

RIGGERS

React, Invent, Get together
for a Goal: Expertise in
Rigging Services



EVALUATION

BY SAAR ROMBOUT

STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS | STOCKHOLMS KONSTNÄRLIGA HÖGSKOLA



Co-funded by
the European Union

FEDEC



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THE PROJECT

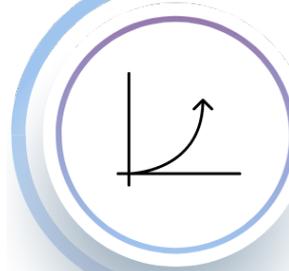
RIGGERS stands for “React, Invent, Get together for a goal: Expertise in Rigging Services”. It is a 2-year project co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission and coordinated by SKH (Stockholm University of the Arts) and FEDEC (International Network for Professional Circus Education).

The project is aiming to enhance the quality Of safety measures in circus schools, and to foster the creation of an international community of professionals eager to exchange skills, advice and expertise for actual and future generations.

RIGGERS

Noé Robert	ACAPA (NLD)
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Søren Flor	AFUK (DEN)
Nikolay Pyasta	Codarts (NLD)
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Bilbo Rochette	ENC (CAN)
Thomas Loriaux	ESAC (BEL)
Julien Bordais	ESACTO'Lido (FRA)
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Will Cleary	SKH (SWE)
Johan Bodin	SKH (SWE)
Fabio Merante	Circo Vertigo (ITA)
Matt Burch	NCCA (UK)

Goals



Enhancing the quality of safety measures in Circus schools



Sharing best practices



Seeking tailored solutions to common issues



Developing an international community of circus school riggers



Professionalizing the sector



EVALUATION

This evaluation is written by Saar Rombout, rigger, artist and researcher in the circus field. She is the head of the 30 credits independent course “Introduction to rigging within circus” at SKH. She also teaches rigging on the BA and MA circus departments of SKH and Codarts. She has an MFA in Contemporary Circus Practices from SKH for which she wrote her thesis on “Rope Design and Rigging Design as Artistic Practice”.

Saar has attended most of the events and did interviews with the riggers to be able to write this evaluation report as complete as possible. Saar is not an employee of the FEDEC or one of the partner schools but was asked for this project as an external evaluator.

This document is both to summarise what has been discussed during the meetings and exchanges of the riggers, as well as to evaluate the process.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Anna Beentjes	Codarts (NLD)
Anne Mette Norskov	AFUK (DEN)
Jorun Kugelberg	SKH (SWE)
Christine Thibaudeau	ENC (CAN)
Isabel Joly	FEDEC (BEL)
Lorenzo Albiero	FEDEC (BEL)
Petter Wernardt	SKH (SWE)

PARTNERS



SKH – Stockholm University of the Arts
Stockholm, Sweden

ACAPA – Fontys Academy of Circus and performance Art
Tilburg, the Netherlands



AFUK – Akademiet For Utaemmet Kreativitet
Copenhagen, Denmark

CODARTS – Codarts Rotterdam Circus Arts
Rotterdam, the Netherlands



ÉNC MONTRÉAL – École nationale de cirque
Montreal, Canada

ESAC – École supérieure des arts du cirque
Brussels, Belgium



ÉSACTO'LIDO – École Supérieure des Arts du Cirque
Toulouse-Occitanie
Toulouse, France

CIRCO VERTIGO
Grugliasco, Italy



NCCA – National Centre for Circus Arts
London, United Kingdom

FEDEC – the International Network for Professional Circus
Education is coordinating the project together with **SKH**



WHY RIGGERS?

In the last 15 years, the circus education sector has grown strongly, in Europe and in the world. In parallel, there is a growing awareness that safety and prevention in the schools must be a priority. Even though performing in the circus arts is closely linked to a certain representation of danger, artists must learn from an early stage how to manage and control risks. Furthermore, circus arts are evolving, enriched by artistic, aesthetic and technical innovations as well as by industrial and technological developments. It is crucial that the circus arts education sector stays adequate to this evolution with a set of unique, specific and up-to-date safety and rigging measures.

The RIGGERS project has been developed to answer the needs of riggers in professional circus schools, with the aim of enhancing the quality of safety measures in professional circus schools, but also to create an International Community eager to exchange skills, advice and expertise, that can be transmitted to future generations.



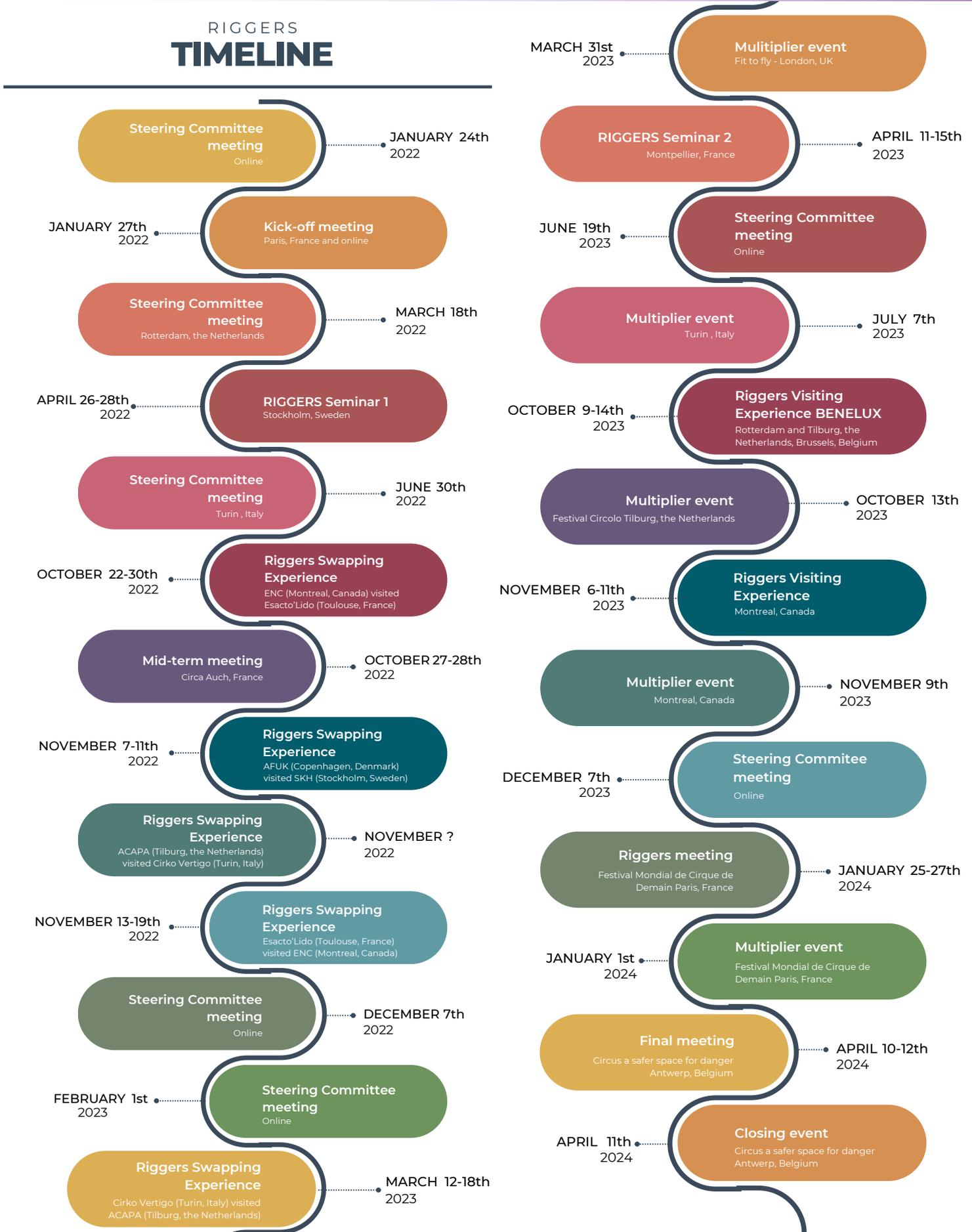
ACTIVITIES

- 2 RIGGERS Seminars: events to meet, share and prepare the cooperation.
- 8 Steering Committee meetings to organise and manage the project.
- Various Riggers Swapping Experiences (RSE) and Riggers Visiting Experiences (RVE): study visits to the partner schools to exchange knowledge, good practices and explore different approaches to safety & rigging. Each RSE/RVE has 4 goals:
 - Explore how safety & rigging issues are managed in a fellow school.
 - Nourish the cooperation on a specific working topic (chosen by the riggers).
 - Develop at least one FED-Talk (video tutorial on a good practice).
 - Raise awareness about the vital role that safety & rigging play in circus schools.



- Partners Meetings and Multiplier Events to manage the project, disseminate the results and give visibility to the sector, in cooperation with major circus festivals (Circus a safer space for danger - MAD festival, Circa, Festival Mondial de Cirque de Demain, Festival Circolo).
- Distance cooperation on Slack (online platform to manage communities) about chosen topics of common interest.

RIGGERS TIMELINE



OUTCOMES

There is an array of outcomes from this project, some are very clear, but many are less tangible. Some of the outcomes are as hoped or better, others could still be improved, I will evaluate this at [LOOKING BACK](#).

Tangible results:

- A survey on the profession of rigger in circus schools, with a report that suggests possible areas of cooperation and further sustainable actions in view of a stronger professionalisation of the actors operating in this field. This report is to be found with the following link: [RIGGERS Survey Report](#)

The survey gives a glimpse of the variety of educational backgrounds and career paths of circus school riggers. There was a clear need for support identified, inside the school and among peers. Most of the riggers need support to cope with the challenge of promoting technical progress and artistic development while ensuring a secure environment during the learning paths of the students. Thanks to the survey, detailed and clear data about the profession of circus school rigger in Europe and Canada has been collected, which can serve as a basis for further initiatives and follow up actions.

