

Summary of the EU TTEC meeting 15 January 2019

Overall, the meeting was an excellent start to an ongoing, annual process of strengthening and consolidating the European trainers' voices in Teacher training (both ATA and Programs) policy matters. There was feedback that the discussions were not focused enough – that some different meeting styles, facilitation approaches, and agendas could move through more items more quickly. We will try to incorporate these ideas and experiment with some different ways to run the meetings next time.

After a meditation and a check-in, Amrit shared a little background about TTEC, and his ideas about how this new EU TTEC fits into our evolution as a community of trainers. Some of the key points from that framing and subsequent questions are:

- In the early 1990s, Yogi Bhajan pulled together the teacher trainers and demanded that they create a common, global teacher training program. It took them years of challenging meetings to hammer out all the details, but that is what led to our Aquarian Teacher textbook and curriculum. The group that worked through all of that kept meeting and became the Teacher Training Executive Committee (TTEC). After they had the Level 1 program defined, they moved on to setting up the Aquarian Trainer Academy (ATA), with the different roles defined (intern, associate, professional, lead) and how one qualifies for each role. Then they set up the Level 2 program and modules, and then the Level 3 program.
- Legally, the KRI board of directors is responsible for all policies of the organization, and hence they do formally review and approve the policies that come out of TTEC. They trust the wisdom of TTEC and have never not approved a policy that TTEC has approved. To maintain a strong connection between TTEC and the KRI board of directors, TTEC selects one member to sit on the board (subject to KRI board and SSSC approval).
- TTEC has worked well, but we have now outgrown its structure. When it started, there were about 180 trainers. Today there are more than 800 trainers in the ATA.
- TTEC was effective because they created a group consciousness. Some of the things that we think helped to create that group consciousness (so we can find new ways to achieve the same) are:
 - Fairly consistent membership and attendance
 - Starting with a dialogue day, which is a time to discuss a big topic without trying to convince anyone or argue your opinion. Taking the time to share thoughts and opinions openly, and listen deeply to one another helps make the “business” smoother.
 - Keeping the meetings to (roughly) 25-30 people, so that everyone can sit in a circle and everyone can be heard.
- Amrit's primary focus is on HOW we make decisions, even more than what any particular decision is. How can we create a similar group consciousness among our more than 800 trainers, so we can navigate through today's circumstances? Our mission is to maintain the purity and authenticity of Yogi Bhajan's teachings. Yet with the whole world changing so fast, we know that we need to keep updating how we deliver those teachings. We also have to answer questions that Yogi Bhajan never addressed or answered. We need to be flexible and adaptable, but uncompromising on the core teachings. Telling the difference between the two, knowing what is a core value or teaching that is not culturally dependent, and what is a style or

way of teaching that can be adapted to be optimally effective is a critical function, and KRI uses the group consciousness of our entire community of trainers to help it do that function.

- KRI is trying several new things to try to harness the wisdom of our trainer community, and is committed to keep striving towards this collective wisdom. A question came up, that wasn't answered in the meeting, about what exactly do we mean by "group consciousness," as we all may have somewhat different definitions. Some of the avenues available now for trainers to contribute and have their voices heard are:
 - Participate in the Global TTEC meetings (currently held in Espanola)
 - Participate in various committees like the Professional Development Committee or various ad-hoc committees focused on one specific topic or issue (like a group getting started now working on mentoring)
 - Sutra discussions. Some trainers expressed being overwhelmed by too many emails from Sutra, so they end up ignoring all of them. It is suggested that you change your notification settings in Sutra. If you don't want any emails you can set that Pod by Pod. That way you can only turn on notifications, and at the frequency you wish (from none at all, or every message, or daily, weekly or only once per month) so that they are useful to you. Maybe turn off all notifications for all pods except the ones you are wanting to stay actively engaged in?
 - Trainer forums. Each one now has at least a few hours for "global decision making," where important topics are discussed and feedback gathered. This will probably be temporary, with regional TTEC meetings eventually fulfilling this role, and the forums becoming more focused on Professional Development.
 - Hoping to bring the Global TTEC meeting to Europe, maybe in April 2021.
- In this context, what is the role of this EU TTEC? It is a way to focus, and therefore strengthen, the voice of the European trainers. Outcomes from this meeting will go to the upcoming trainer forums in Chile and Mexico, and to the Global TTEC in April. There are twice as many Level 1 teacher trainings in Europe as in the US, and also more Level 2 courses in Europe than the US, so the perspectives of this portion of our global community is very important. KRI also hopes that at least a handful of people from this meeting will commit to regularly attending the global TTEC meetings, as eventually those meetings may become the place where representatives of various regional TTEC meetings all come together to reconcile and finalize policy decisions.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** If you are interested in perhaps playing this role of a representative of the EU TTEC to the global TTEC (which would entail attending most if not all of the EU TTEC meetings and Global TTEC meetings for the next 2 to 3 years), please email Amrit Singh.

