



Moving Moments in National Government Funding Policy: An Evaluation of Sustainability in National Arts Council (NAC) Three-year Funded Dance Companies

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as commissioned research by the National Arts Council of South
Africa.

September 2009



Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre Dancer Siyabonga Mhlongu *Body of Evidence* Choreographer Jay Pather
Photographer Suzy Bernstein 2007

¹ This document is part of Ms Waterman's Masters degree registered with the University of Cape Town. She could be contacted at waterman.arts@pixie.co.za.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to:

- The National Arts Council for the project grant, the National Arts Council staff, especially Julie Diphofa (Arts Development Manager), Thato Monamodi (Arts Development Officer – Company Funding), Charmaine Morareng (Arts Development Officer for Dance), Simon Mapadimeng (Research Manager), and Kiran Isvarlal (Chief Financial Officer)
- The research administrators, Jane O'Connell Crewe, Trisan Reddy, Caryn Green and Thato Momamodi
- All the generous time given by the 2006-2008 three-year funded Dance companies

Foreword

Dance performance remains my much loved and practiced art form. I started a contemporary and classical dance school in the mid 1970's and have worked in the non-profit section since 1976. Some of the highlights in the Dance world for me were sitting on the national panel that drafted the curriculum for the new Grade 12 certificates - it is a great joy, knowing that Dance can be taken as a school subject. More school children are dancing now than ever before. Another project that shines in my mind is the coordination and research for the *Tshwaragano In-touch Integrated Dance Project*, where dancers of different abilities worked with Adam Benjamin to create a performance work for theatre. These dancers have moved from the distant sidelines, to being commissioned to make works for main stages. They have opened up the right of who is eligible to dance professionally.

Arts management is a vital component of the success of Dance organisations. I have created and built new courses at Wits University in undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, and facilitated in community-based organisation, in all nine Provinces over South Africa. Lately, I have been witness to the distress about survival for many three-year funded Dance companies, those receiving money and also those not receiving funds. Very few Dance companies are confident of their financial futures in these turbulent economic times. This research² is a start towards building a nexus of dialogues needed to move out of inertia or confusion and into positive action. Change is always possible.

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Introduction

Dance thrived in the pre 1994 election climate. The financial assistance, keen political and artistic interest of foreign donors and Corporate Social Investment pressures to deliver on culture as a societal healing agent, gave an already well rehearsed 1980's Dance community a boom period, which lasted until the late 1990's.

Dance Umbrella Contemporary Dance Festival started in 1989 as an open platform for contemporary dance, with fourteen choreographers sharing their work at The Wits Theatre. By 1999 two hundred choreographers were participating in *Dance Umbrella* - a clear indication that in South Africa, contemporary dance was vibrant. <http://wwwat.artslink.co.za/arts/umbrella/history.html>

After the first democratic elections in 1994, foreign assistance started fading as global priorities moved away from South Africa. International donors also felt that the new democratic government should become involved in supporting arts and culture. This resulted in many leading Dance companies finding themselves in acute positions of economic failure while trying to adjust to new South African funding schemes. Sylvia Glasser, Founding Director of *Moving into Dance* in an interview in February 2009 remarked that in 1992:

Moving into Dance's great expansion took place with foreign funding especially from the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. The organisation increased training and outreach work with this new funding. The funders gave *Moving into Dance* four years warning that they would cease and would be removing their money in this period. With the democratically elected government they would now be working government to government.

The National Arts Council came into being in 1997 and showed direct support for short-term Dance projects. Choosing to spread aid to many short-term projects as a political imperative proved that, a little financial support given to too many organisations only grew artistic frustration, inhibited planning and caused extra administration for many concerned.

In 2002 a new plan of three year funding for appropriate Dance companies was opened by the National Arts council, to build financial and artistic sustainability. This research takes time to look back at the viability of the three-year company funding for the years 2006-2008.

Scope

Fifteen Dance companies were funded for the 2006-2008 period. The research works with thirteen of these companies as listed below;

1.	Cape Town City Ballet <i>Western Cape</i>
2.	First Physical Theatre Company <i>Eastern Cape Province</i>
3.	Flatfoot Dance Company <i>KwaZulu Natal</i>
4.	JazzArt Dance Theatre <i>Western Cape</i>
5.	La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre

	<i>Western Cape</i>
6.	Masutsa Dance Theatre <i>Free State Province</i>
7.	Moving into Dance <i>Gauteng Province</i>
8.	Namjive <i>Northern Cape</i>
9.	RK Dance Theatre <i>Gauteng Province</i>
10.	Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre <i>Kwa Zulu Natal</i>
11.	Tribhangi Dance Theatre <i>Gauteng Province</i>
12.	Unomthadazo Theatre Company <i>Gauteng Province</i>
13.	Vuyani Dance Theatre <i>Gauteng Province</i>

Two Dance companies were not included in the research. One has closed down and the other was unreachable.

This group of thirteen Dance organisations has been selected, as it is a fair representation in numbers and small enough for me to be able to interview and visit thirteen companies in person. The ages of the Dance companies researched, reached from a mature seventy five years in existence to a young six years professional experience. One strong feature in this wide age range, is the both the seventy five years old company and the six year old companies have very much the same management challenges. It is not about age. They are all exposed to the rapidly changing and shifting paradigms in the world around us and have to find new mechanisms to cope.

Putting a time frame of 2006-2008 around the research makes it timeous and has also allowed relevant and detailed information to be revealed and reflected upon - information that could possibly impact on the 2011 preparation for company funding. I have also include observations around the 2009 National Arts Council funding cycle as these criteria have raised some pertinent and heartfelt issues of company survival and confusion in fully understanding of National Arts Council selection criteria.

Research Method

Dance, and its ephemeral nature, brings it into the complex research realm of measuring intangibles. Using a qualitative method is likely to effectively produce trends and ways of thinking and being that contribute to opening up attitudes, which inform the research questions. Why are so many good Dance companies that receive three-year funding support battling to sustain themselves? Have the marketing, fundraising, board structures and management policy of Dance organisations developed to help sustain the companies? Is three-year funding the only answer to sustainability? Where does the responsibility lie for sustainable Dance practice in South Africa? Where is the National Arts Council positioned in creating long-term projects?

Finding a process that connects with the Dance companies' ways of communicating was important to enable trust and confidence in the research. Seeing the research from the eyes of the participant built mutual understanding and encouraged independently empowered research participants.

On growing intrinsic research, which supports words rather than figures, a qualitative approach can be valued to explain human perceptions. Jowell cited by Holden (2004) states that,

Too often politicians have been forced to debate culture in terms only of its instrumental benefits to other agendas...In political and public discourse in this country we have avoided the more difficult approach of investigating, questioning and celebrating what culture actually does in and of itself.

Holden, J., 2004 *Capturing Cultural Value – how culture has become a tool of government policy*, London: Demos.

This research also wishes to embrace some quantitative approaches that appear in data analysis, like the emergence of common themes in the data that can be processed into percentages.

Interviews with questionnaires containing open and closed questions were processed. I personally visited all thirteen Dance companies to dialogue, to tape the responses to the questions, and to see more into the company processes than can be done on the email. This was a good move as many Dance companies used this opportunity to ask questions themselves.

Other data like; websites, press releases, narrative and financial reports, business plans, marketing tools, policy documents, journal articles, books, National Arts Council annual reports, photographs, YouTube, Dance company merchandise were used to build empirical evidence and to grow debate around the issues pertaining to the research.

Context

All policy is informed by aggregating social, political and economic values of a ruling power and has a direct impact on how the Arts can be implemented. The environment in which the research is embedded is situated around the debates of South African Arts and Culture.

Theoretical Framework

A 'disciplinary integrated' and eclectic approach is important when working in the terrain of Arts management and arts policy, as it touches on an ecology involved in balancing social, economic and political issues. Chong (2007, p.viii) a writer in business administration and arts history states that,

Synthesis has been crucial. Theoretical texts from a diverse range of disciplines – sociology, cultural economics, museology, cultural policy, art history, and management (including marketing, strategy, organisational studies, and critical accounting) – continue to have a profound impact on arts management writing.

Chong, D., 2007. *Arts Management*. 6thed. New York: Routledge

I have chosen to weave the challenges and theories of cultural policy, Dance history, organisational studies, psychology and economic positioning in non-profit arenas - looking specifically at organisational processes in marketing, fundraising and board activity. The theory selected impacts on organisational sustainability, that reveals itself through survival efforts of three-year National Arts Council funded Dance companies (2006-2008). Evidence and observations from National Arts Council documents plus interviews with Dance company management, artists and boards promoted new issues and future critical thinking for Dance management practice.

The research is framed in the 'three-legged stool' model of Hunt and Shaw (2008 p. 6-7), where all aspects of an organisation the **Art**, the **operational systems** and the **finances** need to stay in balance for the organisations' stability and health. This is not a fixed state but one that requires artists and management to be constantly vigilant about new organisational flows in the internal and external environments.

Structure of the Report

The research review is divided into four sections and an introduction namely:

Section One

"Moving Moments in South African Arts Policy"

Section Two

"Sustainable Systems"

Section Three

"Speak Out"

Section Four

"Re-Positioning Recommendations for the NAC"



Cape Town City Ballet Mannie Irving and Lauren Rogers *Scheherazade* Weller after Fokine
Photographer Pat Bromilow-Downing 2008

Chapter One: Moving Moments in South African Arts Policy

Highlighted movements in South African Arts policy are taken from the landmark years:

- 1948 when the Nationalist Party got into power
- 1963 the year Provincial Arts Councils came into being
- 1994 African National Congress rule in the first democratic election and the removal of the Arts Councils
- 1996 The White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (White Paper) presented as policy
- 1996 NAC registered
- 2002 first three-year company funding muted

History and policy do not follow an even temporal line. Policy over time is a fractured narrative with the relationships between different or the same points being accented in a coincidental manner. It is the relationship between the positioning of Arts and governments that reveals common or divergent issues, creating ironies, tensions and critical reflections. Arts and Culture policies

construct complex interplays between the nation, power and culture thereby revealing a collection of values, ethics and functions of the arts within a ruling party.