- RIGGERS posters to raise awareness on the role of riggers in circus schools.

- The RIGGERS virtual platform – a workspace on SLACK has been developed in order to allow for online cooperation and exchange among peers. This is partly closed for the RIGGERS partners and another part is open for people who are interested. The platform will later become an open virtual forum dedicated to the sector of safety and rigging in the field of circus. The Slack Workspace has been set up with different channels for different purposes and all project communication is being encouraged to take place there. The use and efficiency of this platform could be improved (see future of the RIGGERS project)

- The RIGGERS What's App group where the partners ask each other advice on problems they run into. As well as exchanging information on accidents and incidents that happen, so they can all learn from it and prevent more accidents from happening.

- The FED-Talks: a series of video tutorials aimed at sharing schools' good practices in safety and rigging with the whole community of circus school riggers in Europe and beyond. The videos, as well as the training materials developed for the tutorials, will remain available after the end of the project and can also be used for rigging education.

- A dedicated section on RIGGERS on the FEDEC website.

Links to the FED-Talks that have been created:



["Dynamic factors: fall with confidence!"](#)

Codarts Rotterdam (NL), National Centre for Circus Arts – NCCA (UK), Ecole Supérieure des Arts du Cirque – ESAC (BE), 2023



["From swimming pool to circus school"](#)

Circus Marcel / Vliegende Mier circus school (BEL), 2023.



["Don't do circus as if you are flipping burgers \(Basic visual inspections\)"](#)

Ecole Nationale de Cirque (CA) & Ésacto'Lido (FR), 2023.

["Splicing tools"](#)

Fontys Academy of Circus and Performance Art – ACAPA (NLD), 2024

["Long bury splice"](#)

Fontys Academy of Circus and Performance Art – ACAPA (NLD), 2024



["Creative rigging"](#)

Fontys Academy of Circus and Performance Art – ACAPA (NLD), 2023.

Intangible results:

- The creation of an international professional community of riggers that among other things can use the Virtual Platforms to keep on sharing and exchanging on relevant issues.

- The creation of an international community of institutions committed to raise awareness about the importance of rigging & safety in the circus sector.

- Connections with for example CRITAC and Thomas Loriaux will support riggers when they need engineering knowledge in designing and using new or adapted apparatuses and rigging setups.

- Each partner school had the chance to discover new, innovative practices, to share and consolidate their own, and discuss good practices to improve safety conditions in circus schools.

- Sharing of mistakes, accidents or incidents that happened in a non-judgemental fashion and discussing those, can prevent similar things from happening again.

- Recognition of the profession



- During the first RIGGERS seminar there were discussions with directors of FEDEC schools about 4 topics; being involved, resources, pedagogy and stress management & workload. This created more understanding with the directors and organisation of what the riggers needs are and what sort of things they are dealing with. This can hopefully be converted into more support for the riggers.

- Empowerment of riggers and tech teams to speak up.

- Collaborations with Festival CIRCA in France, Circuscentrum in Belgium, Festival Mondial de Cirque de Demain in France, Circus Folie school of Tallin in Estonia confirmed the importance of this project and created a greater visibility among other circus professionals, enthusiasts, riggers and schools

MAIN TOPICS



There were 7 main topics decided between the riggers in the first RIGGERS seminar in April 2022. The discussions, exchanges, workshops and visits about these topics lead to the following observations and conclusions.

Transmission to students

It is important to ensure that everyone in the school as a basic knowledge of rigging, and above all to at least have the critical capacity to be able to question, challenge, debate and understand what is going on and the environment in which s/he is working. Safety & rigging basics not only for students, but also for all staff working in the school.

An important reason for the transmission to students of rigging and safety is post-school preparation. One way of working with this is involving everyone in the security of the space. For example, by

- Involving both teachers and students in creating risk assessments.
- Involving teachers and students in daily pre-training inspections.
- Instructing students and teachers to inform the rigger(s) if they see something out of place, damaged or different than they are used to. Don't ignore it and raise an alarm.



Teaching is not for everyone; as a school, do you bring in a separate rigging teacher or do you ask the rigger in school to teach rigging. If the rigger is expected to teach, it is important that they get the tools and resources to do this well for example:

- Training in pedagogy & didactics.
- Specifically allocated time and space.
- Importance of rigging and safety is reflected with ECT's in the curriculum.
- Finding a balance between formal and informal teaching.
- Possibility for repetition, not just once or twice in the school career.
- Clear communication about responsibilities.

Safety protocols and systems of continuous evaluation

Each school has different ways of dealing with safety protocols, some have risk assessments, rescue plans or rules about which crash mat configurations there need to be for certain heights or apparatuses. All partner schools have a thorough yearly or half yearly inspection of all the rigging and safety equipment, besides that there are still weekly or monthly visual inspections.

Safety protocols can be around technical, physical and psychosocial safety, this holistic approach to safety is also what is discussed at the "Circus, a safer space for danger" conference from the 10th until the 12th of April 2024 in Antwerp, Belgium.

There is no consensus about one fixed way of doing this, but important questions to ask or points to discuss in each school are:

- How are responsibilities regarding safety distributed in the school?
- What are the protocols to prevent incidents/accidents?
- What is the protocol after an incident/accident happens?

- Who has access to the equipment apart from the rigger?
- How does the rigger get informed by students and teachers about things that are out of place, damaged or different than they normally are?
- How to ensure that everyone using the space are aware of the correct safety protocols?
- And finally in which way should inclusivity be a part of safety?



Equipment management

The tracking, maintenance, renewal and inspection of equipment all play a big role in the job of a circus school rigger. As well as staying up to date with the latest developments in equipment and the creation of new or adjusted apparatuses. The systems to keep track of equipment range from an excel sheet, free going in & out, Papertrail and having a specific person (who is not the rigger) in charge of all the equipment.

ACAPA and SKH are both using a cloud-based software called Papertrail, which uses a QR or a code system. At ACaPA the system has been specifically adapted to school's needs in collaboration with the company.

The tracking of the equipment, especially for schools having different locations (and scope: production, school, leisure courses), is often not reliable, this could be improved by a system like Papertrail or for example Scannable, where you can check in and out equipment or put things together in a group for a production or a course. The price is per equipment item, so for schools with a lot of equipment it is more expensive, and it takes some time and effort to get everything in the system.

Risk assessment

Often in circus schools, riggers and technical directors will do a risk assessment by themselves, in their head without keeping note of it. They usually know the space in which they are working, and therefore can assess the risk as almost a daily routine, but this is not the best practice. Ideally there are written risk assessments for all the different disciplines that are happening in the school, made in collaboration with the discipline teacher and sometimes input from the students as well as risk assessments for the different spaces in the school. When there are productions/performances, when a student wants to develop their discipline in different way or when there is a new group of students the risk assessments would need to be remade or adjusted to that situation.

A risk assessment is there to mitigate the risk, not to eliminate it (this would be impossible). Reasons to have all the risk assessment documentation in order are:

- To prevent accidents from happening (when you don't write it down things to get overlooked more easily).
- To make sure the liability is covered if something does go wrong.
- To share the mental load of the responsibility for mitigating the risk.
- To create an environment where safety is a shared responsibility and all people in the organisation are aware of how to deal with the risks involved.

In the risk assessment you should look at the physical, mental, financial and reputational risk of the performer, staff, audience, organisation, assets, environment and others involved.

RISK MATRIX							
		SEVERITY	1. INSIGNIFICANT	2. MINOR	3. MODERATE	4. MAJOR	5. CATASTROPHIC
		CONSEQUENCES	People	Slight injury	Minor injury	Major injury/Health effects	Single fatality/permanent total disability
		Environment	Slight impact	Minor impact	Moderate impact	Major impact	Massive impact
		Asset	Slight damage	Minor damage	Local damage	Major damage	Extensive damage
		Reputation	Slight impact	Limited impact	Considerable impact	Major national impact	Major international impact
LIKELIHOOD	E ALMOST CERTAIN	Incident has occurred several times in the company	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5
	D LIKELY	Incident has occurred more than once per year in the company	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
	C POSSIBLE	Incident has occurred in company or more than once in industry world wide	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
	B UNLIKELY	Incident has occurred in industry world wide	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5
	A REMOTELY LIKELY TO HAPPEN	Never heard of in industry world wide but could occur	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5

Only a few schools have a standardized risk assessments and have good systems in place for them to be adjusted to changing situations. In some countries like the UK it is very common to work with risk assessments, in others like Germany they are hardly used. It would be good for the development of circus rigging if risk assessments become more common practice when training and during the creation of circus.

Stress management

As a circus school rigger your actions can affect the safety and lives of the students and mistakes can be lethal. This brings a lot of responsibility and stress with it. Often it is not possible for the rigger to share this stress with anyone. Most others in the organisation prefer to ignore the risk than face it and hope that the rigger deals with it in a good way. The RIGGERS project gave the riggers of the partner schools the possibility to share their stress and worries, and all found out that they are not alone in this, which seemed to relieve a part of the stress already.

Sometimes pedagogy or productions feel more important than the safety. There is a fatigue with some of the riggers around constantly trying to convince people of the need for safety. The management needs to be aware of how risky is not to consider safety and therefore the riggers priority. The rigger is invisible most of the time, until something goes wrong. In that case, all eyes are on the person in charge of safety and rigging. Riggers are often excluded from the rest of the team, which makes them feel isolated. Consequences of risks and mistakes can be a heavy burden on a rigger's shoulders, ones that already happened or the ones that could still happen.

To manage the stress, it is important to consider the working times and available energy. Balancing the tasks, working conditions and workload. If this is not balanced it creates a greater risk.