The group then had a wide-ranging discussion (some thought too wide-ranging) that started off on the themes of What is the Aquarian Age (and what does it mean for us)? Especially about how we view power and hierarchies (acknowledging that the relationship of KRI to trainers is a hierarchy, as is some of the interactions between trainers of different roles in the academy). And what do we mean by group consciousness? And how do we maintain alignment with our values?

A summary of the points from this discussion:

- KRI needs to be clear on the core teachings and values – what is non-negotiable. There were some questions that came up even here, among trainers (e.g. how we introduce Sat Kriya, the use of music in class or relaxations, about warm-ups) – and if we are not clear, imagine how our students in teacher training feel!
 - What in the Teachings is “eternal,” and what come from the current cultural? We know that Yogi Bhajan used some things (like the Long Time Sunshine song for example) from the current cultural when he taught. In what ways can we as trainers use our intuition to serve our students best, and when do we need to follow things exactly “as they were taught?” All traditions develop over time, so in what ways should ours?
 - We acknowledge that our goal is to be always tuned into our inner guidance – but that we all are still human and aren’t always able to. So clear guidelines (such as our Code of Excellence) are important, and when we declare ourselves as teachers and trainers of Kundalini Yoga as Taught by Yogi Bhajan we must surrender ourselves to these guidelines.
 - We acknowledged that a part of group consciousness is to act as this external reference to one another. We as a community can, and need to, help one another continue to learn and grow. This doesn’t stop once you become a lead trainer!
 - The areas that came up for possibly clarification were:
 - Do students (and ourselves) still need a spiritual teacher? What do we mean by “guru,” “spiritual teacher,” “Teacher,” and “teacher?”
 - The use of music. We know that the manual says to use only 3HO music. But these days there are techno versions of mantras and all kinds of things that may not be appropriate but are still “3HO music.” And many trainers will use their intuition and play music from other traditions. So is more clarity needed?
 - How we introduce Sat Kriya. Is it ok if the group sound sounds like, “Naam Sat” instead of “Sat Naam?” Is it ok to teach that a mental repetition of “Wahe Guru” be added in between each “Sat Naam” to help keep a rhythm?
 - Warm ups – including do you tune in before or after the warm-ups? Can you do warm-ups from another tradition, then tune in?
 - Some people see YB's teachings are too heterosexual, too old fashioned. How can we be more inclusive that people make. The Humanology supplemental chapter was good. But now people are talking about how gender is not something you are born with, but something society assigns to you. How to deal with this?
- Level 3 needs more of a focus on actually training Teachers. Maybe KRI is afraid of developing teachers among us, they only want YB to be the Teacher? But Level 3 will just keep spinning off less than true teachers.
- More transparency, including things like the Akal Security – ICE relationship, would be helpful

After lunch Nirvair Singh and Hari Charn Kaur from KRI joined via Zoom. They gave some updates about things happening at KRI, and then Amrit added some additionally. Some of the updates:

- Specialty trainings can now get the KRI Seal of Approval (there was some discussion about this and exactly what is getting “approved,” and how it works. Those questions would need to be addressed with Nirvair Singh directly

- KRI is considering having a team of globally distributed, part-time trainers paid to help move policy discussions like we are having here forward. **ACTION ITEM – if you are interested in possibly being one of these trainers, email Amrit to begin discussions.**
- We hope that between Sutra, the quarterly trainer bulletins, and the policy change tracking log on the KRI website people are keeping up to date with all that is happening, and all the ways they can contribute if they want to. **ACTION ITEM – if you are not getting the trainer bulletins via email, please check your spam and then email Amrit Singh. There will be another one going out in a few weeks.**
- Planning for the EU trainer forum has begun, and the agenda will be ready soon. And then planning for the 2020 forum will begin so we can be one year ahead. **ACTION ITEM – if you are interested in teaching a workshop at the forum, please email Hari Charn.**
- TTEC in September approve 3 new policies – competencies simplified, level 1 formats (allowing other trainers to submit applications to lead courses in an Immersion format, or any other format that is currently not allowed), A new pathway to qualifying as a Level 2 trainer
- KRI will be tightening the consequences for being out of compliance with KRI policies, e.g. if you aren't current with your trainer licensing, you won't be able to be listed on a contract. And if you are more than 90 days past due on your course royalties without a mutually agreed payment plan in place, you won't be allowed to license any new programs.
- As the academy grows, we have a growing need for interviewers for our professional and lead candidate interviews. As participation is also a "case study" and a part of one's professional development as a trainer, KRI will be expected lead trainers to participate on interview teams.