Matarosso, a specialist in the relationships between Arts development and policy, collaborated with Landry, a world known researcher in strategic policy development. Their book, *Balancing act: twenty-one strategic dilemmas in cultural policy* debates contemporary Arts policy issues.

One of the key issues about cultural policy for Matarosso and Landry is how communities and government come to agreement on the role of culture in society. They have set up opposite points of view on a continuum and place debates in the fluid realm between opposing points. An example on economic challenges, questions the nature of financial support from government. Is this government Arts money a subsidy or an investment and how does this fit into new world monetary paradigms? Does a subsidy turn artists into passive receivers of money bound by government policy requirements or can an investment attitude place arts organisations into an active role leveraging further monies from the base investment, to generate more independence from government politics. Can Arts organisations do this without losing their artistic vision and non-profit mission?

Cultural democracy or democratisation of culture for Matarosso and Landry is another discussion pertinent to theoretical debates around the positioning of culture in a society. South Africa is also debating these matters at present. Matarosso and Landry espouse that cultural democracy gives,

...people access to a pre-determined set of cultural values, expressions and products...It was seen as a 'top down' dispensation of elitist cultural values, and which neglected or dismissed many forms of cultural expression and identity. It was argued that cultural policy should go beyond educating people into appreciation of approved culture and, ...should involve them in the fundamental debates about the nature and value of cultural identity and expression.

Matarosso, F., and Landry, C., 1999. *Balancing act: twenty-one strategic dilemmas in cultural policy*. Belgium: Council of Europe Publishing.

1948 - Onwards and into an Era of Segregation

In 1948, South Africa was a country battling societal turbulence of a post World War II economy. At the same time many people were striving to heal after the ravages of a brutal human rights war. Further surprises shook South Africans, when the notoriously racist Nationalist Party got into power in 1948 – an uncomfortable irony for many citizens who supported a World War to rid societies of racial injustices.

The Nationalist Party government worked steadily to entrench an apartheid system where theatres and artists receiving funds only served the White or European communities and particularly the Afrikaner. While South Africa was moving towards an elitist and separatist European culture, the United Nations declared the 'right to culture' and promoted the cultural democracy - the same points in time (1948) offering two completely different cultural ideologies.

The United Nations states in its declaration of human rights (1948, Article 27),

Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts...

http://www.hrea.org/index.php/base_id=157

In South Africa segregated and elitist culture ruled. Classical Ballet, a 'high art' form was the preferred dance form to be funded by the Nationalist Party government. As with many countries it was the so-called 'high arts' that were seen to be an enlightening, civilising and nation building tools following a Greco-Roman mode. Even the titles of many world wide classical ballet companies suggest a powerful national feel – the Royal Ballet in Britain, The Imperial Ballet of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, and American Ballet Theatre of the United State of America are a few one can mention. In South Africa today, one still has the national claim in Ballet company titles such as the *South Africa Ballet Theatre* and of less nationalistic and geographical grandeur, *The Cape Town City Ballet*. These South African Ballet companies now receive little and in some cases no government funding. This is a vast financial change from their 1963 beginnings.

Carol Steinberg in her MA thesis (1993) *Towards the Transformation of the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal* cites (Bennett, 1993.78),

...the "high arts" brought with them an important characteristic of the relations between culture and power in the nineteenth century: their valorisation as embodiments of universal norms of civilisation or humanity.

Giving classical Ballet an elevated position and using it to create 'universal norms' for cultural value set out to undermine the importance and existence of local indigenous cultures. Steinberg describes this colonisation through citing (Ngugi, 1986) where he speaks of imperial culture as normative and imbued with value, thereby marginalising and undermining the culture of the colonised. Seeking recognition and international standing in Europe meant that the Nationalist Party government had to be on equal standing in a cultural arena. Culture is a very important diplomatic tool, which is often the fore runner to deeper dialogue with international states – especially the European states Nationalist Party so badly wished to emulate to promote trade and further entrench their power.

South Africa was not always in tune with what was happening in Europe where notions of 'high art' were being highly challenged at this time. The Nationalist Party government continued regardless and with more commitment to 'high arts' than before.

1963 - The Nationalist Party Government Big Spend

It was in this year that huge finances were put into the development of Performing Arts Councils,

1963 was a momentous year for the performing arts, as the Government decided to subsidise them on a provincial basis, establishing in each province a board to administer companies for opera, ballet, theatre and music.

Grut, M.1981 *The History of Ballet in South Africa*, Cape Town. Human and Rousseau (Pty) Ltd

With the establishment of the four Performing Arts Councils in South Africa and their attendant companies such as the 60 – strong CAPAB Ballet under the direction of David Poole, an era of plenty was born, when seemingly unlimited funding available for lavish productions at the Nico Malan Opera House, and the large scale-tours to venues such as the Settlers' Monument Theatre in Grahamstown, the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg and the Port Elizabeth Opera House.

<http://www.capetowncityballet.org.za>

The audiences and artists were White with particularly preference given to Afrikaaners. Subsidies were large and ticket prices low or free, so that houses could be filled with potential White voters who wished to build separatist aspirations towards European 'high arts' theatre models - isolating people from valuing things African. The Nationalist Party government used the ballet to gentrify the 'boer' image they badly wished to transform. The Afrikaners came from many varied cultural classes so, exposing them to Ballet performances in the small towns helped to build the normative cultural values desired by the ruling party. This action cost the government dearly.

Grut cites Dr Slater, vice-chairman of CAPAB on the 25 August 1965,

We are expected to provide on a professional basis for the four expensive arts to a comparatively small population distributed in hundreds of towns and villages over an enormous area. To do this in a worthy manner is a costly task, however economically we carry it out. CAPAB will therefore need a much larger income in the future.

No Black dancers and audience members were allowed into these performances. South Africa ignored what was happening with culture internationally, for example the United Kingdom starts the Community Arts Movement in the 1960's and begins to open arts opportunities for all. Community Arts was seen as an instrument for social change. With the shift in who has the right to Dance professionally, a broad based contemporary Dance movement grew vigorously.

1975 - Slightly Open Doors?

It was only in 1975 that the Nico Milan opened its doors to all races with *The Sleeping Beauty*. Grut (1981 p. 248) states,

Something momentous was happening in the Nico Malan Theatre at the same time as the premiere of *The Sleeping Beauty*. It was the first evening that the theatre could

open its doors to all races, and it deserved such a vibrant production to celebrate this event.

Theatre critics recorded by Grut (1984 p. 196) were taken in by spectacle and entertainment, March 1975 Hatfield, writing again after ten years' silence, says in *The Cape Times* of 24 March 1975,

...and how effective, in this act, is the transformation scene, with its rising and gliding gauzes, revolving stage, swirling mist in which the prince is lead to the his love in time and space...the very stuff of theatre.

In *The Argus* of the same date Macfarlane felt that,

Gillian Luke as the Songbird looked as if she could have been made by Faberge. The most difficult solo is the Golden Vine, danced by Christeen Fuller. She made it look easy with not a foot or finger out of place.

It is difficult to imagine that the critics were so unaware in their writings that millions of citizens were angry because of the patronising attempts to soften the apartheid system. Keeping citizens entertained with displays of power and fantasy and they will forget disenfranchisement or aspire to the same normative 'high art' value system was clearly endorsed by the press. The Nationalist Government and its many citizens were the 'sleeping beauty' and received a harsh awakening in the 1976 uprisings, which questioned present policy.

Many non-governmental community based organisations came into being in the 1970's to work as cultural activists opposing government arts policies. Two leading companies who had their birth at this time are part of the National Arts Council three-year dance funding system today. *Moving into Dance* is one of the companies and was founded in 1978 as a non-racial performance and training organisation funded by foreign donors. *JazzArt Dance Theatre* also had its origins in the 1970's, surviving off earned income and donors wishing to work for a non-racial society.

1994 Movement and Emotion – leaps into new policy

In 1994, notice was given that all funding from Central Government would cease and that all performing companies should become independent of their parent bodies, the Arts Councils, by 1997.

<http://www.capetowncityballet.org.za>

The new African National Congress (ANC) government brought with it pressures to try and survive in the government subsidy system. Sichel states in her journal article *Ballet Loses Its Footing In South Africa - State Theatre Ballet, State Theatre Dance Company Ended*. Dance Magazine, Nov 2000,

The seventy-student school Weller established in 1994 was more racially representative of South Africa than the company itself, which was mostly white, but it was a case of too little too late.

Other journalists carried forward a different view fearing the loss of things classical forever. A battle for survival of what was known and valued culturally proceeded. The potential of many indigenous arts forms was overlooked or at times not held to be of any value. Steinberg in her MA recalls an article by cultural journalist Barry Ronge in the *Sunday Times* 2 May 1993. Ronge writes about,

...Ballet companies being kicked into oblivion by the gumboots of traditional dancers and...orchestras and opera singers fading into dissonance before the throb of the mbira and the cowhide drum.

The dependence on a patriarchal government provider was short sighted in a country where the majority of cultural voices were not being heard. This narrowly focused view of culture ended in the dismantling of state subsidies going directly to preserve old European 'high art' forms.

Policy for the People

In the years 1994 -1996 a consultative arts and culture policy document was being born through the work of the Arts and Culture Task Team. This transformative policy is,

...inspired by the best traditions of democratic society world over, where these features are valued in themselves and are treasured for their contribution to the quality of life.

White Paper for Arts, Culture and Heritage, 1996. Chapter 1 point 1.

Forty six years after the Nationalist Party got into power and United Nations declaration of the 'right to culture', the African National Congress started working on an Arts, Culture and Heritage policy for all South Africans. This task group was commissioned by Ngubane, the Minister of Arts and Culture, Science and Technology, and was an open and consultative process.

For the first time in the history of our country, all art and culture practitioners have the right to participate in creating public policy.