Causes for stress

- Bad planning
- Long working hours
- Working alone
- Pressure of productions
- (Unrealistic) expectations
- Short notice/deadlines
- Budget
- Staffing
- Spontaneity/reacting
- Communication problems
- Part-time rigger

Ways to manage

- Scheduling, enough time
- Riggers involved in planning
- Having a plan B (and C)
- Training skills, knowledge and experience
- Cooperation
- Shared responsibility
- Understanding from others
- Working in a team
- Turning stress positive

It was interesting that the responsibility did not come up as a cause for stress, that is something that seems to be excepted as part of the job and is dealt with. But who takes care of the rigger if something goes wrong... what is the safety net for a rigger? Most of the time there are no safety protocols on the mental effect of being responsible for the rigging and safety in a circus school. It would be important to comprehend what it means to take all that responsibility. How to deal with an accident? How to follow-up? Can we think about a psychological follow-up for riggers? Are there mental health programs that school could share each other? How to practice the acceptance when a mistake happens?

It is important to create an environment for future circus riggers where stress is acknowledged, where they get help from the organisation to manage the stress and prevent the stress from overloading. Where they are mentored and trained when they enter the school.

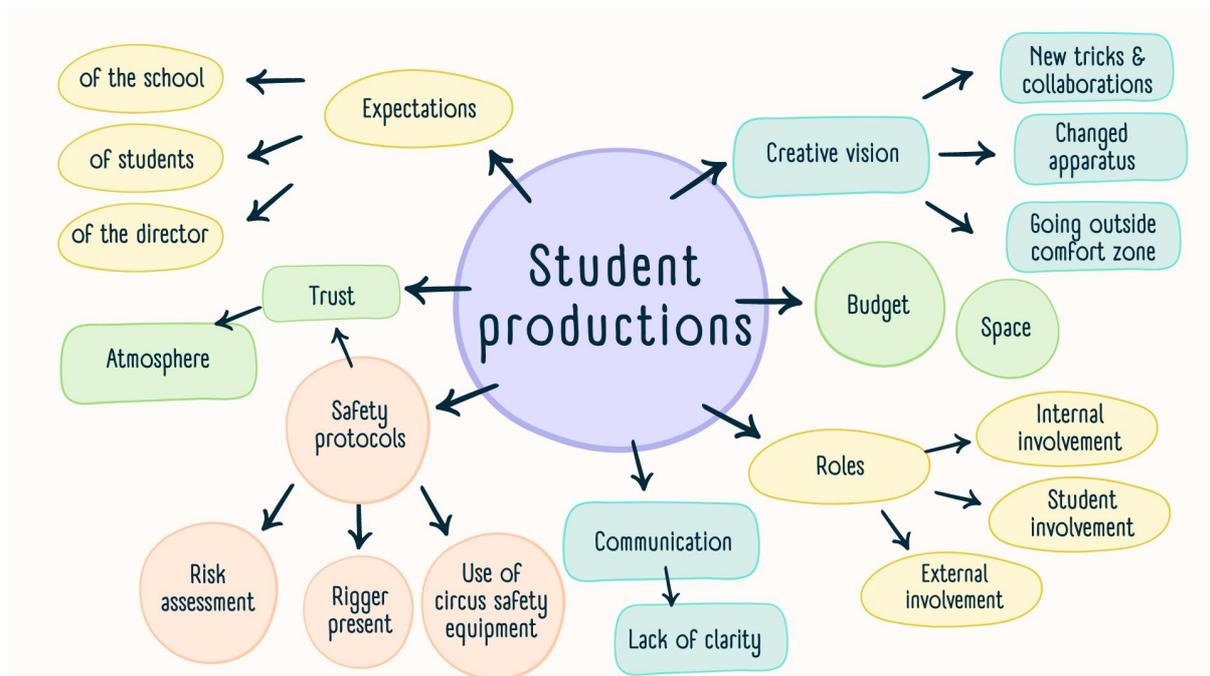
One way to deal with this would be to use a stress management risk assessment for circus and rigging. The Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT) launched "Guidance Note W2: Mental health and well-being in the workplace - A practical guide to conducting Stress Risk Assessments and creating well-being policies" in November 2022. This document was created and written by Mig Burgess Walsh. A template for this is added in the APPENDIX III.

<https://www.abtt.org.uk/product/guidance-note-w1/>



Student performances/productions

Student productions mean a lot of creative input, from students as well as occasionally an outside director. The productions often involve many changes in schedules, locations and ways of working and most importantly the pressure to perform and the stress that comes with that. Things are tried out in a hurry without overseeing the consequences. All these elements create new and often more or higher risk than in a normal school training situation. Often safety and the riggers needs, to preserve that safety, are low on the list of priorities.



There are many layers happening at the same time. Which roles are filled by who? Is there a producer, director, stage manager, costume designer, sound designer and/or technician, light designer/technician, scenographer, technical director, rigger, prop manager, stagehands, etc. Are there people hired for some of those roles, are they performed by students or teachers, or do they just not happen at all?

At which stage of the production is the rigger/technical team involved? Do they get a say in the planning and/or production, or will they hear about it when everything is decided already? It is important to have discussions between student, teacher and rigger on making changes in the discipline or apparatus and adapting the risk assessment accordingly.

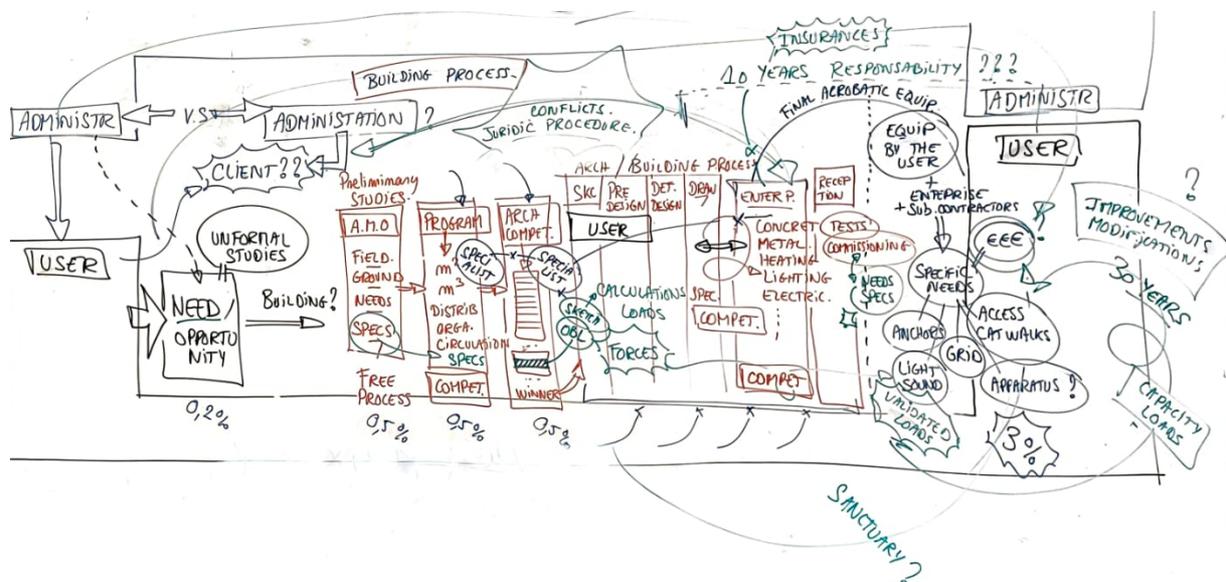
How much should the setup of the school change for a student production? Do you go in full theatre/black box mode? Is it still possible to have regular discipline training (also for other years)?

