

DRAMA FESTIVAL GUIDEBOOK

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Organising a Drama Festival

So, you have decided to organise a drama festival. Congratulations! It is a brave decision and one that will cost you time and nerves. We have to warn you: there will probably be times when you'd wish you never embarked on the task. Fair enough. But there will also be moments when you'd feel that there's nowhere else on Earth that you'd rather be. And that's what makes it all worth it.

That is one of the reasons this booklet has come to existence. To aid enthusiastic teachers like yourself who believe that teaching English is not all about passing a test or getting a grade, but also about having fun and putting smiles on people's faces. These are the pearls of wisdom your fellow colleagues who have 'been there and done that' decided to share with you in order to make your life as a festival organiser a bit easier. These are not instructions to follow word for word or else! They are suggestions and ideas of people who have done what you're trying to do on several occasions and you might want to take into consideration these before 'going boldly where you haven't gone before'.

Since it is generally accepted that you start at the beginning, the first thing that you want to know is what kind of festival you want to organise. This, of course, will depend on several factors including your school capacities, support from the local community and financial situation, but if you're a first-timer we suggest starting small and growing with time and experience.

Type of festival

When you organise your first ever drama festival you need to make lots of decisions. One of the first of such decisions should concern the type of festival you organise. You need to think about its duration, whether it should be bi-lingual or multi-lingual, involve an element of competition. Do you want it to be built around one theme or keep it open, shall groups submit original scripts, or would you prefer adaptations? We will discuss these in this chapter.

Duration

According to duration, the festivals are usually divided into three main groups: drama day, drama weekend and drama camp.

Drama day

This type of festival is usually local in character. It is definitively the kind of festival you might want to consider if you're a novice in the business. It should be held either on the weekend or a teaching-free workday if you're planning to have it at school. The number of groups taking part will depend on the organisers, but around ten should be easily manageable. A word to the wise: it's not a good idea to run parallel sessions (you don't want to split the audience).

You should remember that you will have to provide lunch and refreshments for the participants (it might even be good idea to set up stalls where refreshments can be bought – even the audience gets hungry, you know). One thing you probably won't be able to offer is rehearsal time on the stage, given the length of the event and the number of activities. Mind you, all the participants must be informed of this beforehand. You should, however inform them about the size and shape of the stage, as well as provide a classroom for each of the groups in which to get changed and practice. A must for this (and any other type of festivity) is having a person from the organising school as a contact to each of the groups in order to 'guide' the groups at the venue and deal with any problems that might arise.

One final point: if the event you're planning is competitive in character (and they usually are), it would be useful if you could have an activity for the participants while the jury is 'reaching their verdict'.

Drama Weekend

This event would probably be a regional one. If you feel adventurous, or have already tested your strength in organising a drama day and feel ready for more, the next thing on the agenda is a drama weekend. It doesn't have to be too complicated - the participants could arrive on that day and have the accommodation just for one night. However, don't feel tempted to cut out the sleepover altogether: people should participate in the full festival, not just arrive and leave on the same day they perform (though that might be done for financial reasons) as then you basically get two consecutive drama days.

This might be a good time for a lesson in applied maths: 1 drama weekend (2 days) ≠ 1 drama day + 1 drama day. What we're trying to say is: do not overdo it with the number of plays; bear in mind that you'll need other things on the programme as well (example - Day 1: arrivals, lunch, plays, party. Day 2: breakfast, plays, lunch, plays, workshop[\[1\]](#), closing ceremony). Time the whole festival carefully, and remember that the participants will have to leave for home at a decent time on the second day. As for the jury, they can do the evaluation during the workshop since they will need some time for feedback together even if they fill in the evaluation forms during the plays.

This is definitely more challenging as you'll have to deal with overnight accommodation. When it comes to accommodation, you basically have two options: it could be either covered by the participant fee or you could arrange staying with the school children (in which case we suggest having a survey among home troops – you don't want to be unpleasantly surprised). This second option is probably a lot more cost-efficient, but don't get over-excited over the prospect of saving money – it might not always be doable. Therefore, check with your students whether they would be willing to participate in such a scheme (and how many of them would be available – you might not have enough places to accommodate all the participants coming to the festival).

Drama Camp

A drama camp could be a national or even an international event. If you've already gone through the first two stages, you might be ready for some first-class, top-level, time-consuming, nerve-wrecking, unbelievably-fulfilling, do-I-dare-try-it (yes, you do!) festival organizing! Naturally, we're talking about a (possibly international – why not? The sky is the limit!) drama camp.