White Paper for Arts Culture and Heritage, 1996. Chapter 1 point 7

1997 The National Arts Council Starts a New Funding Era

The National Arts Council came into being through the constructs of the White Paper. The National Arts Council (NAC) Act 56 of 1997 created the National Arts Council as a statutory public body with its executive powers based in the Department of Arts and Culture. Once this legislation was passed the NAC opened funding to Arts groups throughout South Africa. (The Foundation for Creative Arts had started this job in a tied-over period between changes of government.)

The NAC vision is, to promote through the Arts, the free and creative expression of South Africa's cultures. The mission is, to develop and promote excellence in the Arts.

<http://www.nac.org.za/>

The mandate (objects) of the NAC is set out in its founding legislation, the NAC Act (1997), and reads as follows:

- To provide, and encourage the provision of, opportunities for persons to practice the arts;
- To promote the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the arts;
- To promote the general application of the arts in the community;
- To foster the expression of a national identity and consciousness by means of the arts;
- To uphold and promote the right of any person to freedom in the practice of the arts;
- To give the historically disadvantaged such additional help and resources as are required to give them greater access to the arts;
- To address historical imbalances in the provision of infrastructure for the promotion of the arts;
- To promote and facilitate national and international liaison between individuals and institutions in respect of the arts;
- To develop and promote the arts and to encourage excellence in regard to these.

<http://www.nac.org.za/mandate.html>

The NAC mandate is guided by the values of the White Paper and shows a vast change in Arts policy thinking from the Nationalist Party government. One similarity remains - in both apartheid and post-apartheid eras there is no specific government policy devoted to Dance within South Africa. Dance activities are embraced along with all the performing arts.

One of the first issues is that of creating a Dance policy that is relevant to the Dance community in South Africa. The Arts Council of England has a Dance Policy plan that is created by broadly knowledgeable Dance practitioners and open to the public on the Arts Council England website.

http://artscouncil.org.uk/downloads/dance_policy.pdf

Arts Council of England have three main points in the Priorities for Dance 2007 – 2011 document – these points could have been written for South Africa,

- *To support a more confident, diverse and innovative arts sector, which is valued by and in tune with the community it serves*
- *To enable more people to take part in the arts and both audience and participants*
- *To help create vibrant communities across the country*

New Zealand, France, The Netherlands, Canada and Australia are all countries that create Dance policy to guide the relevance of their funding distribution. Dance does have different needs from Music and Drama. To bring the best out each Art form one should see each Arts discipline in their own contexts, within a general Arts context and in an integrated context.

Once policy is agreed upon, implementation, monitoring and evaluation can take place in a transparent way as all grantees know the frame and can work in different ways to achieve it. This Arts Council of England policy could have been written for South Africa.

The National Arts Council realised that the short term project funding was not building a sustainable Arts sector. In 2002 a three-year company funding structure was set up with specific goals. The aim of the three-year grants was to:

- Encourage and promote excellence in the arts
- Encourage creation and presentation of indigenous arts
- Stimulate job creation
- Enthuse the private sector to match the grant on a 50/50 basis

Company Funding Report – compiled by Julie Diphofa November 2005

Changing Presidents, Shifting Policy?

Different presidents have offered different solutions and points of focus for Arts funding. The humanist nature of the Mandela-led government of 1994 emphasised healing, reconciliation and addressing past legacies. The principles of the White Paper placed human rights, freedom of expression, redress, and nation building at the core.

President Mandela at his Inaugural Address, 10 May 1994 put forward a desire to see,

...a rainbow nation at peace with itself and the world...

White Paper for Arts, Culture and Heritage, 1996. Chapter 1 Introduction

It was at this time that the National Arts Council distributed many short-term grants to try and reach artists and organisations who had never benefited from government funding.

President Mbeki placed accountability, economic sustainability, equity and job creation through the arts as the main policy focus. Policy is always open to interpretation and each new president will give it his own touch. The shift in the Arts from a humanist approach towards economics imperatives and values is revealed in Minister P Jordan *Parliamentary Media Briefing Economic Cluster 11*, 10 February 2006,

A R100-million will be channelled into the creative industries: film, craft, music, television, books, publishing to make a major contribution in closing the gap between First and Second Economies. (Point 1.1)

We trust that the above developments have the potential to create employment for over 5000 people in the next 3-5 years. (Point 1.4)

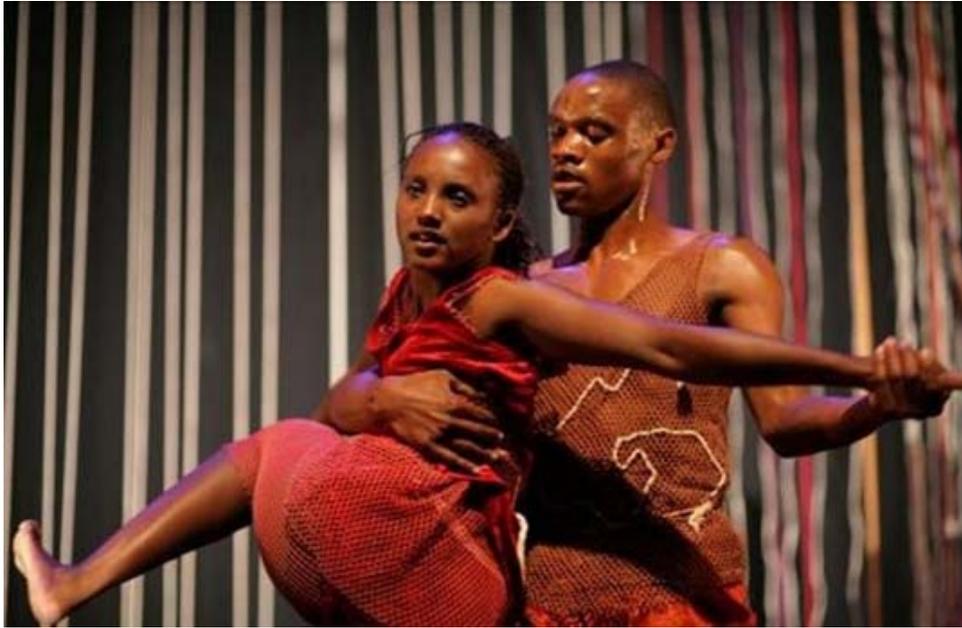
<http://dac.gov.za>

Arts seen as a financial means to support a society often reduces the intrinsic value of the Arts into a commodity to be consumed. This concept leads to many imbalances and misunderstandings as to why the Arts are important. The Arts offer much more than instrumentalised financial targets. This debate will be called up in Chapter Two when looking at the notions of sustainability of the Arts. Two of the four aims of the three-year grants previously mentioned by Diphofa, namely to ' Enthuse the private sector to match the grant on a 50/50 basis and to stimulate job creation' are connected to financial success, which is in line with the Mbeki government concerns.

Minister L. Xingwana under the Presidency of Zuma has presented her 19 June 2009 budget speech. The emphasis being much the same as the ex Minister Jordan. One issue that appears in her speech is the enhancement of social cohesion, 'In his state of the Nation address, President Zuma called on each and every one of us to help build a more cohesive society' <http://www.dac.gov.za/speeches/minister/2009/19JuneSpeech.html> President Zuma is expanding the 'social cohesion' call from ex President Mbeki. Minister Xingwana makes no mention of the National Arts Council, something the artists in non-profit organisations want to hear about.

The White Paper has not been changed much since its inception in 1996, and is over due for a serious facelift, as sagging energies in ANC government Arts departments battle to find clarity of direction. The White Paper was essentially a transformational policy from the Nationalist Party to the ANC government. It is over ten years since the White Paper was legislated - this policy and the NAC Act would benefit from restructuring to meet the relevant issues of today.

Receiving government monies is complex. Dance companies understanding and practicing sustainability when they enter into a contract with the National Arts Council to receive three-year Dance company funding needs further support, to reduce the inherent anxieties of survival.



Moving into Dance Company Faith Maseko and Fana Tshabalala *Threads* Sylvia Glasser
Photographer John Hogg 2008

Chapter Two: Sustainable Systems

2.1 Stepping into sustainability

Many a time attending the theatre, public performance events, Arts policy forums and participating in street chatter, one hears of the difficulties of sustainability for Dance organisations. The anxiety is heart-felt. Artists are excited about receiving National Arts Council long-term grants. Contemporary Dance organisation use the opportunity to offer many new innovative and challenging works yearly, but most companies remain fragile and stressed by trying to build sustainability. The present research revealed only one organisation (8%) that was completely confident of its survival - *JazzArt Dance Theatre* has already started their business plan for the years 2011 – 2013.

JazzArt Dance Theatre are confident as they have enough funds from NAC, the Province, corporates, foundations and the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF) to explore their mission statement for three years, they have a sound base to work from at Artscape, their board is highly effective and their product and services are excellent, in demand and innovative. They plan well in advance which reduces risk. *JazzArt Dance Theatre* have the 'three legs of the stool' systems model well balanced.

Part of the issue, is to expand possible meanings of the word sustainability. One of the aims of the three-year Dance company grants is to 'enthuse the private sector to match the grant on 50/50 basis' (Diphofa 2005). Private public partnerships are part of national government's economic policy. The

National Arts Council uses this idea to encourage independence from one of subsidy complacency. Grant giving comes with strong economic positioning and some times over-rides a vision of supporting excellence in Dance.

Finding one's own organisational position in the multiple definitions of the sustainability concept is important. Schwaiger (2005 p.1), PhD Dance researcher from Australia, holds two vital issues as indicators for survival, one being finances, the other being the attitude of the dancer,

Sustainability can relate to the economic conditions under which the dancers practice, the viability of sustaining one's practice under uncertain and unfavourable economic conditions. It can also relate to the dancer's own disposition and motivation. Feeling valued by one's culture and society as a dancer...However, the two aspects of sustainability – economic and culturally valorised – are interwoven, as the dancer's 'value' is reflected in the remuneration and continuity of employment, just as much as it indicates audience appreciation.