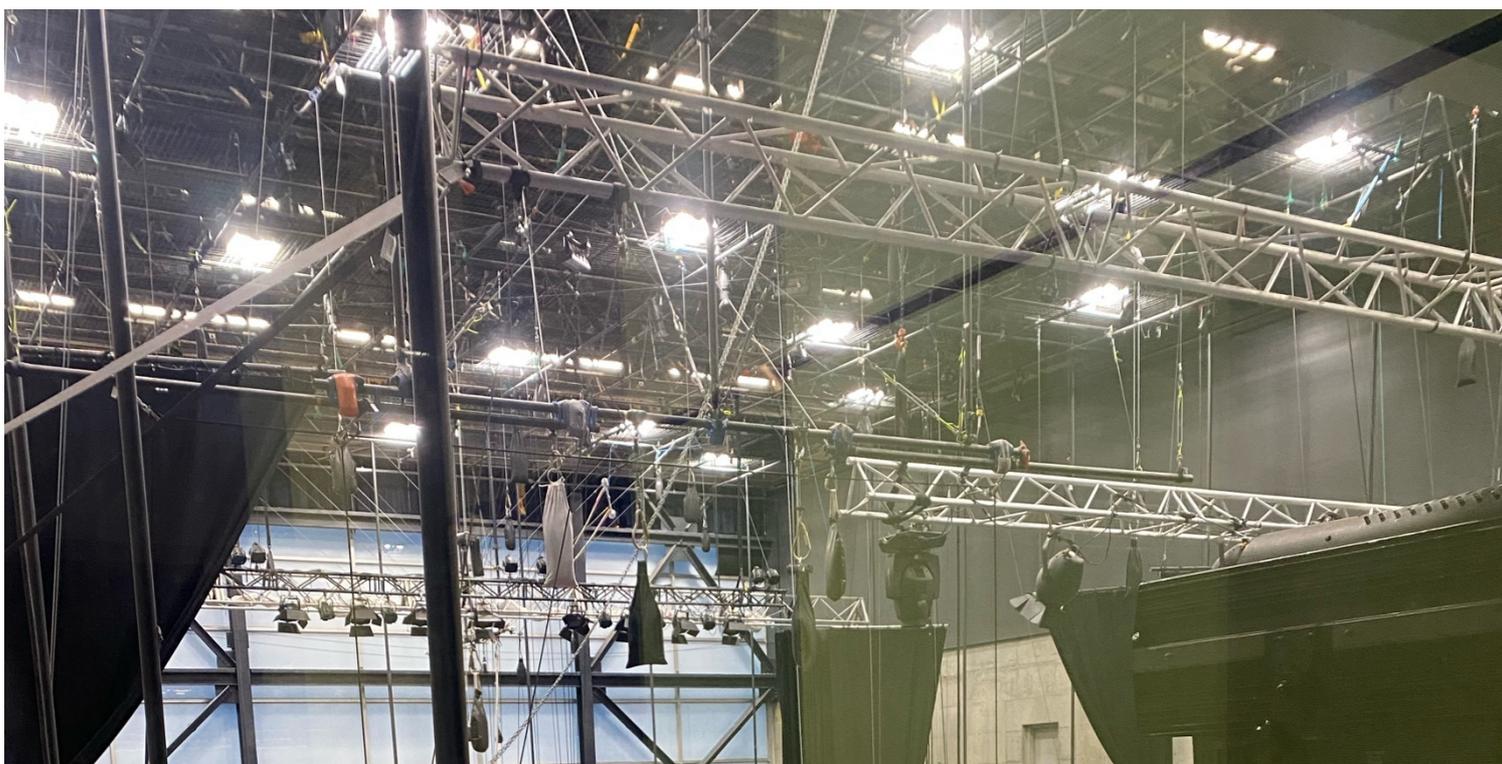
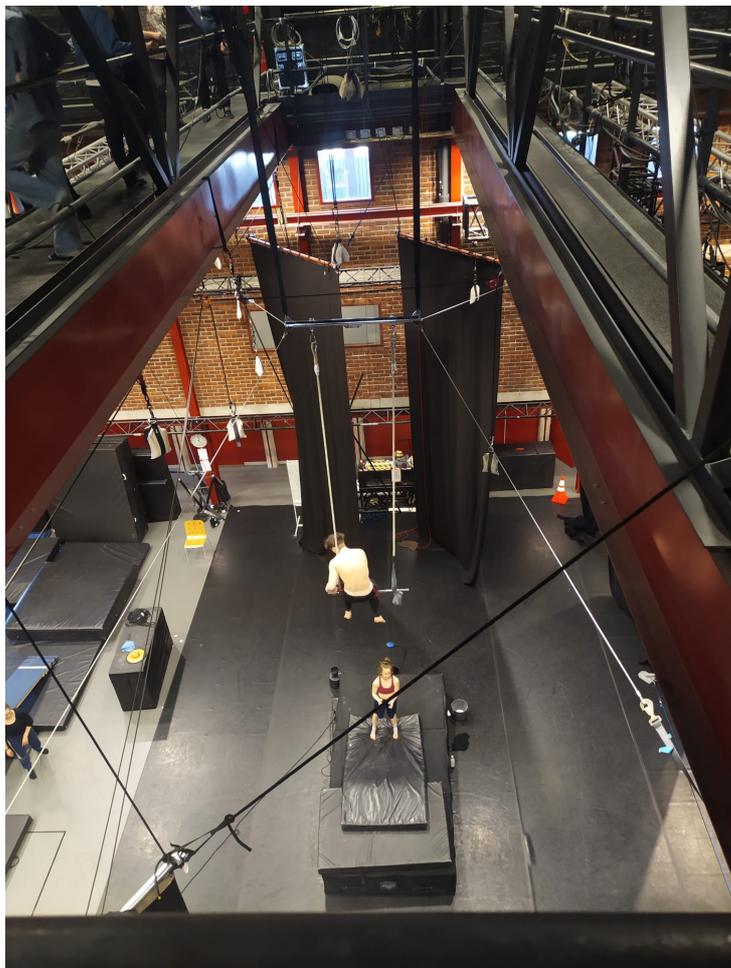
In the end it is important for a school have a clear idea of the purpose of the student production and plan the priorities accordingly. It is good to involve the rigger early on in the production planning to make sure important safety issues are not overlooked.

Spaces made for or adapted to circus

Many schools are currently renovating or changing their training and performing venues. We should assume that the people constructing/renovating the building often do not have a circus perspective. The dimensions of the spaces, such as the corridors or lifts, the heights of the halls, the anchor points in the halls, the disciplines that each hall can accommodate are often not discussed with the riggers, who are not engaged in the discussion with the architects. It is complicated because there are many different and often conflicting interests and there is not often the overlap of knowledge between circus, engineering and architecture. One of the riggers in this project however, Thomas Loriaux, does have that overlap in expertise and has been involved with the building and adapting different spaces for circus.

During the RVEs and RIGGERS Seminars several different circus spaces were visited, pros and cons were discussed by the riggers, but there is not perfect space. Everywhere you run into different problems for which you have to find creative solutions.





INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPATING RIGGERS

Following is a summary of the answers from the riggers to the interview questions, the full answers can be found in APPENDIX I.

- **Do you have a job description and if so, what is it?**

Most of the riggers involved don't have a very clear job description and list of tasks and responsibilities. Only two have a quite clear description of their job.

- **What is your role in the organisation and what % are you employed as a rigger?**

There is a big range, some are 100% rigger, others have a percentage that they work as teacher, technical director, pedagogical director or work for other employers as well.

- **What problems do you run into, and do you have people to discuss those with?**

Main problems:

- Logistics around scheduling, lack of space, time, equipment and budget.
- Unclear responsibilities.
- Security issues not understood by students, teachers and administration.
- Working in grey areas that are not within the standard working regulations.

Most riggers do have people to discuss the problems with.

- **Are you taken serious/listened to/included in the organisation?**

In general the riggers feel taken serious and listened to in the organisation.

- **In what way do you feel you need support, and can you get that from this group?**

Exchanging information and solutions, having discussions and asking questions in the group was very helpful. It is also good to get back up what the riggers already know towards for example the administration of the school. But there are also still some things missing like juridical advice or evolving the sector.

- **What did you hope to get out of this project end how do you envision it continuing?**

What they hoped to get out of the project was connection with other riggers, exchanging knowledge, experience, problems and solutions, a professional profile, best practices. To become a rigging and technical advisory group that supports all circus riggers and who meet and talk regularly.

Suggestions for the continuation: rigger masterclasses, more exchanges/job shadowing, creating a guide of good practice.



• What do you feel you have gotten out of the project already? What have you learned during this project?

Making connections with other riggers and recognition that each school must deal with similar problems irrespective of school size. Seeing how other circus schools are organised, build, installed and rigged, and that the level of rigging expertise differs a lot per school. Gaining knowledge that makes the work safer and easier.

• Was the 1:1 exchange more valuable for you or the group exchanges? (Or the combination of both?)

Both were important to the riggers, some said that it is good to start with the group and afterwards the 1:1 exchange.

• How can we extend this to other circus school riggers? And possibly circus riggers not in schools?

It would be good to involve as many schools as possible, this could be done by:

- Creating a best practice guide for training in a circus school to share.
- Managing and using the Slack platform in good way (better than now) could be an efficient way to get other circus school riggers involved. Having a space to ask questions, share problem and incidents and talk.
- Organising master classes, training programs and an annual circus rigging symposium, these could also be open to circus riggers who are not involved in circus schools.

In all of this good communication is essential.

• How can we build and improve relationships of trust? (Between riggers, the organisations, teachers, students and each other).

Trust is something you earn and develop, and it depends per person how you do this, but there are some things that could help in the organisation. Like a clear understanding the roles and the riggers responsibilities and set guidelines.

“The show must go on, let’s make a big show” must change to “No serious accidents in our schools!”

Trust is not the issue, but THRUST is: We need more THRUST to PUSH MORE with bigger budget and communication means on the sector. So that prevention can be made by EXPERTS, paid like EXPERTS to make aerial arts: a "Safety First" activity.

• **If there is a RIGGERS II, would you like to participate again?**

Most riggers answered yes.

