I toured a pilot run of the play in 2007 to a number of venues across the UK and also to Freetown and Bethlehem. The play is accompanied with a diverse package of workshops.

Indra Training: 'Not another anti-racist workshop'!

For many people the thought of attending an equality and diversity workshop generates defensive resistance. This training promotes understanding of key issues through models of practice that allow participants a safe space to acknowledge and work with their own thoughts, feelings and awareness within a non-judgemental framework.

The training is targeted at students and professionals in a range of settings. Do please pass this information on to any potentially interested parties and we can provide further, detailed information.

News

Burnley, Bolton and Derry

Lisa O'Neill writes:

In February this year the Bolton and Burnley INDRA groups visited the Derry group. We had an amazing weekend learning about issues of sectarianism in Derry. The young people took part in workshops, visited museums and met the Mayor, who told us about the 2013 capital of culture plans for Derry!

As a follow up to the project project 5 young people from Derry came to visit us in Bolton and Burnley 3 weeks later. We all watched Romeo and Juliet at the Octagon theatre and spent 2 days at Burnley Youth Theatre creating pieces of theatre around the issues young people face in Derry, Bolton and Burnley.





The exchange was a huge success and the young people are now very excited about the prospect of another World Congress!!!!

Plymouth

Voices for Change have been busy exploring a range of issues, such as bullying, and are looking forward to building up momentum for the next Congress.

Durham

Julie Ward sends this information:

Jackass Youth Theatre have devised and produced, 'A Case of Belonging'. The group has been exploring the themes of identity and home over the past 18 months. Their research has taken them to meet with the Minister of Justice at Westminster and to international youth gatherings in Brazil, Germany and Serbia. They have been thinking about what nationhood and nationality means in a local and global context. Last October they ran workshops at Northern Stage with designer Alison Ashton, for children and families as part of the region's Juice Festival, making suitcases of 'precious belongings' to share what it is we love about who we are and where we're from. Now they are touring their show and sharing their ideas with other young people.



An extract from their promotional material reads: 'A group of weary travellers arrives at a border with nothing but their suitcases, full of memories, of home, and the people they love. The border guard has orders he must obey. Everyone must wait their turn. While they wait they tell their stories; someone has lost a sister, someone has lost a child and someone has lost their mind. Will these refugees ever move on, or must they stay in this 'No-Space' forever? Is home the place we leave behind or the place we are going to, or is it simply a place in our hearts?'

South Africa

Mary Lange writes:

We are thrilled to share that ARROWSA: Art, Culture & Heritage for Peace is now a registered non profit organisation in South Africa . This was made possible by the efforts of a strong team that includes members who supported ARROW's work in South Africa from conception and were part of the teams that shared with ARROW Plymouth in 2006 and the Global Congress in 2010. The management team is divided into various portfolios and has representatives from various organisations and institutions who share common objectives, The team includes myself and Lauren Dyll-Myklebust, Sertanya Reddy and Eliza Govendor from The Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS) University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN); Karen Peters and Zama Mbatha from DramAidE; Mr Padayachee, Joy Seidle and Richard Mthethwa from Bechet High School; Francesca Verga from Local History Museums; Sana Ebrahim from www.indiansinafrica.com ; Belinda Kruiper from the Kalahari artist community and Marlene de Beer from Durban University of Technology (DUT) Jewellery Design and Manufacture Department. ARROWSA is registered as a voluntary NPO and registration not only lends legitimacy to the organisation but also opens door for funding opportunities which we hope will not only lead to improving the quality of our present projects but that we will be able to branch into new and exciting projects locally and nationally and internationally - especially in collaboration with INDRA Congress.

Sierra Leone

Stephen Koroma is now heading up Indra activities in Sierra Leone. Stephen is Head of Performing Arts at Milton Margai College in Freetown. Visitors to the country have commented on Stephen's extraordinary energy and commitment. The photograph below shows Stephen, on the left, meeting with writer and artist Marion Liebmann. Working in collaboration with Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, Late Lady Patricia and Memorial Secondary, AGAPE Secondary , Goderich Community, COSADO and Schools in Fadugu in the North, Stephen and colleagues have been developing activities in such areas as peer pressure, showing concern for others, exploring values, family planning, sexual transmitted infections, education and the protection of abused boys and girls.



Stephen observes: 'The priority is to identify and work with boys and girls seriously affected by the senseless war in Sierra Leone'.



The Indra group are keen to set themselves up as a formal organisation and a Board of Trustees has been formed to move this forward. They are planning to be an integral part of the 50th Independence Anniversary Celebrations.

India

Palestine

We have been delighted to see Mirna Sakhleh, who was a drama student at UCP Marjon, playing an active role in the Al Harah company. It was wonderful to see Mirna return to Plymouth for her graduation and to meet other members of her family. It is also good to see Mirna continuing the development of her extraordinary data base and archive of Palestinian films, a subject on which she is becoming an authority.

Al Harah has completed a dizzying number of shows over the last year, touching on important and challenging issues faced by inhabitants of the West Bank.



Themes have included confinement; women's issues in Palestinian society; social, interactive skills for young children and the challenges and conflicts raised by HIV/Aids. The Al Harah Theatre Young Trainees have further developed the documentary/drama 'Walls', which made such a strong impact at the 2010 Congress.



The photograph above shows the Squires with Marina and members of the company.

The participation of the group at the 2010 event was made possible by generous financial support from the Tavistock Quakers in the UK. Maggie Squire, who was the organiser of that support, was one of the team of artists for the Congress. Together with her husband Pete and two sons, Maggie recently visited Marina and co in Bethlehem. The family were warmed by the wonderful hospitality of the group and deeply moved and shocked by seeing the impact of the separation wall, settlements and checkpoints on the area and people.