Kaiser, the President of John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts, in his February 2008 lecture at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, has a different emphasis, and stressed that turnarounds in Dance organisations require a focus on 'good art and good marketing' that build a positive identity around the mission. Never losing sight of the importance of autonomy for the development of the artistic product is of paramount importance. A highly commercial and commodified version of products/services is not the terrain of the not-for-profit arts organisations. Often sustainability is confused with only improving economic viability, which in turn questions the purpose of non-for-profit organisations. Chong (2007,p.x) puts forward support for non-profit structures in 'three commitments – to excellence and artistic integrity; to accessibility and audience development; and to public accountability and cost effectiveness. Dance companies applying for grants from the National Arts Council aspire to their value being artistic, social and economic. Pushing economic demands at the cost of innovative work often skews the reasons for the existence of non-profit Dance companies.

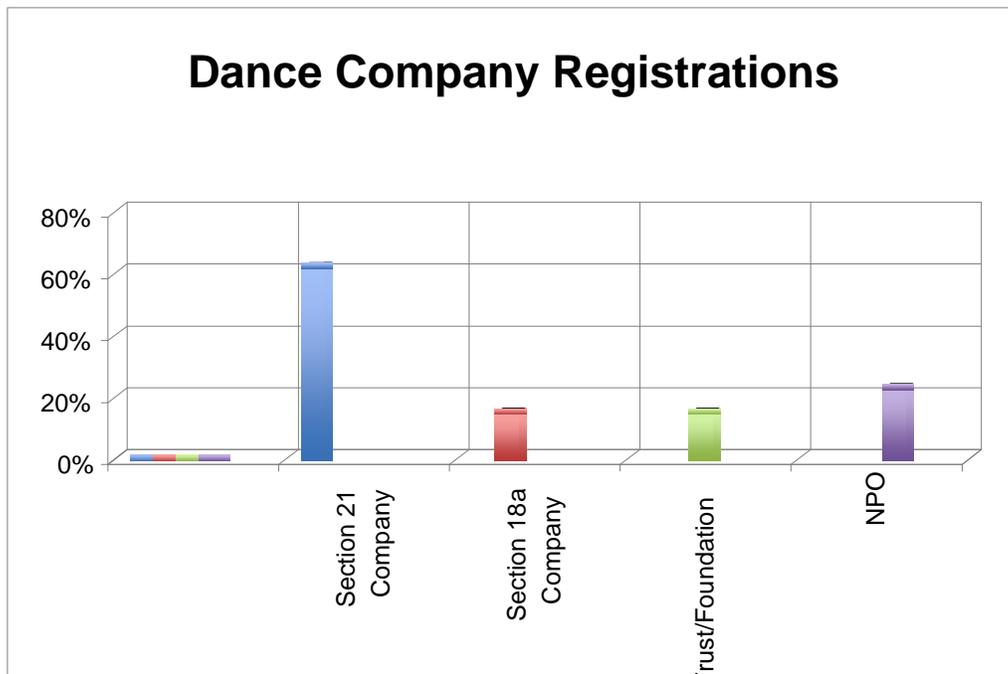
In the article *Sustainability: a new frontier for the arts and culture*, edited by Kaman and Hirschberg (2008 p.16) they make apparent specific skills that can enhance sustainability. These are useful skills and align themselves well with the idea that flexibility of mind and being open to change. They are important learning moments for young and old Arts managers towards retaining sustainability:

- Competency in foresighted thinking
- Competency in interdisciplinary work
- Competency in cosmopolitan perception
- Transcultural understanding and cooperation
- Participatory skills
- Competency in planning and implementation

- Capacity for empathy, compassion and solidarity
- Competency in self-motivation and in motivating others
- Competency in distanced reflection on individual and cultural models

All the National Arts Council three-year funded Dance companies have to be registered in the non-profit sector.

- 62% are registered as Section 21 companies (eight Dance Companies)
- 15% are also registered as Section 18a (two Dance companies)
- 15% are registered as Trusts/Foundations (two Dance companies)
- 23% are registered as NPOs (three dance companies)



The research revealed that 69% percent of Dance companies registered between 2002-2006, which indicates that they are fairly new to the governance and practice of the non-profit world. These dates and the interview question on why they registered, also show that the organisations registered when they were required to apply for National Arts Council three-year funding grants. Compliance to public legislation, good governance, plus a fast changing world economic situation holds many challenges for these newly founded legal entities. Only two(15%) Dance companies have

registered for Section 18a, which is a positive registration for all organisations that offer education with qualifying courses. Once registered as Section 18a, business can get tax benefits from giving registered organisations money.

The world attitudes on policy, governance and new business models have been strongly led by King (2006) in his book, *The Corporate Citizen – governance for all entities*, published in Johannesburg by Penguin. When King talks about ‘all entities’ he is also referring to the not-for-profit world. The construct of a ‘triple bottom’ line is an important business concern, as it shifts the business model from only viewing the economic base and pleasing the shareholders at all costs, to a model that strives to find balance between profit, the people, culture and society and the natural environment.

Businesses who embrace the ‘triple bottom line’ move away from the narrow concerns of shareholder interests to involving the broader and more generous issues of stakeholders. These businesses would need to practice what King (2006) calls ‘good governance’,

Good governance is summed up as involving, ‘fairness, accountability, responsibility and transparency on a foundation of intellectual honesty’ and against that background it is for directors to arrive at decisions which are objectively in the best interests of their companies.

King, M, 2006. *The Corporate Citizen – Governance for all Entities*. Johannesburg: Penguin

It is the ‘intellectual honesty’ that gives the not-for-profit entities credibility and value. Sustainability is built through self reflection and responsible governance.

Hunt and Shaw (January 2008), present another useful image relating to the concept of the ‘iron triangle’ where they expand ideas of balancing a ‘three-legged stool’ directly into building organisational sustainability.

The most common image used to describe sustainable arts practice or enterprise is that of the three-legged stool. One leg stands for the product (the Arts), the second leg for the operating structures it uses to make and sell the product (the operation) and the third for the way the whole is financed...If one leg is weaker than the other and breaks the stool will fall over. If one leg is shorter than the others, the stool will find it hard to fulfil its function. A sustainable structure is one in which all three legs are the same length, equal in importance and quality.

Hunt,C., and Shaw,P., 2008. Sustainable Arts Sector: What will it take? *Platform Papers, Quarterly Essays on the Performing Arts*, No 15, p. 6-7

The key research question is around notions of sustainability. Why do so many Dance Companies seem to be in constant crisis mode? Arts organisations in the United Kingdom appear to have similar instability challenges. Research by the organisation Mission Models Money (MMM) 2007 in their, *South East Dance: MMM exemplar case study*, available at <http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk> sets up what is termed, ‘the iron triangle’, where the *mission* is the prime focus. The *models* refer to legal structure, business, model and organisational capacity, and *money* explores organisations financial capacity.

The two above mentioned models show commonalities

Mission: the non-negotiable core purpose of the organisation (iron triangle)

Art: the product and/or service of the organisation (three-legged stool)

Models: your legal structure, business model, organisational capacity (iron triangle)

The operations: structures used to make and sell the product – art (three-legged stool)

Money: your financial capacity (iron triangle)

Finances: how the organisation is financed (three-legged stool)

Arts organisations often go for the monetary route thinking that funding is always a challenge and therefore having a bigger pot of money will make them more sustainable. This is a short-lived investment. Sustainability is much more than financial. It looks at the encouragement of innovative Arts product/services, continued community networking, audience involvement, flexible minds that can adapt to changing paradigms or can engage in inventing new paradigms, and active self agency. It looks at the long-term growth of present and past cultural expression, without closing the opportunities for future generations. Hunt and Shaw (2008 p.2) included the efficiency of the organisations operating systems as part of the developing a healthy organisation.

Finances and operational capacity are totally linked to the longevity of a Dance company and are often neglected when monitoring and evaluating why an organisation with an excellent artistic reputation falls over the edge. The product/service, as illuminated in an organisations mission statement, is the publically assessed element of a Dance company. Dance is peer reviewed in the media, by audience members, by dance professionals and funding bodies. In this research I will work mainly behind the scenes and place my observational lens on the 'models and money' aspects of the 'iron triangle', integrating them with the 'operations and finance' components of the three-legged stool image.



JazzArt Dance Theatre Phindile Kula and JazzArt Dancers *Cargo* Choreographed by JazzArt Dance Theatre under the direction of Alfred Hinkel Photographer Garth Stead 2007

2.2 On the Boards

Many of the 2006-2008 Dance companies are newly constituted as legal entities they are therefore freshly exposed to the concept of boards. The board is the key governance entity that guides the fiduciary responsibility and mission of an organisation. Working productively with the management the board builds a healthy organisation.

In the research some Dance companies were sure and clear of the role of the board and others were only complying to the minimum meetings and had not seen certain board members for such a long time that they become mere tokens. There are two main ideas about boards. A board can have big names to validate the organisation in being associated with them, this often happened to Non Governmental Organisations from 1970 onwards. The leading personality gives the organisation a stamp of approval but does little else to support the growth of the organisation. The second type of board works in a constant dialogue, giving time, advice, raising funds and participatory support to the organisation they are championing.

Boards differ according to the history of the organisation and nature of changes in the political climate. *Cape Town City Ballet*, the oldest Dance company in the three-year funded list has just created a new board to serve the different needs the company requires today - board processes are never static.

Kaiser (1998) speaks of the flexibility of boards in his book *Strategic Planning in the Arts: a Practical Guide* p.93,

Since Boards are agglomerations of personalities, no two are exactly alike. Nor does the Board's remain unchanged over time. In fact, the nature and roles of the Board frequently change in predictable ways as the organisation matures.

In the history of boards the young board tends to contain friends of the artistic founder who can offer moral and sometimes financial support. These board members' sometimes even volunteer time to do some of what would be regarded as staff work. With time and more permanent staff employed the role of the board will change and become more about raising money and creating a public profile. (Kaiser, 1998 p)

A well operating board is a lifesaver to sustainability in an organisation. Kaiser (1998 p.92) speaks of a board serving,

...both legal and non-legal functions. Legally the board is responsible for financial oversight, for hiring and firing artistic and administrative leadership, and for setting major policies...The board is not responsible for making specific operational or artistic decisions.