• **Other remarks about your experience with the RIGGERS project**

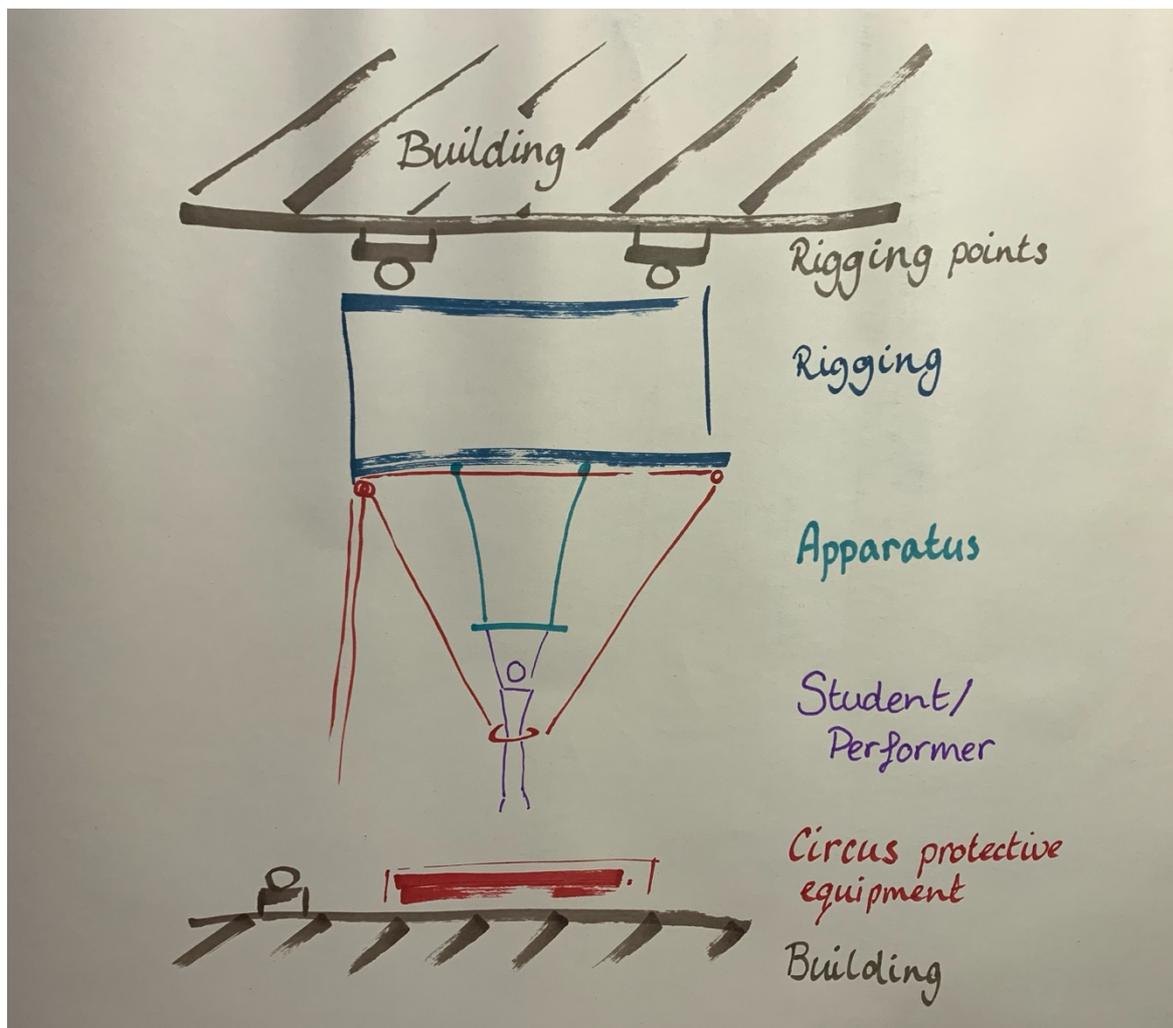
This was a helpful initiative and good to be part of it. There is a consensus that now the project has begun, it needs to continue as there is much to develop, share and advocate for. There is a need for consistency, concentration and a clear focus where to go from now on, to make sure the project doesn't fizzle out.



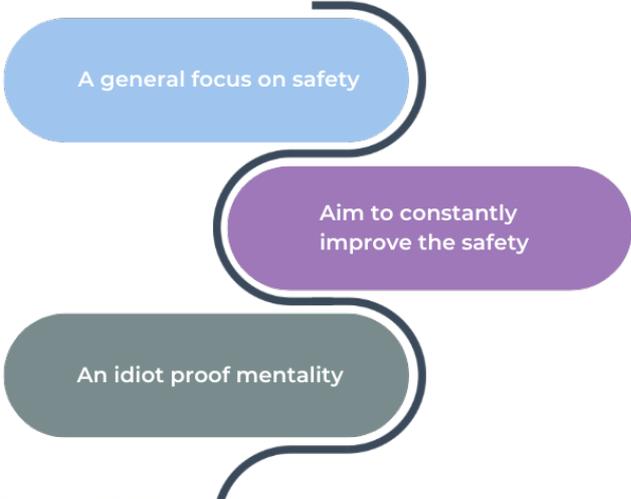
PROFILE OF A CIRCUS SCHOOL RIGGER

One of the things that was talked about a lot during the gatherings was the profile of a circus school rigger. Often there is no clear job description in which the responsibilities are laid out. Most riggers at circus schools do more than just rigging, some also teach (circus discipline and/or rigging classes), others do jobs that fit more to the description of a technical director or technical manager of the equipment. To get an overview of this we tried to separate which responsibilities belong to which role. Or at least where the riggers would like those responsibilities to lay. The roles that were looked at were rigger, technical manager of equipment, technical director, teacher (just the rigging related responsibilities) and external/other roles.

To start a drawing was made to look at which parts of the space and equipment are whose responsibility. This was separated into the building, rigging points, rigging equipment, apparatus, student/performer and circus protective equipment.



This list is by no means complete, but it is a start of an inventory of how the responsibilities could be divided between those different roles. As an overarching attitude everyone involved with rigging in circus schools should have =>



Rigger

- General focus on safety
- Risk assessment - Innovation of equipment
- Rigging layout
- Innovation / creativity - Research & Development
- Innovation / creativity - Construction
- Product research and selection
- Yearly/½ yearly inspection
- Working at height
- Assemble, install and dismantle (safety) equipment
- Prepare students for the outside world
- Constant improvement of the safety
- Idiot proof mentality
- Monitor developments in techniques and standards
- Correct use of rigging equipment
- Write incident report
- Rescue plan - ~~case~~ Technician
- Tedehing rigging (informal) Transmission to students Tech advice

Technical manager of the equipment

- Risk assessment - Discipline specific
- Risk assessment - Productions
- Equipment purchase
- Organisation and storage of equipment
- Equipment Inventory
- Budget management
- Provide Circus protective equipment
- Incident report - physical - technical

Technical Director

- Building Specs
- Rigging points
- Innovation / creativity R & D Construction
- Inventory Software
- Budget Management
- Training / Competency
- Safety protocols
- Rescue plan - Discipline specific
- Making sure incident report is made
- Building Research & Development
- New rigging points
- Understanding building safety and engineering
- Space organisation
- Room layout
- Logistics
- Planning Production
- Delivery of equipment to various sites
- Policy writing

Teacher

- Daily/weekly inspection
- Risk assessment - Discipline specific
- Innovation / Creation - Research & Development
- Correct use of apparatus and equipment
- Approve individual Training
- Organisation of student practice and training spaces
- Risk assessment - Innovation equipment
- Write incident report
- Correct use of circus protective equipment
- Prepare students for the outside world

External

- Innovation / Creation - Construction
- Scheduling Space
- Schedule rigging Time
- Attribute equipment to schedule

Rigging teacher

- Design curriculum
- Transmission to students (formal)

	TECHNICAL MANAGER OF EQUIPMENT				TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	TEACHER	OTHER
RIGGER	TECHNICAL MANAGER OF EQUIPMENT	TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	TEACHER	OTHER			
Actions	Assemble, install and dismantle equipment safely	Equipment purchase	Delivery of equipment to various sites	Daily/weekly inspection	Cleaning roof, catwalks etc (?)		
	Install fall protection system						
	Working at height	Organisation & storage of equipment					
	Weekly inspection						
	(1/2) Yearly inspection						
	Write incident report	Incident report - Physical & technical	Making sure incident report is made	Write incident report			
	Maintain rigging equipment						
	Work safely with machines						
	Load/unload equipment						
	Execute safety procedures	Execute safety procedures					
	Identify & report problems	Identify & report problems	Identify & report problems	Identify & report problems			
	Recognise limits of abilities & competences						

	TECHNICAL MANAGER OF EQUIPMENT			TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	TEACHER	OTHER
RIGGER	TECHNICAL MANAGER OF EQUIPMENT	TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	TEACHER	OTHER		
Management & organization	Rigging layout	Determine inspection schedule	Space organisation	Organisation of student practice and training spaces	Schedule space (Scheduler)	
	Calculate/determine loads & forces	Calculate/determine loads & forces	Room layout		Attribute equipment to schedule (Scheduler)	
		Generate rigging plot	Promote & identify health & safety requirements		Schedule rigging time (Scheduler)	
	Be responsible for own safety		Ensure safe work environment			
	Risk assessment – Discipline specific	Risk assessment – Discipline specific	Rescue plan – Discipline specific	Risk assessment – Discipline specific		
	Risk assessment – innovation of equipment	Risk assessment – Productions	Identify access requirements	Risk assessment – innovation of equipment		
	Rescue plan – Technician	Selecting, purchasing & storing equipment	Inventory software			
	Be familiar with safety protocols & standards	Manage equipment inventory	Document/write safety protocols			
	Develop & maintain professional network	Develop & maintain professional network	Develop & maintain professional network	Develop & maintain professional network		
		Monitor equipment loans	Identify organisational chain of command			

RIGGER	TECHNICAL MANAGER OF EQUIPMENT	TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	TEACHER	OTHER
	Updating specialized documents	Manage professional development		
	Estimate resources, time & costs	Understanding building safety & engineering		
	Budget management	Budget management		
Manage professional development	Manage professional development	Organise training/education		
	Project management	Production planning		
		Logistics		
		Policy writing		
		Collaborate with other departments		
Creation & development	Risk assessment – innovation of equipment	Building specs	Risk assessment – innovation of equipment	
	Innovation/ creativity – R&D	Building – R&D	Innovation/ creativity	
	Innovation/ creativity – Construction	Existing rigging points		Innovation/creativity – Construction (Constructor)
	Product research & selection	New rigging points		