Now, once again, think rational not megalomaniac! Don't go with a week-long event (unless there's a lovely lake or a ski resort in the vicinity), but more like three to five active days (including social events, workshops, and performances). Consider your capacities and all the activities that will be included to help you limit the number of groups (we have no suggestions here – by this time you will have learned the hard way how many groups in how many days are manageable). The extra-stage activities will have to be much more varied and numerous, and organisation as branched as Microsoft's head office (with HQ at the state of red-alert 24/7). However, we'll let you know – once you pull this one off, there'll be nothing you can't do. World peace? Piece of cake!

If you are covered in cold sweat just by reading this, you might want to skip a few pages to the *'Roles and*

Responsibilities' section, where you will learn one simple and undeniable truth (which is also something you should repeat to yourself every day until the end of the festival: YOU ARE NOT ALONE! A few good men (and/or women) are all you need to start with. Get them as excited and keen as you are and watch the laws of physics unravel before your very eyes: the chain reaction in process. Soon enough, you'll have an army at your command, ready to help, willing to pull their share and eager to see the magic take place. Let the games begin!

Competitive or Non-competitive

That is a life long problem. In a perfect world, one would organise a festival where there will be such impressive performances that the prize would be getting invited to perform in such an event. If this was the case, the jury would have to move from awarding prizes towards the selection process. It is obvious that the jury cannot travel around the country to see all the shows and select them. One more thing is that the groups with little or no experience would never get the chance to watch experienced colleagues at work.

It is true that prizes are always a source of debate, frustration and disappointment. Although they are meant to reward the best and show the others where value lies, they contribute to tension among the participants. All the organisers can do is make sure the jury is competitive and objective and the evaluation criteria are clearly stated and known by all participants in advance.

Thematic or Open

Another debate is whether a festival should have a theme or not. The theme would be a common element in the evaluation of the performances and would give individuality to every festival. On the other hand, themes could be too restrictive and the groups might feel constrained. Examples of good themes are "Teen Turbulence" or "New Lamps for Old". These themes are general and many ideas can come from them. Some bad themes would be "Shakespeare's Apprentice" or "Old Myths in New Clothes". These could make participating groups think that they must prepare a Shakespearean or mythological play.

Original scripts/Adaptations

So far, all the festival organisers that aimed at only selecting original scripts ended up accepting adaptations as well. One may want to encourage young people to write and perform their own scripts, but the jury often placed such scripts in an unfair competition with plays written by famous dramatists. It is frustrating to be awarded "best original script" and not to get any other prizes, as if your original script had been poorly acted and directed. In fact, the jury is often influenced by the strength of the script and tend to consider only groups that do

“serious theatre” worthy of attention.

Bi-lingual or Multi-lingual

The last thing you might consider when organising a drama event of any kind is to combine it with a similar event that is made in some other language. You may even decide to run parallel sessions in different languages. This could be a good idea, since the workload can be shared as there might be people who can help you. You might attract more attention and demonstrate that we live in a colourful, multilingual and multicultural world.

Terms of joining the festival

When it comes to terms of joining the festival no one knows better than yourself what you want the festival to be and, therefore, what should be the criteria you will take into consideration when deciding who gets to participate. However, we'd like to offer some hints to make your life easier.

Hint No.1 - The number of participants

We strongly suggest limiting the number of participants. Plan the optimal number according to the stage capacities and the duration of the plays (see Hint No.2). You shouldn't be too lenient here as some teachers may be tempted to bring too many participants, which might just not fit onto the stage (or into the budget!) Also, consider the entourage of the players. The teachers should be reminded that this is a students' festival, so as not to bring half the staff on a field trip (it's been known to happen, we're not exaggerating!).

Hint No.2 - Duration of plays

If limiting the number of participants is recommendable, limiting the duration of each play is a must! This one is up to you, but experts (read: people who have learned the hard way) say that 10 minutes (maximum 15!) is just the job for the 7-14 year olds. This will ensure that nobody stays on stage too long, as well as provide a certain common denominator for all the groups thus making it easier for the judges (not to mention the audience!). Oh, and one more thing. When you say 10 (or 15) minutes maximum, you must bear in mind that no matter what kind of a time limit you set, in practice the performances usually have a tendency to last longer than it was foreseen, so try not to make a very tight schedule.

Hint No.3 – The age group

All the students in competing categories should preferably be from roughly the same age-group (in this case 7-14 can be divided into sub-groups since kids are very different give or take a few years!). It's just another one of those things that gives everyone equal footing plus it helps avoid awkward situations of a group of 8-year-olds playing against a more mature 14 lot.