In research discussions with the Dance companies, there are some active and highly generous boards giving time advice and money but for the most the organizations are struggling with passive boards that need change. Once the

idea that a board can be a great asset to ones organisation rings home, organisations, even at present, are striving to find the appropriate members to serve them well. The concept of a good board is not put into practice enough; it would be beneficial to run workshops of board construction, roles, and board induction. Many of the newly formed and mature Dance companies could benefit from these skills, as every bit of support is need in these volatile times.

2.3 Facing Finances

Joss cites Bill Gates (2008 p. 30) discussing the nature of capitalism,

Speaking at the 2008 World Economic Forum in Davos, Bill Gates said that capitalism only worked for those who could pay. Companies had to find out how the power of the marketplace can help the poor...we need a creative capitalism where business and the non-governmental organisations work together to create a market system that eases the world's inequities.

In the years 2006-2008 according to the *National Arts Council Company Funding 2008 Annual Renewal* February 2008, presented by Thato Monamodi, the government gave the National Arts Council R 20 million Rand to be utilised on three-year company funding. Council approved R 4 650 000 for Dance company funding. The grants ranged from R150 000 to R 500 000, spread over three years. Fifteen Dance companies followed through to the final three-years contract date. Three Dance companies, for different reasons were not able to complete their contracts.

About R 247 000 was not claimed by Dance companies in this three-year cycle - an indication that some organisations are not managing the expenditure to its best advantage. The question to be asked is why does this happen? Funds not claimed will be held by the National Arts Council for special projects, which might not even be Dance projects.

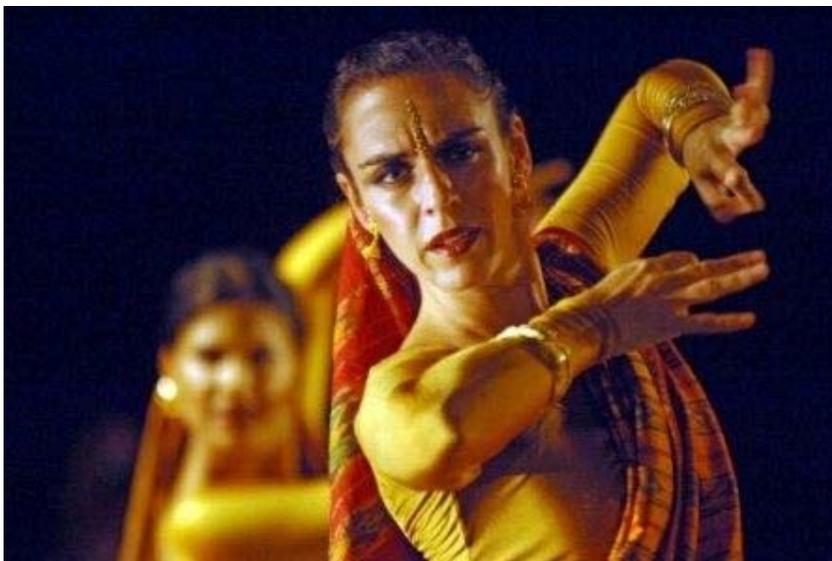
In a discussion with Goodwin Mnisi, NAC Chief Operating Officer, about how the NAC funding is divided. He stated that the full funding budget is divided as follows, 50% on projects, 30% on company funding, and 20% is ring fenced for special projects. A question arises, as the NAC is a national funding body should more money be spent on company support than on short projects? Could the provincial budgets carry most of the projects?

The world is in unstable economic times. Loyal funders often change strategies, leaving organisations stranded and cash strapped. This has shocked many Dance companies. In new funding paradigms a dependency on one specific funder is a high-risk act as this funder might have changes in priorities and then leave one unable to function. Having multiple funding bases creates a lower risk stable of possible financial supporters. In this funding stable one should try to find different types of monetary support investigating, foundations and trusts, donations, earned income, different levels of government funding, corporates, embassies etc.

The agreement between National Arts Council and successful three-year funded Dance companies applicants, states in the conditions and payment of

funds section that 15% of the grant is allocated towards administration costs and 85% of the grant is used for performances and the creation of new artistic programmes/work. With these percentages in mind it is absolutely vital that Dance organisations increase their income to be able to function with marketing and other administration costs, through raising complementary income. The organisation will be thin on staff and stress build up will increase, often impeding the true success of a good new work.

La Rosa Dance Spanish Dance Theatre and *JazzArt Dance Theatre* have a sound variety of financial resources helping them to actually grow their organisations. Unfortunately, 31% of Dance companies rely 50% or more on National Arts Council grants. These companies could place themselves at risk by putting all their financial support in one funder. There is a need to develop a wider financial base for most companies. The Dance companies interviewed put forward the desire to raise more money themselves. This is where the boards can be brought into play to help secure finances so that the artists can give quality time to making dance and illuminating the mission statement.



La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre Abbey Volks *Vlaje Flamenco* Photographer Lenore Cairncross

One of the NAC aims for Dance company funding is a 50/50% involvement with the corporate sector. On the research question about Business and Arts South Africa (BASA) and whether Dance companies used this corporate opportunity, only two out of the thirteen companies(15%) have used BASA in the last three years. Responses from Dance companies were:

- We don't know how to get to corporate sponsors
- We are not aware how to use BASA
- The rewards are too small

- We did not know about them
- We feel that our unique dance style does not suite corporates
- Corporates are difficult to find if you are not in the city

The National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund is a potential grant giver with some of the Dance companies being grateful for their support. All organisations except one declared that National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund is a difficult customer and that they are not sure how to deal with them. It seems that if the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund and Dance companies could advance communications they would be able to make the best use of these large funds.

Facing finances includes how one sets up operating systems within an organisation. Business structures and systems are changing. Many financially powerful individuals are now looking at revising their for-profit businesses – King and the ‘triple bottom line’ concept has already positioned this idea as a healthy system of governance in the for-profit sector. Looking more broadly at stakeholder involvement, the environment, people and culture and not only shareholder profits sitting in the bottom line. Non-profit organisations are ironically making a move towards more business-like operation systems. Suddenly synergies between these two types of legal entities, the non-profit and for-profit become significant and new sites of collaboration can be mapped. These mutually beneficial ventures could hold new prospects for Arts organisations.

Zohar and Marshall much like Gates, endorse change in economic systems. The non-profit Arts organisations need to keep in touch with new world economic shifts. The following quote by Zohar and Marshall states that,

...our capitalist culture and the business practices that operate within it are in crisis. I describe the global business as ‘a monster consuming itself’. This is because the underlying ethos and assumptions of capitalism, and many of the business practices that follow them, are unsustainable. Capitalism and business as we know them have no long-term future, and these limit the future of our culture at large.

Zohar, D., and Marshall, I., 2004. p 2. *Spiritual Capital – Wealth We Can Live By*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing

Financial figures seem to frighten a few Artists and Arts administrators, locking them mentally into a fixed way of interpreting numbers. A budget is an organisations narrative in figures. When the descriptive narrative opens up interpretation of the figures, new possibilities can happen. Organisations need to establish the potential in an economic crisis.

New ways of seeing and responding to numbers are the keys to sustainability and removing one from old crisis blocks,

Once we shift from looking only at the cash flow and balancing the bottom line to examining the assets on the balance sheet we will see our organisations and ourselves in new light...but it takes an entrepreneurial mindset to create resources

where none are visible. It lies hidden in the creative links yet to be made between ideas, people, projects and possibilities. We stand in the richness of connections, latent around our feet. Our dance brings new resources to life.

Cooper, C., and Dodds, R. 2007 *Invitation to an alternative future*, London: Missions, Models and Money

Financial and marketing skills are directly linked. Kaiser calls fundraising 'development' as it is about developing mutually beneficial relationships and not merely a hand-out from some outside organisation. Relationships require nurturing to be kept. To have a mature and equal relationship with a funder requires, an active, respectful and caring attitude with regular communication. Marketing and fundraising are inseparable as the success of one depends on the success of the other. Common features between Kaiser's idea on fundraising as 'development' and relationship marketing are made apparent in the following definition of relationship marketing that states,

It emphasises the importance customer service and quality and developing a series of transactions with consumers.

<http://www.sitepoint.com/article/marketing-success>

Relationship marketing is a humanist philosophy that is directly part of new operational business systems. The Arts, financial and operational legs of the 'three-legged stool' construct, is a nexus with all parts affecting each other and the whole organisation.

2.4 Communications, Marketing and Building Identity

Kotler and Scheff (1997 p. ix) in the United States of America talk of the struggle non-profit organisations have, they see this daily in newspaper headlines: 'Is the Symphony Orchestra Dying?' and 'Dancing Precariously on the Bottom Line'. This Arts dilemma is more wide spread than in South Africa.

Marketing is a philosophy that opens communication and builds bridges with artists and audiences. 'The role of the Arts organisation is to serve as liaison, as facilitator, as distribution channel between artists and audiences: therefore it must be sensitive to both, Kotler and Scheff (1997 p.25)

Dance is an ephemeral Art and therefore requires alert and active marketing. There is no inventory, once a performance is over the empty seats are irretrievable losses. The live arts also have bounded income, which is restricted to the number of seats that a theatre can take. In the case of public performance events without ticket sales, the commission to make them is the defined income. Performance, unlike the more flexible times of an Art gallery, has a fixed time when you can see it. Art galleries are open all day giving customers a wider range of times to experience the Art. In a busy and highly competitive Arts world one has to be mindful of the restrictions on time and space that can inhibit attendance of potential audience members. Getting the marketing philosophy in sync with the needs of the Dance organisation and the environment, in which it happens, is part of successful income and identity building.