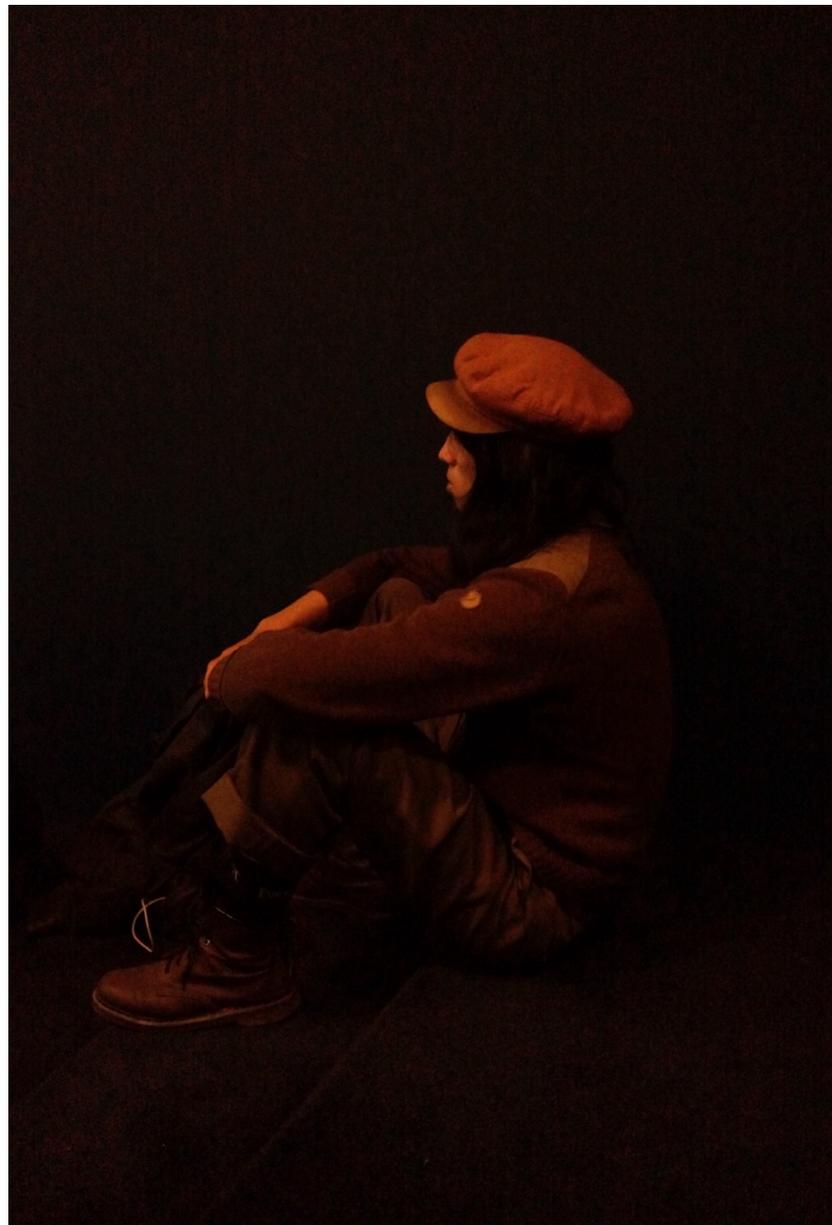
	RIGGER	TECHNICAL MANAGER OF EQUIPMENT	TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	TEACHER	OTHER
	Monitor developments in techniques & standards		Innovation/creativity – R&D		
	Define rigging needs for artistic production		Organise resources for artistic production		
Education	Instruct/oversee correct use of rigging equipment	Provide circus protective equipment		Correct use of apparatus	Design rigging curriculum (Rigging teacher)
	Teaching rigging			Correct use of circus protective equipment	Transmission to students (Rigging teacher)
	(Informal) transmission to students			Approve individual training	
	Installing a feeling a responsibility and ownership of their equipment and looking after each other			Installing a feeling a responsibility and ownership of their equipment and looking after each other	
	Technical advice				
	Prepare students for the outside world			Prepare students for the outside world	

LOOKING BACK

A lot has been done and exchanged in the two years of this project, but of course not everything only went smoothly. In the beginning of this project some of the riggers felt like things were decided for them and that they didn't get a say in how the project would run. This changed over time and by the end the riggers seemed to feel more ownership over the project.

Another point that was a struggle in the beginning were the FED-Talks in combination with the exchanges. It was agreed that the FED-Talks in themselves were a good idea, but it was a lot of work to write, film and direct them so there was not much time left for the exchange itself. Some of the FED-Talks have eventually been made outside of the exchanges.

After the first year and the first round of 1:1 exchanges there was an evaluation during the 2nd RIGGERS Seminar in Montpellier, France. One of the things that the riggers decided was to change the RSE (Riggers Swapping Experiences), where the riggers of two schools exchange and visit each other's school, to RVE (Riggers Visiting Experiences) where a group of riggers all went to visit one school at the same time. It was decided to do one visit to ENC in Montreal, Canada. For the other visit, the three schools in the BENELUX (CODARTS, ACAPA and ESAC) were grouped together, since they are so close together it was possible to see all three in one week.



FUTURE OF THE RIGGERS PROJECT

Following is a collection of suggestions of how this project can and/or will continue after the funding for the RIGGERS project has finished. For any continuation it is very important that the riggers are involved in deciding how things go.



By making the connections between the riggers and starting to build a network between them, there is an inherent continuation in that the riggers in the different involved circus schools are not as isolated anymore. They have regular contact with each other over slack and through the What's App group to ask each other advice on problems they run into. It would be good to nourish this network and the connections by organising some gatherings to see each other in person.

Since this project was received so well, an application for a follow up ERASMUS+ project has been written with the input from the riggers. This follow up project is called "Every knot matters" and its aim is to further professionalise the sector of rigging & safety in circus education, focussing on the future of the profession. For example, by training the participants in teaching methodologies, creating more FED-Talk videos as well as FED-Tips (practical guides) on the topic of safety & rigging in circus arts. Furthermore, the project will also work on creating a rigger's career path (by drafting a competence profile) and on enhancing the community, by improving the existing virtual platform and by including riggers from the youth sector and smaller professional schools.

The platforms that have been used for communication and information sharing; Slack, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and the FEDEC website, can continue to be used. A workshop in Slack use, can be one way to improve the effectiveness of the platform.



- Exchanging information on mistakes, accidents and incidents that happen, to learn from each other and prevent more accidents from happening.
- Exchange and develop the rigging curriculum in the different schools. It is crucial that the circus arts education sector stays adequate to this evolution with a set of unique, specific, and up-to-date safety and rigging measures.
- There are two schools; ACaPA and SKH where there is more extensive rigging education of a full semester for some students. Those students need to do internships to get more on the job experience. It has been discussed that those internships could maybe be during productions or inspections of other schools.
- A depository of training courses addressed to circus school rigger could be a useful tool for both newcomers to the profession and experienced riggers looking for up-to-date tools and competences.
- During the inspection weeks in different schools there are often extra hands needed. There are possibilities to invite a rigger from another school to help with the inspections as an exchange.
- An annual Circus Rigging meeting/ symposium. This could partly be online.
- Forming a working group to talk about and be representative for safety standards in circus (school) rigging.
- Forming a working group to write codes/guidelines for best practice.
- Forming a working group to develop a common glossary of rigging terms, in all languages of the project partners.
- Competence development through masterclasses between riggers.
- In most of the schools who were partners in the RIGGERS project risk assessments are often used, but this is not the case for all circus education. For example, in Germany risk assessments are not common at all. A risk assessment is a very good tool analyse the risk involved and mitigate it where needed. Spreading knowledge on how to make and use risk assessments for circus school and circus companies would be very valuable.
- Creating a competence profile for a circus school rigger.

CONCLUSION

There was a clear need for this project with the developments in circus and rigging that have been happening over the last 15 years. Also to address the isolation of circus school riggers, to create a network for them to be able to share problems & solutions, ask questions and find support for their stress management. This project was a good start, but there is space to develop it further and a need to nourish and extend the network that has been build.



There is a desire for a set of guidelines of best practices, which will be a very big job to collect and write. Besides that there is necessity to have a group of representatives of circus rigging in the European field to make sure safety standards for theatre, performing arts or gymnastic don't prevent us from doing circus.

Another reoccurring theme was being involved. There have been many discussions on why it is important for circus school riggers to have input in decision making about new buildings, to be involved from the beginning in the production planning and performances. To be involved or consulted when the program changes. There is a need to re-evaluate the importance of the role of the rigger and that the management of the schools recognise what their needs are, technical, organisational and mental needs.

In the end it is important to create an environment where safety is a shared responsibility and all people in the organisation are aware of how to deal with the risks involved in training, creating and performing circus.

APPENDIX I – Questionnaire to riggers

AM: Andrew Michell – ENC
 ED: Eero Druus – Folie
 FM: Fabio Merante – Cirko Vertigo
 JoB: Johan Bodin – SKH
 JuB: Julien Bordais – ESACTO LIDO
 NP: Nikolay Pyasta – CODARTS
 TL: Thomas Loriaux – ESAC
 WC: Will Cleary – SKH

• Do you have a job description and if so, what is it?

AM Head rigger and all that involves.

ED I Am rigger in Circus Studio "Folie" – I do aerial rigging in two small spaces 9x20 h 5,5m, also make rigging for all city camp, summer camps. In case of performances, I will make rigging in theatres, other spaces also in outdoor events – to the trees or truss construction or... I teach acrobatics as well – hand to hand, handstand, banquine. I work as a freelancer rigger in some events, festivals, stunt works, sometimes as event rigger when extra help is needed.

FM In our school there's not a job description at the moment for the rigger, our head riggers that are employed have his contract as Audio Technician because it's the most similar things for the law. In this month our school and an organisation of riggers are working on a job description for a rigger's freelance education for our region because they ask for it to have clear what kind of work and experience the people need to do the job for the show's reality. But still not include the school reality this one for the moment.

JoB Production technician, Circus rigger (EU commission occupation code 7215.2.3 High rigger that includes circus rigging)
<https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/classification/occupation?uri=http://data.europa.eu/esco/occupation/19cb84ca-952e-4f33-b31a-c918db074a6e>

JuB Yes, I have it, the file is attached.

NP We have a short and unclear one. It needs to be updated.