Hint No.4 - Conformity to the festival rules

If the festival you are organising favours certain types of script (for example only original or only adaptation), it should be stated clearly in the invitation together with any other preferences and must-dos. It helps avoid misunderstanding and disappointment.

Communication and publicity

At this point (when you've sat down and decided exactly what you want the festival to be about, how long you want it to last, the exact number of), you might wish to let everyone else

participate (well, more or less know about it, too). Namely, the time has arrived for a little bit of publicity.

Now, a good commercial goes a long way, but this is not only about attracting participants. There's a lot to be done and if you want to do it well, just follow the three phases we've put down for you. There's no way you can go wrong.

Phase No. 1 – Pre-festival

Spreading the Word

Before the festival can start, you need to reach potential participants and let them know that there's a brand new opportunity for the young and talented and what they need to do to enter. You should start announcing the festival quite a while beforehand. Send out the first call or participants at least 6 months before the big day.

Now, what you can do is to contact a teachers' association, Ministry of Education, British Council – any organisation that can help announcing the festival. Posting an advert on the ELTeCS mailing list is also a good idea as it is received regularly by a large number of teachers. Of course, if you have your own organisation, you can also announce it on your website or in your newsletter. If the event is local it might be possible to inform local newspapers, radio and TV stations.

You should also send letters of invitations to all primary schools in your target area (the city or region). Don't panic, you can find out the necessary contact details from the associations of schools or the ministry. All the letters of invitation should come with a 'Registration Form' with relevant information included (as well as a deadline for applications!).

What you also need are *CONSTANT REMINDERS*. Every now and then the schools should be reminded of the deadline (and the event itself). Sending notices stating how many schools have already applied and how much time have they got to apply themselves is usually a good way to keep everyone posted.

Home Com

While dealing with making your festival public knowledge, you must not forget the local channels of communication! The members of the organising committee should have regular meetings and clear lines of communication in order to stay on top of things.

Advertising the Event

This is not the same thing as scouting for participants. This time you concern yourself with the target audience – the people who might want to come and see the festival and (quite as important) the people who might wish to donate some money for the good cause. Potential sponsors are very sensitive about advertising (let's face it, who wants to pay to be advertised at a no-name festival no one heard of?). Therefore, it is crucial that you make yourselves heard of.

What can you do? Write a press release for newspapers. It's not too much of a bother, really, and to make things even easier we've put one or two samples in the Appendix at the end of this booklet.

Also, see if you can arrange media coverage by the local newspapers. Announce the event to

them beforehand to make sure they can have you in mind and then remind them a day (or couple of days) before the event itself. If there is a regional school or educational institution magazine, use it for advertising.

And last, but not least, plaster the city with posters advertising the event and shower it with leaflets. Let there be no man, woman or child unaware of the fact that THE FESTIVAL IS COMING!

Phase No.2 – During the Festival

We've mentioned media coverage already. Make sure the media people get there, even if it is only a one day festival! (Mention free drinks or open buffet at the opening/closing ceremony – remember: there's no such thing as a free lunch). You should also consider having a press conference at the opening of the festival (especially if you have a celebrity guest on the jury, or an important cultural figure).

If it is a longer event, consider having a *festival bulletin or newspaper* with news, relevant information, pictures and comments from participants, humoristic remarks and such. Both the participants and the audience will cherish it.

Use *notice boards!* They're cheap, but effective form of information. They can contain programmes, maps, names of relevant contact people, important phone numbers. You can even allocate one to be a 'problem board' – where people can put their queries (you should expect this one to be the target for pranksters and a source of mirth for those who read it (and as such a regular column in the bulletin), but it might give you one or two much needed guidelines for what should be set straight next year.

Phase No.3 – Post-festival

Even though the festival is over by now, it does not mean you're in the clear. There are some fine touches you should do in order to be taken seriously – and you need to be if you're planning on doing it all again next year.

☛ Send thank-you letters to sponsors and partners. It's a good idea to add newspaper clippings on the festival to show them their money/effort was well spent.

☛ Send multimedia materials (festival CD with pictures, video, text) to the participants and sponsors.

☛ Send organiser's feedback – a letter from the festival committee with information about the overall success of the festival from the organiser's point of view. Also, it is a good idea to send the contact information of the committee and encourage participants to keep in touch (you must think about the next festival!).

Roles and Responsibilities

Organising the organising committee

If you do not have a drama organisation or a teachers' association it might be a bit difficult to get all the help you need. That's why you should start with a few dedicated people. Find someone who's infected with the 'drama bug' – that shouldn't be too hard. Next, see how you can draft some more hands.