Kaiser believes that to run a successful Arts organisation one strives for 'good Art, well marketed' (2008 p.4). There are often misunderstandings about marketing with Arts organisations saying they don't want to be a 'sell out' to commercial enterprise as the heart of a non-profit is to serve the mission statement, which is to support some specific societal need. Today a non-profit has to balance the books and try to make a surplus to carry them over in difficult times or to grow the organisation. There are no charitable guarantees. Marketing philosophies that compliment the ethos of the non-profit can be established and can be part of their operations system.

BASA News Issue 26 August 2007 cautions us on consumerism leading us into a soulless world of materialism. The BASA newsletter quotes Professor Cilliers,

We are living in a largely instrumental world where marketing values determine our existence. There is nothing wrong with that, but we are possibly losing our humanity.

The philosophy of relationship marketing has the possibility, if used sincerely, to bring back and heighten 'our humanity'. Relationship marketing brings the 'people' element of the marketing mix into close focus – value to people in a mutually beneficial dialogue – people working in the organisations and the many stakeholders outside the organisations. Relationship marketing is more than a set of tools that brings sales to an organisation – communication and human participation is in its essence.

Heather Maitland, an Arts marketer and consultant talking at the PANSA/BASA Arts and Culture Marketing Conference (2003) sees marketing communication as, 'Talking to the right people, at the right time, in the right way, about the right things.' This is a simple mantra but to get it to work successfully requires a great deal of research and heightened communication skills.

Publicity on the other hand focuses on informing and selling. Publicity is very often free. *Vuyani Dance Theatre* as an example, have made publicity their chief organisation identity builder and the strongest means in which they keep the public aware of their programming. They have built sincere, professional and respectful relationships with many different print and electronic media outlets. These are relationships they nurtured for future events and have brought them much success.

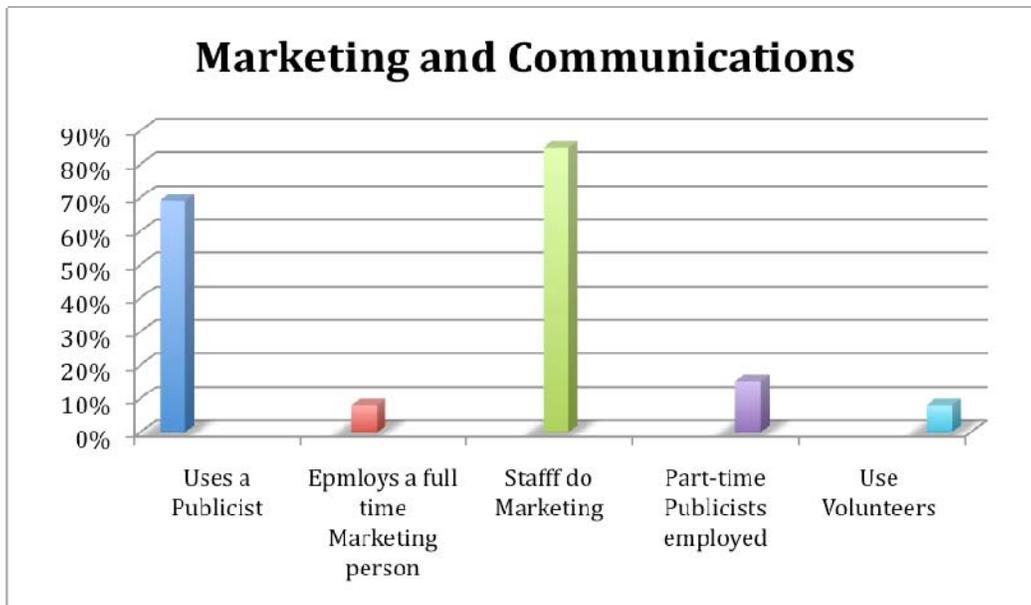


Vuyani Dance Theatre Gregory Maqoma *Beautiful Me* Choreographer Gregory Maqoma Director Gerard Bester
Photographer John Hogg 2007

Publicity is very often free, it all too often becomes a 'bolt on activity' when the Arts organisation has a performance or some public offering. There is a rush of publicity action and then after the performance...nothing. Shortages of cash, lack of planning, limited marketing skills, few opportunities for arts marketing training and finally understanding the fundamental importance of marketing research for customer retention, is lost in the quick fix publicity option.

- 69% of the three-year funded Dance companies use a publicist at production times
- One company 8% has a fulltime marketing employee
- 15% two companies have part-time workers
- 85% percent of the organisations use internal staff to support and develop the marketing
- 8% one organisation uses volunteers.

With these results logged mainly in the publicist arena and showing little understanding of the financial benefits of marketing, it is clear why most Dance companies have not engaged with the corporate sector or used the marketing potential of BASA grants.



Kaiser (2008 p 8,9) looks at the production publicity as ‘programmatic marketing’ and organisations get energised when they can see the direct income from their efforts in the form of ticket sales. If Dance companies placed time and value into ‘institutional marketing’ they would have longer term investments in their organisation and in the end would spend less on ‘programmatic marketing’ as customers would have already bought into the value of the institution, and are likely to trust their work.

Retaining customers is an important relationship marketing guiding principle. Arts entities need to know their audience base to be able to fulfil this requirement. Very few Dance companies have good and up to date databases of their audiences; this is because they do little or no audience research. The integration between the financial and operating legs of the sustainability stool needs attention in most of the Dance companies

Hill, O’Sullivan and O’Sullivan (2003 p.1) support the humanist view that,

Arts marketing is an integrated management process, which sees mutually satisfying relationships with customers as the route to achieving organisational and artistic objectives.

The words ‘integrated management’ and ‘mutual relationships’ are keys to a healthy organisation.

Relationship marketing is important as it:

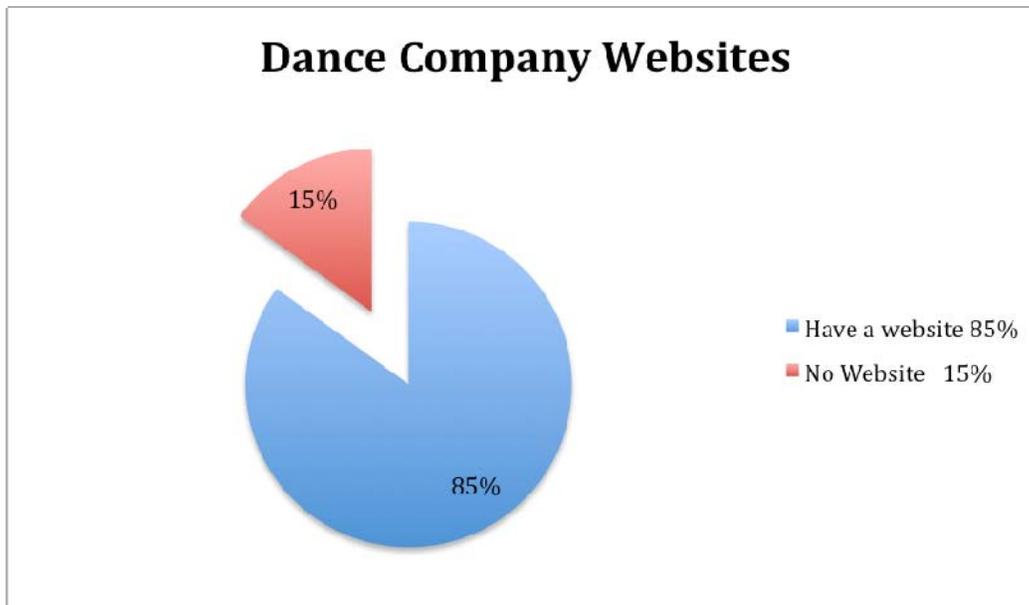
- Builds partnerships with established, new and potential audiences
- Promotes effective planning strategies and sound implementation
- Reduces organisations financial risk

- Stimulates the positive and effective use of artistic, financial and educational resources
- Encourages organisational growth and sustainability, both internally and externally

The most common marketing tool for most Dance companies is word of mouth. Firstly it is free and an endorsement from another person carries much more value than a flyer or poster, as there is a human element in the transfer of information. The word of mouth process can be extended professionally into an Arts ambassador programme where company supporters help to bring in new audiences who might have physical or psychological barriers to the theatre or performance experience.

National Arts Council Three-year Dance Companies 2006-2008		Websites
Cape Town City Ballet <i>Western Cape</i>	www.capetowncityballet.org.za	
First Physical Theatre Company <i>Eastern Cape Province</i>	www.ru.ac.za/firstphysical	
Flatfoot Dance Company <i>KwaZulu Natal</i>	www.ukzn.ac.za/department/extra.asp?id=5&dept=dramperfund	
JazzArt Dance Theatre <i>Western Cape</i>	www.jazzart.co.za/	
La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre <i>Western Cape</i>	www.larosa.co.za/home/index.html	
Masutsa Dance Theatre <i>Free State Province</i>		
Moving into Dance <i>Gauteng Province</i>	www.midance.co.za	
Namjive <i>Northern Cape</i>	Care of JazzArt	
RK Dance Theatre <i>Gauteng Province</i>		
Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre <i>Kwa Zulu Natal</i>	www.yale.edu/summer/abroad/Swaziland/SIWELA_SONKE_profile.pdf	
Tribhangi Dance Theatre <i>Gauteng Province</i>	www.jamally.co.za/tribhangi.htm	
Unomthadazo Theatre Company <i>Gauteng Province</i>		
Vuyani Dance Theatre <i>Gauteng Province</i>	www.vuyani.co.za	

- Eleven Dance companies 85% have websites
- Two Dance companies 15% have no websites



Most, not all, organisations use posters and flyers. Printed media is costly organisations are moving into the electronic medium where they can. *Namjive* in the Northern Cape, where Internet, computer and bandwidth are not sufficient for their company administration requirements, have to use the printed medium. Marketing should be cogniscant of environmental challenges and find the most appropriate way to each old and potentially new customer. Three organisations 23%, have set up face book communications, these work in university and urban environments where people have regular access to computers. It is a tool to capture young audiences. *JazzArt Dance Theatre* has opened their work into the non-live space of YouTube.