TL Me or based on my job – NO
 Don't need to – and quite impossible when it comes to my real work and functions.
 Regarding ESAC: Easy: teacher in the subject of "Safety at Height and Acrobatic Rigging"

WC No

• **What is your role in the organisation and what % are you employed as a rigger?**

AM 100 % Head Rigger

ED I guess it is 60% rigging and 40% as a coach.

FM My role in the school it's as assistant of the pedagogical director, teacher and coordinator for the creations of the University helping all the part (students, teachers, pedagogical, riggers, audio, lights, productions, diffusions, etc...) so I talk a lot with all the technical staff this year.

JoB 100 % but do many things that are not rigging. Rigging, planning, electric/signal cable management, sometimes help the janitor, look after circus equipment, move big circus equipment etc.

JuB Technical director, 15% as a rigger

NP Head rigger

TL 0%

WC 100% Rigger

• **What problems do you run into, and do you have people to discuss those with?**

AM Scheduling time in the studios to do our work. My boss the technical director

ED No big problems in aerial trainings - the aerial coach is young professional artist and have knowledge of rigging. In show time - there is mostly little problem with rehearsal time: to make lighting, then run-through, and performance - sometimes it to intensive for youngsters. Also, height in other spaces (our space is 5,5m), rigging point might be too high - so the ring, or tissue, or ... can swing too much and the feeling is different. If there is more space to climb up, then young artist can get tired - then we make act simpler. Always I tell artists that you have to know your limits and no problem if you finish the act earlier. It doesn't usually happen, but it's good for them to remember it.

Yes, I always talk about problems to the aerial coach and boss, and technical advice or confirmation that I am doing the right thing- I can ask from a stunt company, rope access company or other technical director of theatre or

FM The main problem in the school for the riggers it's that our head rigger it's divided between the academy and the centre of production and most of the time it's work on the production and residencies and less on the School, most of the problem is based on that and on the organisation to make all the things done good and safe in more spaces, and without having all the time the possibility to change things in a short period of time.

JoB What is the job description for the two riggers positions?

How to shop abroad when you don't get a company debit card?

Are our catwalks legal today? Is our landlord telling us things that are

wrong?

How much rigging should students be allowed to do themselves on evenings etc.

To find times when the studios are not used so rigging can be done.

Can discuss some of it with colleagues, friends etc but hard to find good advice.

JuB We are running out of time and budget.

Spaces are not available to carry out assembly safely.

Security issues are not always understood by students, teachers and administration.

NP There are too many opinions, which can be a problem. I have a pool of people to whom I can speak about the topic.

TL: Pedagogical issues – logistic issues related to the spaces, the equipment needed for the lessons.

=> and do you have people to discuss those with? Yes – mainly the TD.

WC Lack of non-rigger colleague competence and knowledge about circus in 2024, rigging, risk, consequence, the grey areas where we do things that are not within the standard working regulations.

• Are you taken serious/listened to/included in the organisation?

AM Yes

ED Yes

FM I can say yes, more and more after this project and we try more and more to connect all the part of the organisation, have meetings in advance to let each one explain their needs. We are going to build one or 2 new spaces in the next years, so the Riggers are really taken in count, and I've been involved in sharing the knowledge that I got and the discussions where I've been involved in in the experiences during the riggers project. The Head riggers and I are organising to progressively change the rigging systems of the school with the set up that I saw in the other schools to have the systems.

JoB Yes, most of the time.

JuB Yes

NP Yes

TL Yes

WC Sometimes, locally yes – within the whole organisation – no.

• In what way do you feel you need support, and can you get that from this group?

ED Yes, there are a lot of questions but during this project and being in those conversations, many Q-s have been answered. I have also received

- answers specially related to my work, also answers to some little details and where to find some sites or knowledge.
- FM I think that a big support was sharing the knowledge and see what other schools are doing. It has made a real change to have a community where you know that you can ask about and share problems or solutions. One other thing that I think that will help in the future is to have a base job description that we can use and help the ministry to accept it (if it's done by a community of riggers around Europe it will be easily accepted, I think.
- JoB Wish for a lawyer to give advice and update us on new rules that we don't hear about.
- JuB Information sharing, solution sharing
- NP Best practices and transmission to the students and teachers.
- TL Making the sector evolving => and can you get that from this group? – No
- WC Simple example – we discussed not using the twisting belt use for swinging trapeze – then I have some support when I tell my teacher 'No, you can't use the belt as a sole primary safety because it's not safe'. Yes, you can use it for something where it's not the only safety – like if you have a mat.
It would be very good to develop a best practice because it supports us from the 'push back' we get from people who don't want to change or learn.

• What did you hope to get out of this project end how do you envision it continuing?

- AM I intended to have contact with other riggers in the trade. I hope to continue to have this resource of Circus school riggers.
- ED I hoped to see what work is like in other schools, to meet and hear the experiences and knowledge of other riggers,
This project must definitely continue. How? I think we need to discuss together and find the main goal and direction to move.
For me personally is interesting:
Practical work in circus school, like job shadowing or 1:1 exchange
Riggers courses or workshops – can be separated to parts like, calculations, materials, rigging systems, safety mats, inspection.
- FM I hope that this project can arrive to concretize one or more profession profile that we are now starting to get into something clearer, to continue all the sharing process between the group that help to understand better what other reality do or with problem and solutions they had to relate to, and maybe arrive to create in a moment some kind of «best practice » that also the new generation as me can go and see.
I hope that we can arrive also to have minimum knowledge transmission to students because it's something that can help not only the riggers that teach but also the pedagical part of the school, in our school for sure this.

- JoB I hoped for a lot of new knowledge through a report or something from FEDEC.
I would like to measure the bounce in different types of rigs to see what is best for fast learning and I would like to look at cheap ways to get rigs without bounce but still use climbing gear.
- JuB I hope that we will be able to make a guide to good practices, perhaps in a second shape.
- NP I'm hoping that, aside from chatting with the group and getting to know the riggers, we are becoming an organization with a supporting institution that stays behind to support all circus riggers.
- TL Having made a step for the group in understanding better some issues of the branch/sector => and how do you envision it continuing? - Nothing - Doing what I do for more than 25y : Pedagogy + Expertise + Communication
- WC I hoped we could establish a cohesive group who can meet and talk on a regular basis - I think we should be the rigging and technical adviser group to FEDEC.
Then we would have the mandate for further meetings. Currently with the bad financial climate, I can see that organisations will not prioritise this kind of thing, but I think it is invaluable - because we can learn so much from each other to make things easier and safer.

• What do you feel you have gotten out of the project already? What have you learned during this project?

- AM Connection with other riggers
- ED I have seen a lot of professional circus schools now - how they are organized, how built, how installed and rigged. I have gained a lot of knowledge that make my work easier and safer. I think the main goal is the same for all and good to know that my way is not so different.
- FM The Head riggers and I are organising to progressively change the rigging systems of the school with the setting that I saw in the other schools, it will take a bit of time for the budget, but I twill help a lot of students, school incoming having systems that are more similar to the one in other schools. I got a lot on knowledge of the profession, of the way to do things that I'm sure it will help our school in more ways, from the how to do a static trapeze pulley system to how to organise construction of a new building, for example. For sure I will get others on other moments of this project and in the future.
Discussions about problems during creation processes that some schools shared helped me a lot on the task that I have this year in the school on how to try to involve all the parts in the creation process (students, teachers, staff, riggers, etc.)

- JoB Very nice to learn some from other universities.
I have learned much more about Fedec.
- JuB I learned that the problems were the same for everyone, despite the differences between schools.
- NP Plenty of practical examples. Recognition of the same problems and self-esteem.
- TL Nothing particular
=> What have you learned during this project? The poor level of the rigging expertise in (some of) our "superior" circus schools.
- WC So much, mainly from the group visits to Canada and Benelux – the opportunity to visit schools and talk about work and approaches we take. It's such a learning curve I think – even though I have 30+ years' experience, it's all in my small bubble of colleagues so to share with other riggers is very important.

• Was the 1:1 exchange more valuable for you or the group exchanges? (Or the combination of both?)

- AM I think the 1 to 1 exchanges were more valuable for my team.
- ED I think both is needed – practical work in specific place and round table discussion with all riggers.
- FM I think that both have a reason to exist, but I think that I get the most in the group exchanges. If there would be first a group one and after the 1:1 I think I could have gotten even more from the 1:1 exchanges.
- JoB 1:1 N/A But the group exchange gave me some understanding of other universities.
- JuB The group exchange was more valuable.
- NP The group exchange has greater value.
- TL Not particularly
- WC Group, we need to meet to forge relationships but also to become a working group – otherwise were just still in our small bubbles. Maybe I would have liked to do a 1:1 exchange, but it wasn't really possible. I can see the benefit – but I would say that its more important to build a 'group' anyway.

• How can we extend this to other circus school riggers? And possibly circus riggers not in schools?

- AM I think we should open this project to as many schools as possible. In my opinion this project is for circus school riggers only and not riggers outside of this specific job
- ED To make some booklet or handbook like ENC and CRITAC, "Conception et Fabrication". Translate to English – Guide d'aménagements des espaces de formation et des équipements circassiens.

- Folie can talk with our friends in circus schools and with artists.
- FM I think that managing in a good way the Slack platform can be a super community where other circus school riggers can be involved. Having a space to ask, share and talk, as an annual seminar in presence that can have workshops for all the circus school riggers.
- JoB Try to attract CNAC to a project and then gather information from different schools in a report/manual.
- JuB Workshops?
- NP It remains an unanswered question for me until we know where we are going.
- TL Pedagogy (master classes - training programs) + Expertise (being personally involved in some technical issues or projects) + Communication.
=> And possibly circus riggers not in schools? Pedagogy (master classes - training programs) + Expertise being personally involved in some technical issues or projects) + Communication.
- WC I think it's good to do that - to be able to meet and discuss, the first would be a 'general circus riggers meeting' but I also think it's important to have the circus riggers in schools in a group talking about the things that are important to them as well, its two different things, best practice for general training in a school is much easier I think to discuss - in a performance situation there are more variables, I guess that also goes for performances in a school, so in that sense there is possibility to extend this conversation. I think we should focus on the general training in a school before its extended out though.