Depending on the school you work in you might have (misery loves company) support from your principal which will make life (and head-hunt) easier for you. In some countries, taking part in organising such an event can earn professional bonuses for teachers involved, thus making it easier to gather a team around you. If nothing else, point out that it'll look good in their portfolio. Maybe that'll do the trick. In order to have a working team, you will need about 12 people, but remember – the larger the event, the more people you have to recruit.

Once you've got your team, you should divide them into departments according to the tasks. NB: depending on the nature and length of the festival, some of the following teams might not be necessary.

1. Public Relations – this is a big task, so it's advisable to divide it into sub-departments:

a) *Communication* – they will take care of the press (contact the press, invite and remind them to come, negotiate media coverage, collect newspaper clippings for the sponsors - and yourself) and the festival newsletter – if there is one. This team will be in charge of writing, typing, printing and distributing the festival newspaper, bulletin, leaflets, or tickets...

b) *Welcome* – they will be responsible for the participants: permanent contacts, exchange of information, guides during the festival, travel duty (if necessary to pick the participants from train/bus stations), welcome pack (designing, multiplying and distributing the welcome packs for all the participants - this kind of work could easily be done with the help of students-even the young ones, accommodation - organising, and providing information, meals, etc.

c) *Agenda and extra-agenda* – they will be in charge of performances and social events (planning, organising, booking (venue, tickets...), transportation if necessary, guides).

d) *Jury* – selection of, and communications with the jury, hosting them during the festival.

e) *Logistics* – props (in charge of rehearsals and performances) and office equipment (computers, photocopiers etc.).

2. Marketing – people who work in this team are in charge of the image of the festival, including posters, badges, trophies, diplomas, website, CD, etc. Needless to say sponsors should receive the lot!

3. Financial department – should be in charge of all the financial operations done for the festival. So make sure they aren't tempted to re-direct some of the money elsewhere. They are also in charge of the relation with sponsors and partners, thus assign your best diplomats and strategists here – they're going to wage a war to win money for you.

4. SWAT team – the best of the best, nerves-of-steel, ready-for-anything crisis management team.

All the departments should have coordinators that answer to the project coordinator in charge of the entire festival. Every department works to deadlines and every coordinator divides the tasks among the members of the department. No person should be overburdened – it is the coordinator's job to divide the tasks equally so that no one 'cracks' under pressure. The responsibilities should also be assigned well ahead, so that important things aren't left for the final day. The coordinators should meet regularly (not less than twice a month – as the festival draws near you might see them more often than your family members). And to keep people from straying, set up the Organizers' Headquarters, where the participants can find information at all times.

Last but not least: DON'T PANIC! Even if it's not picture perfect the first time you organise a festival (and let's face it - it's bound to be a bit painful), it will be better next time around (not to mention the one after that), so you might as well try and enjoy it.

Tips for the Teams

1. *Social events* – People with a lot of energy and ideas can take care of organizing trips, guided tours, games and parties. They are the soul of the whole event so they shouldn't be neglected.
2. *Festivities* – the opening and award ceremonies are the covers of the event so make sure creative people take care of them (students are an endless resource!).
3. *Workshops* – you should have enough people to help you schedule the workshops, take care of the trainers, rooms and maintain order.
4. *Materials* – there should be someone in charge of writing and giving out the feedback questionnaires and then interpreting the results, someone writing the thank you letters plus people gathering all the materials produced (you will definitely need most of them next year!).

Evaluation

There are a few 'golden rules' that must be taken into consideration when, in the case of a drama festival, a jury should/could evaluate the performances of the groups.

- ❖ The evaluation should be positive, constructive and encouraging.
Many people accept criticism with ambiguous feelings, thus praise more than criticize:
* build, do not demolish *.
People are expecting suggestions for improvement and changes.
- ❖ When giving advice be tactful and warm.
- ❖ Each group should be given feedback (oral or written).
- ❖ If possible, award a variety of prizes (identify something worthy in each group).
- ❖ Do not get influenced by the history of the theatre group (evaluate the actual performance).
- ❖ Work out and use a common system of rating;
e.g. the jury decides on the evaluation scale e.g. 1 to 10 or 1 to 5.
- ❖ Highlight and praise the strong /positive points in the performance of each group.

- ❖ The criteria for evaluation should be made public and participants should be made aware of them at the time of applying.
- ❖ Evaluation should be transparent and as objective as possible.

Suggested criteria for the jury evaluation sheet

There are some points to consider before the jury begins to look at and evaluate the performances of the participating groups.