Participatory relationship marketing processes that came out of the research were: a friends table at performances, setting up personal urban and rural networks, audience development lectures, open door rehearsals and talks with the public after performances. Kotler and Scheff (1997 p. 18) put forward the idea that some, 'Art requires listeners and viewers who want to participate and, not just consume'. The experience economy has a participatory customer base where being entertained is simply not enough. There are many, many entertainment choices but an Arts event that can offer something of more value will satisfy these growing number of customers.

Kaiser (2008 p.10) stresses the point that public communication 'must be positive'; keep away from gossip that is negative. He states that, 'The message for each arts organisation must focus on its reason for being, its mission...plan to support the mission rather than the latest financial crisis...' The Dance companies who worked to build audience participation will increase their institutional identity and they will be seen as an organisation that cares beyond the time of the performance. Be Art-driven rather than debt-driven. (Kotler and Scheff 1997 p. 20)

Finding the appropriate marketing approach requires debate. A fully Arts-centred approach to marketing would lead to difficulties with the work being esoteric so that only a few people can access it. The vital communication with the receivers of the work could feel left out of the experience. Today many contemporary Dance audiences want an experience and want to be active participants rather than being passively fed Arts productions. If one follows a purely customer-centred approach, artists will feel that they have to compromise their work to sell. Kotler has posited that two concepts or approaches 'Art-centred and customer-centred' work together finding a way to move relevantly from one approach to the other, when appropriate. Marketing does not have to be an either or fixed approach. It is the relationship and collaboration between the operations of making, distributing and consuming that is of most importance. (Kotler and Scheff 1997, p.18)

2.5 Re-search

Very few of the Dance companies have set out to do audience research. How can one communicate with the 'right people' if one does not know who they are? Once research of ones audiences has taken place and your product /service is known, one can deliver effective marketing, and set up meaningful marketing objectives. *JazzArt Dance Theatre* used its annual report to reflect much of the company's position. The 2007- 2008 annual report is not only a visual treat but it holds vital information for institutional marketing and powerful self-reflections of their organisations.

Looking at Dance companies in a turnaround mode, Kaiser (2008 p.xi) reiterates that,

When one cuts artistic initiative and marketing, one cuts the very reason people supply revenue to the arts organisation. Audience members and donors are attracted to exciting, important work; their interest is confirmed by attention generated by marketing efforts. When art and marketing are sacrificed to balance budgets, the organisation virtually always suffers a loss in revenue. This results in more cutting, more 'savings', more losses, and a vicious spiral is created that has damaged more Arts organisations than one can count.

Kaiser has worked with *Alvin Ailey America Dance Theatre*, *Martha Graham Company*, and *The Royal Ballet, Covent Garden* as a turnaround consultant. In all three cases mentioned he used his business philosophy to bring the organisations into a position where they could balance their books and retaining their artistic merit.

Chapter Three: Speak Out

In the process of qualitative research the 2006-2008 three-year funded Dance companies were asked about their experiences with the National Arts Council. They all followed the same question and added where they had felt the National Arts Council had worked professionally and where they felt improvement could help all concerned. The research writing has clustered like-minded ideas into three categories namely; the National Arts Council, Arts Management and Policy. If a similar idea is mentioned by the participants more than once, it is only placed in the writing once. The research question below was an open question to invite different opinions and replies.

Many of the qualitative answers also tell the reader how the particular Dance organisation is functioning in terms of the balancing the three legs of the sustainability 'stool model' (Hunt and Shaw 2008 p.6)

3.1 Answers to the National Arts Council Research Questions.

Research Question: What are your thoughts on the improvement or changes to NAC three-year company funding?

Answers:

3.1.1 Positive Communication with NAC

- In our first in-depth visit we were able to connect with the NAC and talk to the partners. *Cape Town City Ballet*
- The NAC (Thato) has been to see the work at the National Arts Festival, and met with Prof Gary Gordon to keep dialogue open. *First Physical Theatre Company*
- Keep the trust that you have built over the years. *Moving into Dance*
- Company Funding helps to plan, which in turn, helps the future. *First Physical Theatre Company*
- The three-year funding helps plan ahead to maintain a sustainable flow. *FlatFoot Dance Company*
- We are thankful for you [the NAC] for empowering us to run our own organization, especially for giving Namjive our own bank account. It has given us independence. With this independence comes responsibility! We have pressure with the administration. *Namjive*
- The NAC has improved in its delivery. *JazzArt Dance Theatre* does not believe that the government needs to provide all syndrome.

3.1.2 Communication with the NAC that Requires Review

The names of the Dance Companies have been withheld in this and all following sections.

- Application compliance needs support through knowing the criteria.
- Funding information for successful and unsuccessful applicants should all come out on the same date.
- There needs to be a better information system implemented about who has received funding. Reading in the newspaper is an insulting way to receive this news. Our relationship of trust, with the NAC, is broken.
- A template needs to be created to help guide research and feedback.
- Mentorships need to be conducted to grow arts management skills.
- We need assistance in sorting out dedicated premises.

3.2 Arts Management Section

3.2.1 Marketing

- We need a deeper knowledge about marketing, and skills on how to write to the media.
- We would like to know how to best use and create a website.
- One of our challenges is creating stories for the press.

3.2.2 Fundraising

- We need guidance in raising other sponsors.
- Workshop on the 'Lotto'.
- Funds, which will be professionally administered, are needed to keep a stable of 30 dancers.
- Our challenges include: waiting for National Lottery Distribution Fund money, few corporate sponsors, little use of BASA, and skilled fundraisers on the staff.

3.3 Policy

- Government does not need to fund projects entirely – subsidies will suffice. We suggest a five-year subsidy with strong monitoring at the end of the third year. We should have the ability to make new work, and need to be encouraged to collaborate.
- The NAC needs to include money for touring in its funding paradigms.
- Funding sometimes arrives late and causes a rollover into the next year. A mechanism to deal with this efficiently is needed in the NAC.
- As the companies grow and the cost of living rises, the grants need to increase. NAC funding is very small.
- It is the artist's responsibility to seek knowledge, be alert to what is going on socially and politically, and maintain a broad picture of the industry.
- Organisations need to build a track record, through projects, before receiving three-year funding.
- Stronger communication between government departments is needed.
- All arts funders need to collaborate with funding cycles.
- Site visits for Company Funding is important.



Tribhangi Dance Theatre Nhlanhla Zwane Mxolisi Ngwenya Sibusiso Kubeka
Choreographer Jayesperi Moopen Photographer John Hogg 2009

3.4 Who Spoke Out

The following organizations and individuals contributed to the research.

Total Number of people who attended interview = 56

Cape Town City Ballet

1. Elizabeth Triegaardt: Executive Director
2. Sandra Prosalendis: Fundraising Director

First Physical Theatre Company

1. Prof Gary Gordon: Artistic Director
2. Tshegofatso Tlholeo: Education Coordinator/performer
3. Juanita Finestone-Praeg: Artistic Director
4. Alan Parker: Company Manager and Fund Raiser/ Performer
5. Richard Antrobus: Company Administration, Marketing/Performance
6. Prof Hendricks: Board Member
7. Ingrid Gordon: Affiliates in Design and Performance
8. Acty Tang: Affiliates in Design and Performance

Flatfoot Dance Company

1. Liane Loots: Artistic Director

Jazzart Dance Theatre

1. Alfred Hinkel: Artistic and Executive Director
2. Johan Davis: Marketing and Fundraising
3. Marche Carstens: Company Manager
4. Jacqueline Manyapela: Artistic Director Designate

La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre

1. Carolyn Holden:

2. Beth Shapiro: Position not given
3. Zethu Mtati: Position not given

Masutsa Dance Theatre

1. Ntsani Mopheli: Artistic director
2. Tshidiso Motaung: Project Manager
3. Tshepiso Phethlu: Resident choreographer
4. Thami Maseli: Chairperson of the board

Moving into Dance

1. Sylvia Glasser: Acting Director
2. Lindiwe Taubata: Receptionist
3. Jabulani Nyandeni: Projects Administrator
4. Busi Radebe: Financial Administration
5. Nadia Virasamy: Director of Education
6. Themba Nkabinda: Deputy artistic Director
7. Mandisa Dangazele: Operations Management
8. Thabo Sebathelo: Technical Administrator

Namjive

1. Dawn Langdown: Artistic Director
2. May Wagner: Project Coordinator
3. Sandra August: Project Administrator
4. Viola Wilson: Trainee
5. Jerome Jafhta: Trainee
6. Roshin Knop: Trainee
7. Vincent Charula: Trainee
8. Betrum Isaks: Company Member and Teacher
9. Christopher Samuels: Company Member and Teacher
10. Malissa Rhoda: Company Member and Teacher
11. Esme Marthinus: Company Member and Teacher
12. Nicholas van Zyl: Chairman of the Board

RK Dance Theatre

1. Dr Vinod Hasal: Director

Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre

1. Ntombi Gasa: Teacher, Dancer, Choreographer and Director
2. Nelly: Teacher, dancer, Choreographer and Company Manager
3. Jay Pather: Artistic Director

Tribhangi Dance Theatre

1. Jayesperi Moopen: Artistic Director

Unomthandazo Theatre Company

1. Nomthandazo Hlongwane: Artistic Director, Dancer
2. Themba Mwahla: Treasurer, Dancer

Vuyani Dance Theatre

1. Gregory Maqoma: Artistic Director
2. Sikho Malinga: Company Manager

National Arts Council

1. Julie Diphofu Manager: Arts Development
2. Thato Monamodi: Arts Development Officer (Company Funding)
3. Martin Schonberg: Chairman of the elected Dance Panel
4. Goodwin Mnisi: Chief Operating Officer

Emeritus Professor F. Hagemann

Vikki Karras: Director of Tshwane Dance Theatre



FlatFoot Dance Company Sifiso Khumalo S'fiso Ngcobo Vusi Makanya Shayna de Kock, Nobuhle Khawula
Jabu Siphika *Zukubuyiswa Ngubani Na?* Choreographed by Sifiso Khumalo
Photographer Val Adamson 2008



Namjive Ilse Caroll *Ek is wie ek is* Choreographed by Dawn Langdown Photographer Giovanni Sterelli 2009

Chapter Four: Re-positioning Recommendations for the NAC

4.1 Dancing Dialogue

The Dance company participants were generous with interview time, bringing reports, and many relevant experiences to share. The individuals carry with them dedication and patience, working under difficult conditions, yet very few of them would wish to follow another vocation. This research will make written suggestions for the future. The suggestions are not resolutions, a larger consensus would be needed to prioritise the urgency and find ways to implement any ideas written about. The Dance company research is an open process that should continue to promote a secure future and give the National Arts Council an overview of how the Dance companies are operating in early 2009.