• How can we build and improve relationships of trust? (Between riggers, the organisations, teachers, students and each other).

- AM Good question, trust is something you earn and develop over your career. It depends on the individual how they develop this. As head rigger I believe it is essential to have a relationship with my team based on mutual trust. Without it we can achieve nothing
- ED In our small school I hope it is already ok. I can't say for others, but maybe there needs to be some clear rules, and everybody needs to understand the riggers' job responsibilities. I hope it is not too big a problem and the rigger also has the right to say no if he sees a danger or problem.
- FM For my external view I think that clarifying what really do the rigger or which multiple role a person has it help each other to know better how much is important and in when to ask his involvement... and after to have more meetings between all the parts together to really have the possibility to share, to improve things together, and having different prospective it will help to get to solutions and positive ambiance easily.

- JoB "The show must go on, let's make a big show" must be changed for "No serious accidents in our schools".
- JuB Make a guide to good practices to share to be taken seriously.
- NP To have a set of guidelines that we have all agreed upon.
- TL For me trust is not the issue, or at least the false self-confidence of some riggers is an issue. For me thrust is the issue, meaning:
- In a sector where every 3 years in average you start from scratch with new people, less knowledge and a base of amateurs in inflation
 - In a sector where the "democratisation" of aerial circus art will ALWAYS go faster than any group of experts trying to communicate.
 - In a sector where the SOCIAL MEDIA will ALWAYS go faster than any group of experts trying to communicate
 - In a sector where the NATIONAL STATES pay no attention to this (relatively small) accident logical phenomena...
- We need more THRUST to PUSH MORE with bigger budget and communication means on the sector. So that prevention can be made by EXPERTS, paid like EXPERTS to do make aerial arts: a "Safety First" activity.

So, in other words:

> How can we build and improve relationships of trust? - More accidents.
Tactic one: Many accidents everywhere but not deadly - so that people are more afraid.

Tactic two: One or Two deadly accident - so that people are more afraid.
Actually, we have them - 1 dead every 4 months.... and the awareness is not there.

WAKE is good - but AWASA should be good to = AWARE of SAFETY

Now that "Performance" is everything,
People will take the risk of dying live on SNAP or TIKTOK for their "15 minutes of fame".

"In the future, everyone will (take any risk to) be world-famous for 15 minutes."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewl8exgZcTE>

https://twitter.com/diet_chola/status/1728778456186446173

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1728778456186446173>

Look at this:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=785608490236004&set=a.132525948877598>

Ecole Nationale de Cirque de Châtelleraut - WTF

Clearly, we should protect ourselves with different words/names,
Like for Olympic Gymnastics for example and crazy acrobatics of people
injured on the beach.

Different concepts, different names, you will not blame "Gymnastic" for
people doing crazy stuff outdoors everywhere.

But for "Professional Aerial Acrobatics" it's too late - everything is aerial now.
FEDERATIONS need more THRUST.

WC More chance to meet together. It would be nice to bring a student to visit
another school, maybe it's an idea to hold a rigging gathering of students
and teachers who are interested in rigging and school riggers and other
circus riggers - that might be a nice project. I think it was something that
got missed when FEDEC did their projects on the disciplines to develop the
FEDEC manuals - for example.

• **If there is a RIGGERS II, would you like to participate again?**

AM Not 100% sure. I think RIGGERS is extremely important for riggers who feel
alone in their job. I have a big team to work with and a large network of
riggers around the world who I am able to call on.

ED Yes of course!

FM I really enjoy this one and I get a lot from it so yes, I will participate if there's
going to be a RIGGERS II

JoB Yes, please.

JuB It depends on the content.

NP Yes

TL YES - Master classes please

WC Yes and I would like to influence what that could be, I think it should be the
participants of RIGGERS I who have the main influence, otherwise it will
become something to serve another agenda - then it's not RIGGERS 2, it's
something else.

• **Other remarks about your experience with the RIGGERS project.**

AM It was fun. Thanks

ED I am very grateful that I could participate in the Feder project RIGGERS
and I thank all the participants and Lorenzo.

JuB It was nice!

NP It is a very helpful initiative. But, at least to me, it is becoming unclear where
we are going to go.

TL Inconsistent in a way, I would have hoped more concentration of Intensity
and knowledge/ time.

It was too "meeting" and "tourism discovery" oriented.



WC It feels like it's just the beginning and its quite a fragile group, we have the possibility to learn and develop this and continue to meet to discuss in some capacity (online for example) but also it can fizzle out – to me then the project will have failed if we don't continue to talk – the WhatsApp and slack are a bit of an issue – I wish we had made regular zoom meetings as well to solidify the group – maybe I try to do that in the future

EXAMPLE STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX II – STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

Optional Insert company logo here



Setting the Scene

Include information about your theatre:

Include information about your staff and working patterns

We know from industry based research that the prevalence of mental health conditions is high within our industry.

Our backstage teams do not follow conventional patterns of work like the majority of work forces, working evenings, weekends and often over nights.

We wanted to promote the well fare of our staff and work towards a cultural change towards mental health and well-being in the work place. This prompted us to begin to conduct risk assessments for stress in the work place.

When we refer to Heads of Department (HOD's) we mean Head of lighting, Sound, Stage, Video. When we refer to technicians (Techs) we mean deputy levels, senior technician levels and other technical roles.

How the Risk Assessment was done

To identify the hazards:

- The manager followed guidance from the ABTT's Guidance Note W2: Mental Health and Well-being in the workplace. This Guidance Note uses information from the HSE's working minds campaign looking at stress in the workplace, and is informed by the Alliance of Associations and Professionals in Theatre and Live Events (AAPTLE) industry well-being study from 2021
- The manager talked to members of staff to listen to their concerns and opinions about stress in the workplace
- The people who could be harmed by the hazards were written down

To create the Risk Assessment:

- Existing controls were written down and logged
- Where more controls were felt to be needed these were also logged
- A stress risk assessment was created
- The findings were discussed with staff and the risk assessment distributed

To implement the control measures:

- All existing controls and further control measures were implemented and recorded as having been done.
- An effective way of communicating this to all staff was agreed
- It was agreed to review this each year or when any major changes happened in the work place.

WORK RELATED STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

insert business or venue name

Date: Insert date

Hazards	Risks	Who is harmed?	What are you doing all ready?	Further Action?	Actioned by who?	Date
Demands	Short staffed / inadequate staffing levels					
Workload, work patterns & work environment	Acting up into more senior roles	HOD's & Techs				
	Insufficient resources to work	HOD's				
	Out of hours working	HODS's				
	Long Hours	HOD's & Techs				
	Tight deadlines	HOD's & Techs				
	Inadequate rest and holidays	HOD's & Techs				
	Enviromental factors – Heat / Cold	HOD's & Techs				
	Responsible for people management	HOD's				
	Complex decisions made regularly	HOD's				
	Working from home / isolation	HOD's & Techs				



WORK RELATED STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

insert business or venue name

Date: *Insert date*

Hazards	Risks	Who is harmed?	What are you doing all ready?	Further Action?	Actioned by who?	Date
Control How much say the person has in the way they do their work	Poor communication with staff between general managers / techical managers and backstage technical staff					
	Staff don't feel they are listened too					
	Inflexible work schedules / control of work schedules – time off for appointments leisure activities?					
	Development opportunities					
	Work Life balance					
	No control over being asked to work late, requests to change rotas short notice					

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WORK RELATED STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

insert business or venue name

Date: *Insert date*

Hazards	Risks	Who is harmed?	What are you doing all ready?	Further Action?	Actioned by who?	Date
Support Encouragement, sponsorship & resources available to workers	No encouragement to be vigilant in spotting the signs of work based stress					
	Staff can't talk to managers about mental health and stress					
	No sign posting for support with mental health and well-being issues					
	Staff aren't supported in returning to work					
	No further training to support mental health and well-being					
	Previous history of work related stress / mental health condition.					
	Identifying and supporting high risk people: bereavement, divorce, mental health diagnosis etc					
	Untrained line managers / lack of support for line managers					
	Not feeling supported across all job roles including managers and senior roles					



WORK RELATED STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

insert business or venue name

Date: *Insert date*

Hazards	Risks	Who is harmed?	What are you doing all ready?	Further Action?	Actioned by who?	Date
Relationships Promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour	Poor Line management relationships					
	Poor working relationships					
	Bullying and harrassment					
	Blame culture					
	Sexual / racial harrassment					
	Working with the public and dealing with complaints					

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WORK RELATED STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

insert business or venue name

Date: *Insert date*

Hazards	Risks	Who is harmed?	What are you doing all ready?	Further Action?	Actioned by who?	Date
Role Understanding their role within the organisation, and ensuring no conflicting roles	Job roles arent defined and additional duties are often added to peoples roles. Over worked, understaffed, acting up into higher roles.					
	Lone working					
	Under staffed.					
	Poor staff retention and recruitment					
	Redundancy					
	Lack of definition of organisational goals					
	No support / training, skills development					
	Workers don't feel valued in the work place					



WORK RELATED STRESS RISK ASSESSMENT

insert business or venue name

Date: Insert date

Hazards	Risks	Who is harmed?	What are you doing all ready?	Further Action?	Actioned by who?	Date
Change How change is managed and counciated	Poor communication of work place changes					
	Lack of monitoring of the changes for effects to workers and stress levels.					
	No feedback structure					
	Managing new large projects / shows					
	Line manager dealing with redundancies					