These are:

- use of stage (effectiveness)
- originality regarding solutions on stage
- conveyance of message
- effectiveness of music/sound effects
- clarity of speech
- adequate use of props/setting
- appropriateness of the choice of the text (type of festival, topic, age)
- expressiveness –
- voice projection, intonation
- body language
- level of energy

The Jury

Members of the jury should be carefully selected in order to be representative, reliable, impartial and objective. It is recommended to have an odd number of members as well as a secretary who will fill in the evaluation sheets to be given to the participants and who will prepare the award certificates.

Following is a list of suggestions for the selection of members for the jury:

- ⊕ A theatre professional (e.g. stage director, actor, or producer);
- ⊕ A representative of the press;
- ⊕ A English native speaker with experience in drama and education;
- ⊕ A representative of the students (from a school not involved in the event and with some experience or interest in theatrical performance);
- ⊕ A representative of the British Council (if possible);
- ⊕ A representative of a local cultural institution;
- ⊕ A representative of key sponsors or partners;
- ⊕ The head of the English department of a local or regional college or university.

It is advisable that all members of the jury have sufficient command of English (and / or any other languages represented at the festival).

The assessment criteria should be agreed on prior to the event and made known to all the participants and jury members well before the festival, for example at the time of their application (or invitation as jury members).

Beware: The jury is not a “collective guru” asking for worshipping. The organizing committee

should make clear to the jury what the goals of the event are and insist that the educational aspect be observed by the jury.

Treat the members of the jury with consideration, but do not spoil them too much!

Social Events

Social events are important when organising a festival in order to help the participants get to know each other and enjoy themselves. Following is a list of suggested activities.

No.1 - City Tour

This is meant for the participants to find out more about the host city, but it could be much more than that. In groups led by trainers/teachers, the participants will visit the city and get involved in different educational/interactive activities. For example, a treasure hunt (in groups the children are given a map of the city and are asked to find some places or objects and then present them for other groups); or when visiting a zoo, the children can be asked to name in English ten of the animals they have seen; or when visiting a museum or a factory (chocolate factory would be nice!) they can get some questions or a task to be answered in English.

No.2 - Secret Friend

On the opening day, every participant gets the name of another participant in order to become his/her 'secret friend'. Being someone's secret friend implies sending messages (make sure there is a big box or enough flipcharts in a visible place for the exchange of messages), presents, trying to be around your secret friend, supporting his/her acting in the performance. The identity of everybody's secret friend will be revealed on the last day.

No.3 Global Village

It is the participants' turn to tell the others about the area they come from, their group history, anything else of interest about them. What you need to do as organizers is to ensure that you have a big hall and equal time for each group's presentation.

No.4 - Parties, Fancy-Dress Parties

For children to enjoy themselves you would need to organise some parties which include entertainment activities such as:

- *Musical Chairs* – The children dance in pairs, when the music stops they have to quickly sit down on the nearest chair (there will be 5 pairs and only 4 chairs) so the pair who couldn't sit is out of the game. The game continues until there is only one pair left.
- *Do You Like Your Neighbours?* – The children stand in a circle wearing name tags. There is a child in the middle who asks a child from the circle "Do you like your neighbours?" If he/she likes his/her neighbours nothing changes but he/she could choose to change the neighbours. While moving, the child in the middle tries to get a place in the circle. Whoever remains without a place stays in the middle.
- *Raffle* – small things ranging from chewing gum to big teddy-bears are offered as prizes. Make sure everybody gets something.

No.5 - Other Events

Depending on the spare time, you could have special performances by professional actors, poster exhibition, trips to the surrounding area.

Festivities

The Opening Ceremony

Be creative! Don't just immediately assume that any opening ceremony should include never ending solemn speeches! You need to include a presentation of the organisers, the jury, the participants, the trainers, the programme, the organizers' message.

This does not mean that you are expected to read out a long boring list. You can have video presentations, a dance by the organisers, short amusing sketches and poems, cartoons, nursery rhymes, tongue twisters or a theme song to be learnt by heart and listened to during the festival (find a catchy little tune to make the participants associate your festival with it).

The Award Ceremony

The closing ceremony is equally important but it should have a reasonable extent and you should always have a scenario. A good idea would be to have a photo collage of what the festival represented – and make sure that you include pictures of all the activities. Video highlights would be another alternative. All the people involved should be thanked, all the participants should receive certificates of participation, diplomas and prizes should be given to the winners and not only to them – sponsors, organizers and teachers/trainers could also receive diplomas and small presents for their contribution.

Be careful who you invite to both the opening and the award ceremony and don't forget anyone: parents, sponsors, organizers, local authorities, media, etc.