The meeting then broke into small groups to discuss in more detail several areas. Below is the list of areas that were discussed. The notes from each break-out group will be consolidated and sent out once they are collected. **ACTION ITEM – if you were the note taker for a breakOut group, please email Amrit your notes as soon as possible, no later than the end of January.**

- Improvements to the Level 3 Program
- How do we as a community maintain Alignment with values? Including the question about some trainers not starting Aquarian Sadhana with Japji
- The Issuance of KRI Level One Certificates: digital only? Issued only after 100% completion? Issued only by KRI?
- Mentoring is....What are the mentoring structures or processes you've found valuable and why? Capture best practices – what are they and how to capture?
- How to deal with trainers who have been inactive for some period of time
- Do you need a teacher?
- Bringing in other teachings into Level One trainings
- Guidelines around the use of music in class

There were some other areas that were mentioned, but no one formed a group around them. There were:

- A possible change to our White Tantric Yoga requirement
- A better definition about what are or are not warm-ups
- Level One Trainer Competencies - how can each competency can be demonstrated?

- How can long term teachers enter the academy?

The way KRI moves projects like these forward is with teams (small groups) of volunteers (perhaps soon to be supplemented and coordinated by some part-time, paid staff so things can move faster). Some of the above points have groups already and some do not. The small groups could (where appropriate) research relevant Yogi Bhajan quotes, flesh out the various facets that need to be considered, and then draft some guideline or policy. Additional input on these topics will be gathered at future trainer forums and perhaps at the April TTEC meeting. Eventually, when there is a written policy about these things, they would come to TTEC for approval. **ACTION ITEM – if you are interested in helping to move any of these areas forward, email Amrit Singh.**

Logistics for future EU TTEC meetings: Everyone there felt that this rough time-window (mid-January) was good to stick with. Amrit will send around a Doodle poll to nail down now the dates for 2020, 2021, and 2022. **ACTION ITEM 1 – We recognize that there is a built in bias to ask those who were able to come in mid-January if that time frame works well. If anyone has an issue with that timing that enough advance planning can't solve, please let Amrit know ASAP. ACTION ITEM 2 – Look out for the emails from Amrit with the Doodle polls for future meetings.** People really like the idea of moving the location to different “ashrams” each time, as a great way to see how other people’s centers work. Amrit knows about possible locations in Boizenburg, Germany; Sweden, Rome, Belgium; and will do some further research to confirm locations for future years. **ACTION ITEM – if you have, or know of, a place that could hold a meeting with about 30 people, with beds for at least 20, let Amrit know.**

Possible timing for holding the global TTEC meeting in Europe? Amrit thought April 2021 possibly.

The feedback about what worked and what didn't in this meeting was that generally this was a good start, but that most people would like to see some new meeting and facilitation styles tried to move though topics faster. We will try out some of these at the next meeting. There was also a strong suggestion to start things the night before, so that people can socialize a little, and “land,” and be more present for the discussion day.

List of trainer attendees:

Amrit Kaur (Belgium)
Ardas Singh
Avtar Kaur (SNE)
Daljeet Kaur (DE)
Guru Jivan Kaur (IT)
Gurubhagat Singh
Hari Arti Kaur
Hari Krishan Singh
Jivan Mukta Singh (Finland)
Jiwan Shakti Kaur
Karta Purkh Kaur
Karta Purkh Singh
Karta Singh (IT)
Livtar Kaur
Nam Hari Kaur
Rajdeep Kaur (Switzerland)
Sat Darshan Kaur (Finland)
Sat Karam Singh
Sat Nishan Kaur
Sat Sangat Kaur (IT)
Satya Kaur
Shiv Charan Singh
Simrit Kaur
Siri Gopal Singh (Italy)
Sohan Kaur
Taran Kaur

And three observers who are not trainers – Adi Kaur, Radajeet Kaur, Hari Rai Singh