4.2 Opening Policy and Operations

4.2.1 Much misunderstanding was created in the 2009 three-year funding as the categories were undefined in the advert and the Dance companies did not know the final selection criteria. A wider transparency could have avoided confusion, time and mistrust. An issue to review.

4.2.2 The National Arts Council has set up a Dance peer panel to review work. It is only the Chairman of the Dance panel that reads the Dance company applications for ranking and presenting to the chairs of all the other panels. One wonders if this is the most favourable process when, the Dance panels' support for Dance and the chairperson itself is left out of the Dance company selection process. Dance companies would be grateful to have this process discussed.

4.2.3 Open up to new Dance companies by ensuring that when they apply, they are closely monitored for two to three projects. New organisations need to know what the responsibilities for company funding well in advance.

4.2.4 Persuading provincial and local governments, who are not contributing, to set up Arts budgets and a manner for transparent disbursement. There need to be government and artist pressure groups around the matter, as it is hindering the growth of the Arts in many of the areas, and places an unnatural burden on the National Arts Council.

4.3 Reporting Template

4.3.1 Many Dance companies are not sure about the contents for the final descriptive narrative reports. They write what they feel you would like to know and not necessarily what is needed.

4.3.2 A guiding and well thought out template is helpful for the National Arts Council to gather information that would give indications of the impact of work

they subsidise. National Arts Council organisational research can come out of useful templates.

4.3.3 The Dance companies themselves could use a document like this to do their own self-assessment. So as not to be too restrictive one can have open qualitative sections. It would be an active template that is not simply a tick list of compliance requirements.

4.4 Workshops – Management and Arts Skills Learning

4.4.1 Areas where training request have come up in the research, is in marketing, board management, fundraising, identifying and reaching corporates, financial statement interpretation (linking budget and mission), how to work with BASA.

4.4.2 Arts management and artistic directors require leadership training to hold the new generation in good stead.

4.4.3 Artists themselves wish for choreographic, theory, lighting, design, website knowledge, database building and technique skills training opportunities.

4.5 Communications

4.5.1 Dance companies enjoy the National Arts Council seeing their work and visiting their organisations. The public does understand that there has been a moratorium on leaving the National Arts Council office and that has reflected on their ability to travel. Another factor that impeded monitoring companies is the time the office work takes leaves few hours to facilitate visits.

Regular communication with Dance companies is always welcome, an email or a telephone call. Connections with the National Arts Council clients and the general public have potential.

4.5.2 A regular newsletter would do much to keep all aware of the Arts energies going on inside and outside the National Arts Council office. The 2006-2008 Dance companies did not know who some of their fellow grant-awarded companies were!

4.5.3 Being a three-year funded Dance company implies prestige and recognition that can be used on the companies marketing materials. South Africans should know who the companies are, and be able to identify them clearly. Some companies are sadly more recognised overseas than they are on their home soil.

4.5.4 There should be press packs on these companies at the National Arts Council for publicity. The Dance companies have professional photographs that would do any Arts council proud.

4.5.5 How does the Department of Foreign Affairs deal with promoting South African Dance companies? Do they have brochures in their consulates? Government to government support is useful for South African Dance companies.

4.6 Spreading the Dance

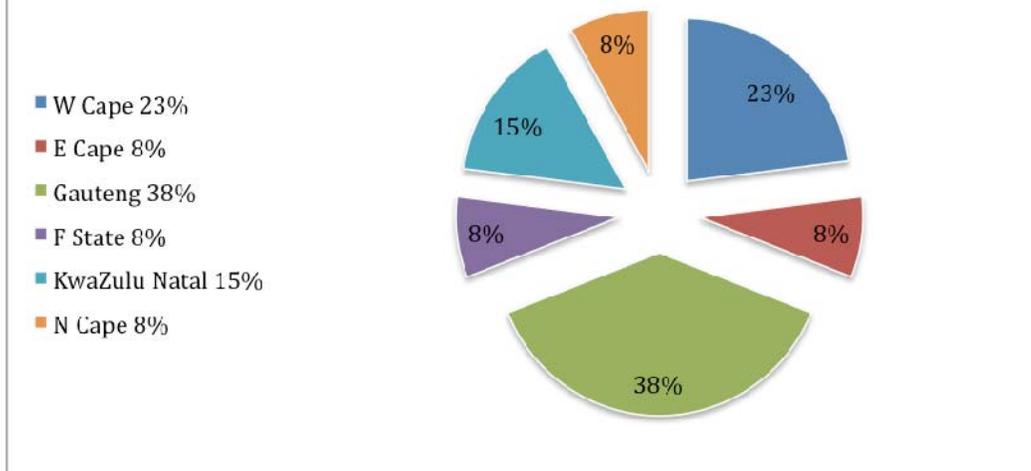
4.6.1 The big gaps between urban and rural Dance organisations are of concern to all. There need to be ways to constructively change this situation. Intervention projects set in a fixed timeframe for three-years could be created to do this work.

Dance Company Organisation	Town	Province
Cape Town City Ballet	Cape Town	W.Cape
First Physical Theatre Company	Grahamstown	E. Cape
FlatFoot Dance Company	Durban	KZN
JazzArt Dance Theatre	Cape Town	W.Cape
La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre	Cape Town	W.Cape
Masutsa Dance Theatre	Qwa Qwa	Free State
Moving into Dance	Johannesburg	Gauteng
Namjive	Okiep	N.Cape
R K Dance Theatre	Johannesburg	Gauteng
Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre	Durban	KZN
Tribhangi Dance Theatre	Johannesburg	Gauteng
Unomthandazo Theatre Company	Vaal	Gauteng
Vuyani Dance Theatre	Johannesburg	Gauteng

The Provincial distribution is as follows:

- Western Cape three companies
- Eastern Cape one company
- Gauteng Province five companies
- Northern Cape one company
- Free State one company
- KwaZulu Natal two companies

Dance Companies Present in Provinces



Limpopo, NW Province and Mpumalanga have no three-year funded Dance companies. Three out of nine provinces indicates that one third of our country needs support to change the inherent geographical privileged positioning.

4.6.2 Creating a budget for touring small works to specific provinces would be a way to set up advocacy for Dance. Pairing successful and growing organisations is another option. This has worked very well with *JazzArt Dance Theatre* in Cape Town, Western Province and *Namjive* in Okiep, Northern Cape.

4.6.3 Dance companies go to festivals to show their work. They also have short seasons in their hometowns. How could the performance length of a new work be extended and seen in non-festival environments? Could the Cultural Institution meet together and use festivals as a place to book and share tours of good work?

Conclusion

A strong movement has happened with redress in Dance company funding. The pendulum has swung since the Nationalist Party 1963 subsidies for Classical Ballet. Two contemporary dance companies *JazzArt Dance Theatre* and *Moving into Dance*, who started in the 1970's with no government funding, are now the strongest funded Dance companies in the National Arts Council stable.

The four aims set out for Dance companies by the NAC have been well met.

They are to:

- Encourage and promote excellence in the arts
- Encourage creation and presentation of indigenous arts

- Stimulate job creation
- Enthuse the private sector to match the grant on a 50/50 basis

Company Funding Report – compiled by Julie Diphofa November 2005

Excellent Dance is happening in South Africa. New forms of indigenous South African Dance are being created in the works, recognising and re-shaping traditions. More regular jobs have been created with the three-year funding. Finding a multi-levelled funding base remains a challenge for many organisations and this is a serious concern. The **product/Arts** are good, the **financial and operational** legs of the sustainability stool require serious attention.

South Africa has a vibrant Dance community which makes challenging, innovate and award winning work, much in demand in South Africa, Europe, Asia, Africa and America, but if some organisation don't get a life line to self sustainability we could all see a very different picture soon. The time for transformation is urgent.



First Physical Theatre Donna Crump Sifiso Majola Anna Morris Diogo de Lima Richard Antrobus Alan Parker
 Tshegofatso Thloloe *Ozmandias* Choreographed by Gary Gordon and John Allan Directed by Acty Tang
 Photographer Stef de Klerk 2008

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7. NAC Annual Report 2006
8. NAC Annual Report 2007
9. NAC Annual Report 2008
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Interviews

Julie Diphofa Manager Arts Development
Martin Schonberg Chairman of the Dance Panel
Thato Monamodi Arts Development Officer for Company Funding

Appendix A

2006 2008 NAC Three Year Dance Company Interview Questions

Name of Dance Company

Names of people attending the interview and their role in the company

A. Board

1. How is the company registered?
2. List the numbers of years the company has worked as a registered company
3. List the number of years the company has been in existence
4. List the board members and their roles
5. How do board members interpret their roles? Are they active? If yes give examples of how they help.
6. How do the board and management work together?

B. Marketing

1. List what marketing tools you use.
2. How much of your budget is given to marketing?
3. How much time is spent on marketing?
4. Do you have a dedicated marketing person?
5. How does the marketing integrate with the mission statement
6. What do you know about relationship marketing?

C. Funding

1. List and describe your funders
2. Do you use BASA? If not why?
3. How do you make earned income?
4. Have you tried to get new markets/audiences? If yes, how did you do this?
5. What % of your funding is from the NAC?

What are your thoughts on improvement or change to NAC three-year company funding?