Workshops

These are optional activities depending on time available (they would be more suitable for events that last at least 3 days), purpose, number of participants etc. The children from different groups should be mixed so as to meet or get to know members from other teams.

Who?

The trainers could be members of the jury, drama teachers, student actors, as well as members of various non-government organisations specialised in training and teambuilding.

Where?

The classrooms of any school would be suitable or any small room or a stage in the theatre.

What?

Simple warm-up activities could be included, relaxing and confidence-building games and any other things you consider fit for participants' age and interest. Some examples of these:

- name games;

- movement exercises and games e.g. “Be as tall/fat/small/big/thin as you can”);

- voice exercises (e.g. sound orchestra, singing a song louder and softer);

- creative activities (“Creative fabric” - children are given a scarf and they should represent different object using the scarf: an octopus, a flag, a flower etc.);

- multi-situational dialogues (a dialogue is given and the children should imagine a situation and the people involved, act it out while the others have to guess the situation and who the characters are);

nursery rhymes to be interpreted in different ways;
pronunciation exercises (e.g. tongue twisters).

When?

They could be organised either in the morning or in the afternoon but one suggestion would be to have them at least two hours before or after the plays so as not to confuse and distract the participants from their performances or while the jury decides.

Feedback For Organisers

Each participant should receive a questionnaire or feedback form to be completed at the end of the festival (the answers could be yes/no or on the scale of 1-5). It would also help to ask the teachers accompanying each group to write comments they could send to the organisers.

Examples of questions to be included:

1. Was the accommodation good?
2. Did you like the stage?
3. Was the programme tiring?
4. Were the other activities useful and fun?
5. Did you like the workshops?
6. Is your English better now?
7. Did you make a lot of friends here?
8. Give a mark to the festival.
9. Would you like to come again?

Thank You Letters

The festival committee will need to write thank you letters to the sponsors and partners. Enclosed with the letters should be photocopies of news articles, and any other materials where the list of sponsors and partners appear.

Collecting Materials

Collect everything that has any connection with the festival as you might need it later or it can help you evaluate and improve the next year's festival.

Invitation;

Programme;

Propaganda materials (posters, articles, T-shirts, badges, caps, bags, videos with interviews);

Scripts (this could cause problems with publishing rights so you might want to consider only including the original scripts – with the playwright's permission);

Photos/video recordings;

Evaluation criteria/feedback forms;

Props (the following year you may use them again).

Budgeting

You need to create a first draft of the festival. Include all possible expenses, without considering the possibilities to raise the money for them. Just put down everything you would

spend money on in the festival, without worrying about the total that would go rocketing towards hundreds of millions! That is your first estimate.

Budget items include:

- Meals and accommodation;
- Rent for theatre hall, rehearsal hall and festivities;
- Promotional materials (posters, programme, leaflets, diplomas, name badges, CD);
- Awards and trophies;
- Service providers;
- Transportation;
- General supplies (toner, paper, blank CDs, etc.);
- Festival newsletter;
- Refreshments for jury and press;
- Parties and social events;
- Communication (telephone, Internet, fax).

1. Meals and accommodation

You will need to provide separate accommodation and meals for the jury and trainers, apart from the participants. The best solution would be for you to find a partner school that is willing to provide free accommodation for the participants at the school hostel. It is important that the participants stay at the same venue, since theatre is a lot about team spirit and concentration. Meals could be provided by school canteens. You might find sponsors to offer in kinds (meat, vegetables, sweets, etc). Ideally, the jury and the trainers should be accommodated in good hotels or guest houses.

2. Theatre and festivity halls

For the performances, it is worth making every effort to have a proper theatre hall, so that the participants will feel the atmosphere of a real theatrical event. The rehearsals, however, could be held in the school festivity hall. The technical rehearsal (to arrange lights, sound, voice projection, position on stage, props) should be done at the same theatre where the performances will take place. Please allow enough time for the groups to become familiar with the stage and the technical system. The workshops can be done in plain classrooms whose chairs and tables can be removed, leaving a lot of space to move about.

3. Promotional materials

All the materials should be done in the same visual design, in order to give the festival its identity. A competition could be organized among students to choose the best concept, rather than resort to professional (potentially costly) support. Involve the students as much as possible in designing and producing the visuals and promotional materials for your festival ~V this is not only cost-effective, but it is also educational. Thus they will have a sense of ownership over the festival.

