

ASTRID'S INTERVIEW

Dear *Judit Stefany-Toth*, I am happy to welcome you in «the interview» section of this EAGT's Winter 2018 newsletter issue.

The aim of the section is to have a space in our newsletter to allow members of EAGT to share about who they are, their practice, activities, their links to EAGT, ... in order to support creating ties, curiosity to go towards and discover the

people who form our EAGT community.

In your case, I have been curious and interested about Hungary offering to organize EAGT's 2019 conference.

This is a huge challenge and I wondered what you could share about this, for the ones of us who have not had the opportunity yet to appraise "from the inside" what this implies.

"Right at that moment I felt a calling"

• How it started

The first impulse hit me in the summer of 2016, when I received the letter from *Gianni Francesetti*, president of the EAGT at the time. The letter said that the EAGT would welcome applications from potential candidates who would be interested in organizing the EAGT conference in 2019.

Right at that moment I felt a calling – it is hard for me to explain – and I wrote to the other members of the Hungarian association's board asking for their opinion on whether we should apply for organizing and hosting the conference. My fellow board members gave a positive answer, which I immediately forwarded to Gianni, who was thrilled to have received our candidacy application.

• What made me step in

Besides hearing and responding to the calling, and that I felt a tremendous opportunity in hosting the conference in Hungary, it was my fellow colleagues' enthusiasm that was the greatest motivating and supporting force. By colleagues I mean the EAGT presidency on the one hand, and the board members and the members of the Hungarian association on the other. At the EAGT Taormina Board meeting in 2016 we received a lot of encouragement and reinforcement from *Gianni* and *Beatrix*, as well as from other members of the board. Everyone was enthusiastic about the thought, which at that time was only a possibility, that the 2019 Conference should be held in Hungary. The unanimously positive and supportive



energy coming from our colleagues in Taormina was touching and a real honour. Having arrived home, our local colleagues received us with great enthusiasm. Everyone was inspired by the opportunity, so we submitted our application. In March 2017 the EAGT board voted in favour, and our application to host the conference was approved.

• What mobilizes me and the team?

Hosting the conference is a great opportunity for us to experience the Gestalt world meeting in Hungary, and the greatest experts visiting us. With this, we are supporting the local Gestalt community as they can meet and learn from the worldwide Gestalt experts in their home-place in Hungary. We feel that we are opening up the

space for many more Hungarian colleagues and people interested in this opportunity. In addition to this professional motivation, we are also inspired by the thought that a great number of people from all over the world will visit our country because of this event. Hungarian hospitality is internationally famous, and we would like to live up to this reputation as much as possible. We are also thrilled that we will be able to introduce ourselves, the association that brought Gestalt to Hungary, as well as show our guests Budapest, our beautiful capital we are so proud of.

• **What is difficult, what is enriching**

In fact what is difficult is also the value in this work. Complexity may be the strongest two-fold figure that arises through the work. Several threads are running simultaneously, which in the end will be braided together to become a big strong ship rope. But every single thread has to be plaited perfectly in its fine details.

IT programming related to registration, payments and workshops is a rather difficult task for us. This requires a lot of time and close monitoring and attention on our part.

What is enriching, besides the intellectual and professional challenge, is the teamwork that we have established. As therapists we often work alone, so the collaborative creation in the organizing team is a strong polarity, which we enjoy very much.

• **What I would suggest to the next country, what is foundational to lead a project like this**

We are in the middle of the process so we expect to have a lot of lessons learnt by the end of the event. What we already know for sure:

– The work is enormous, much bigger than we would have thought. Therefore it is very impor-

tant that the organizing team takes care of itself as a team, as the cohesion, the esprit de corps cannot be harmed because then the project will suffer, too. It is also very important not to be scared away by how enormous this job is. It is essential to have an overview, however, it is then worth dividing the whole into smaller, more manageable tasks.

– Another piece of advice from us is that you cannot start early enough, since you need to be prepared for delays. We started the work 2,5 years prior to the conference, and we think that it was definitely not a too early start.

– Also, do not be afraid to make mistakes either: you will definitely make mistakes anyway, it is all part of the learning, and all mistakes can be corrected.

– What we would also like to convey to all those following us is that you can count on us – we will do what we can to help you. Already, our aim is to create a structure and model which we hand over and that future conference organizers can make use of – be it a website, or the automatized workshop evaluation process, which can be utilized in the future perhaps even within the EAGT.

• **What and how this experience made me grow if this is the case**

One of the most important lessons is how we can deal with the polarities appearing during the work.

Complexity and uniqueness, strict professional content and entertainment, business aspects and social responsibility, high quality and affordability, professional responsibility and creative freedom, cooperation and independent work should all be present in the work in a coordinated way. We experience creative indifference, which is also the motto of the conference, almost every day in this work.

Thank you very much dear Judit for your accepting this exercise, I am happy to have solicited you for this and hope doing so to generate vocations for 2022.

Astrid Dusendschön, December 2018.