4. Awards and trophies

Whether your festival is competitive or not, you will have to consider participation awards for the groups, as well as individual ones. They could range from diplomas, pens, badges, sweets, t-shirts, key chains, stickers, books, to medals, posters, bags, etc. If you agree on other awards, then you should carefully consider them from the very beginning, since it is advisable to keep the same token throughout the years (as part of the festival brand). Art teachers and students

could also be involved in designing and producing the awards (cost effective again!).

5. Service providers

Enthusiastic parents and teachers are invaluable when it comes to helping around, from clearing tables, moving chairs and making coffee. Otherwise, prepare to tightly negotiate the cost of such service with qualified staff.

6. Transportation

Unless you own a goldmine somewhere (or some oil wells in The Arab Emirates), you cannot seriously consider covering transportation cost for all the participants outside the city. However, you may have to think of providing transport from the train station (particularly because theatre groups have a tendency to carry a lot of costumes and props around) to the accommodating facilities. One thing you must definitely take into account is the fact that you will have to pay for the transportation of the jury and trainers. Optionally, short trips could be organized but it is recommendable that you should plan walking tours of the city and the surroundings.

7. General supplies

You will need paper, felt tip pens, blank CDs, photocopiers, printers, toner, flipcharts and various other office supplies. Before starting buying them, try getting them from parents, schools and local companies. You will find that most people will refuse financial support, but may become slightly more generous when asked for in kind contribution.

8. Festival Newsletter

If you have carefully planned the lay-out in advance and have selected the reporters (students and teachers, of course), all you need to do is to persuade a local newspaper, publishing house or school to have your newsletter published or photocopied on colour paper. The best way to do this is to have one of their representatives sitting on the jury. Don't necessarily go for the cheapest version. You might have publishing houses or sponsors interested in advertising in your newsletter, so quality of paper and colour is essential.

9. Refreshments for Jury and Press

They won't ask for it, but you can be sure they'll need it! Don't overdo things (champagne and caviar are optional!) but provide the 'bare necessities' (lots of COFFEE, water, tea, juice, crackers, cookies) during the intervals. It would help if you found out in advance that one of the jury members only drinks decaf coffee or only mint tea!

10. Parties and social events

Welcoming and farewell parties would be a nice addition to building team spirit and making friends. When planning your budget, try to find the most cost-effective (again, that is right!) option. The accommodating facilities, the local school hall should be considered first, before a disco - yes, a more 'glamorous' alternative, but costly and with potential discipline problems. Whatever the place, make sure there are separate facilities for adults (jury, teachers) - they don't normally enjoy loud music for more than 30 minutes.

11. Communication

The organizing committee needs to stay in touch at all times. The communication channels go between the members of the organizing committee who then communicate with participants, partners, sponsors, jury, and press. Hence telephone and Internet expenses should be

considered when planning the budget. However, a fixed sum of money should be allocated to each department or area coordinator.

REMEMBER: your budget will need drafting and revising several times. Therefore, make sure the head of your financial department is one of the meanest people on the committee!

Step 1. Have the area and department coordinators draw up their budgets, then collect them and put them together.

Step 2. Having collected them, the draft budgets will probably need serious ‘trimming’, according to the funds available. Make sure that the area and department coordinators understand the importance of prioritizing their budget items, indicating the things they could do without and those that are absolutely essential. The festival coordinator and the head of the financial department could allocate funds to the departments and areas as needed (since they are the ones that have ‘the big picture’ of both expenses and funds overall). Make sure some amount of money is left for unexpected crisis situations - if the money in the ‘emergency piggy bank’ is not spent, it is always a good start for the next edition of the festival.

Step 3. Have the department and area coordinators write reports on how the money was spent and gather all the invoices and financial documents. It will be much easier for you to start budgeting the next edition once you have written the final report. It is also a guarantee for your partners and sponsors that you have done a serious and thorough job (and funding will be easier for the next edition).

Funding Tips

1. Identify the sources for funding cultural and educational events.
2. Fill in financial application forms or letters and submit them within the deadline indicated
3. Use your personal contacts, if any, among the members of various fund-granting committees or ask to be heard by the committee, to support your project.
4. Make a list of other potential sponsors within the local community especially for in kinds, office items and other services
5. Contact potential sponsors using a sponsorship file. The sponsorship file needs to include a presentation of the organizers and partners, a description of the festival, a list of services the organizers can provide in exchange for the sponsorship (banners, logo on the posters, programme, CD, site, radio announcements, video projections during the festival, leaflets, television adverts). Make sure you have a record of press articles, media coverage, photos, quotes from participants and jury from previous editions, ready to complete your sponsorship file for your future editions. Make it really impressive!
6. Wait!
7. Wait!!

8. Wait some more - and celebrate when you get some money with good quality local wine (we would recommend Tokaj wine for this particular purpose)!

9. Start spending money and pray that it is enough!

10. Keep an eye on your cash flow. Mind the balance between the time when the money comes in and the moment when you need to spend it (it does not help to know that you have been promised funds that you can access 2 weeks after the festival!)

Fundraising and Resources

1. Participation fee

It is a reliable income, which obliges the groups to some commitment and it is money you can start planning expenses on. The criteria taken into account when you set the amount of money required as participation fee should take into account the cost per participant (accommodation, meals, participation award, rent for theatre hall, etc). If funds are obtained from other sources, the amount of participation fee could be reduced accordingly.

2. Entrance fee

However little money you may decide tickets should cost, you should sell them to potential viewers (parents included!) as a form of respect for the artistic effort of the participants.

3. International Funding Agencies

If you are planning an international event, involving several countries, you may apply for funds provided through different programmes of the European Union such as Youth or Comenius. Make sure you seek information at least one year before the moment of the festival. Applying and obtaining such funds is usually a lengthy process.

4. International Partners

The U.S. and British Embassies, alongside with British Council are traditional partners and supporters of such events. You need to contact their cultural representatives and find out in due time about terms and deadlines of application for funds. They can also help you to find international participants and trainers. Their expertise is essential, especially if you are a beginner.

5. National Organisations

Your next target is national cultural and educational organizations, foundations and charities (Lions Club, Rotary, etc), as well as the Ministry of Education and that of Culture. The ministries may not offer funds, but having your event included on their agenda gives it prestige and may attract other potential sources of funds.

6. Local and Regional authorities

They are an important source of funds, since they normally have money allocated to supporting art and educational events. All you need to do is to make sure that your application meets their standards and objectives.

7. The Private Sector

Important companies and banks could be targeted but bear in mind that they are only interested in major projects (for which they offer large amounts of money) so prepare to make your event look "the boom of the century". Otherwise, resort to smaller businesses,

especially local ones ✓ V their money is little but safe. For in kinds this is the number one place to go to.

Partners or Sponsors?

Both partners and sponsors offer you support in organizing the festival. The question is how to measure that support in terms of offering them the status of either partners or sponsors. Generally, partners tend to have the upper hand as a result of their consistent support or because their reputation enhances the prestige of the festival. The presence of the partners' logo on promotional materials alongside the organizers' is a must, while sponsors can be listed below. Sponsors generally negotiate their support in exchange for publicity, while partners support you unconditionally.

Tips to Attract Sponsors and Partners

Involve students as much as possible they are your most persuasive resource. No one will resist their plea, be they parents owning a bakery, friends of their parents or company managers with kids of their own.

Use your personal relations

Never ask for support without offering something in exchange. Doing a good deed may be enough for the enthusiastic organizers, but not for cold-blooded businessmen!

Publicity is what attracts them, but do not sell yourself cheap! Each presence of the sponsor on the promotional materials or in the festival premises should be negotiated carefully.

Offer to organize social events that would promote a certain sponsor, such as a "XXX (name of the company) party"

Negotiate media coverage. Your media partner may be persuaded to promote your sponsors, even in the form of interviews taken in front of a wall full of your sponsors' logos.

The organizers may distribute leaflets and may also create funny advertisements about the sponsors during the festival intervals.

As for publishers or sweets companies, they can be offered the possibility to set up stalls in the hall of the theatre to sell and promote their products

Offer your sponsors the chance to sit on the jury

Offer educational services to the potential sponsors, such as access to English language learning resources

Offer awards to the most enthusiastic sponsors and partners

Invite the participants and trainers to have some of their plays and workshops based on the sponsors' (e.g. publishing companies) textbooks

Have links to your sponsors' sites on the official site of the festival

Offer the sponsors and VIPs invitations to the festival activities - they may like it so much that they will support you in the years to come, and may bring some more influential friends as well, not to mention media attention.

Appendix

Press release

Sample 1

Feel the taste of the First Drama Festival in English in Tokaj.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Venue: _____

Organised by: _____

Sponsored by: _____

Under the patronage of: _____

Special guests: _____

Contact person: _____

Drama tastes better than wine!

Come and see for yourself!.

Sample 2

_____ (What) _____ will take place at _____ (where) _____ on _____ (when) supported and organized by _____. The _____ is a collage of performances in English, prepared by students aged _____ from _____ (place) _____. The highlights of the event are _____ (what) _____. The _____ is done by the students, and it aims at promoting the creative arts, including drama, in English Language Teaching.
(Contact person) (Contact person details)

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