Community arts and the struggle for an inclusive South Africa

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Introduction

The underlying thesis in this paper is that community arts in principle can contribute to political, cultural, social en economical change in a wide variety of ways, and thus contribute to transformation towards an inclusive society. There is sufficient evidence showing how community arts made such contributions under apartheid, and continues to do so, albeit under different circumstances and with changed foci, in the democratic South Africa. The impact of the arts on economic and social development—and particularly active participation in art activities— has been reported elsewhere (Matarasso 1997; Arts Council England 2004). However, there are limitations and challenges to community arts, and the real or potential contributions are often contested, simply not realised or not sustainable. The focus of this paper will be on the challenges which community arts in South Africa face in their contribution to the current transformation towards an inclusive society. The arguments will be grouped around three questions:

1. What are the key issues in the transformation of South Africa towards an inclusive society?
2. How can community arts in South Africa contribute to sustainable transformation?
3. What are the challenges to community arts projects in their contribution towards an inclusive South Africa.

1. What are the key issues in the transformation of South Africa towards an inclusive society?

The apartheid legacy

Despite ten years of democracy, South Africa today is in many respects a divided and exclusive society. The country is in the midst of transformation, with much uncertainty about how an inclusive South Africa will be achieved, and how it will look. For a large part of the population the impact of institutionalised apartheid is still felt in their exclusion from those goods and services that are generally considered valuable for sustainable livelihoods (Saloojee 2001). This legacy could be summarised as follows: (ANC 1994 pt 1.2)

- For over a century South African life – at least for the majority - was dominated by colonialism, racism and apartheid. A minority government used laws and its security forces to exclude Africans from national political processes, ultimately including physical oppression and imprisonment. This led eventually to waves of violence in which thousands died and a culture of violence as a solution of problems was entrenched.
- Housing, education, health and welfare, were racially segregated and unequally resourced due to discrimination, resulting in

compartmentalisation of life and the mind, underdevelopment of rural and black townships, and exclusion from land, services and employment opportunities. Much of this segregation still persists today, continuing the resulting loss of dignity and inhibiting individuals' link to mainstream life. The country experiences high levels of criminality and insecurity, and pervasive prejudice and distrust between cultural groups.

- The South African economy was built on systematically enforced racial divisions in the labour sector characterised by an exclusion of blacks from higher level (and better paid) jobs, by restrictive access to training, and through unequal wages and benefits. Rural Bantustans became dumping sites for the unemployed or the home for families whose fathers and sons worked in the cities or on farms. This inequality led to a dual economy, segregated labour markets and structural unemployment.
- Western cultural paradigms and values dominated society in those areas where welfare was created: the education system, places of social interaction and main industries. African values were encouraged in the Bantustans, but were often used to exclude African people from mainstream culture. Through the segregation of institutions and infrastructure, and discrimination in the allocation of resources, African cultural expressions were marginalised and intercultural exchange prevented. Through strict information control in the media, people's minds were colonised.
- Political, economic, social and cultural exclusions are usually interwoven (Roskilde 13). The result was, and still is to a large extent, a politically, socially, economically and culturally divided country, where many people are still living within the 'vicious cycle of exclusion and disadvantage" (Salojee 2001:3). A discussion, therefore, of the contribution of community arts centres to transformation will have to take these sectors into account.

The impact of globalisation

In addition to this legacy, South Africa as a developing country has been experiencing the impact of globalisation since the late years of apartheid and the suspension of the international boycotts. Despite the availability of natural resources and assets, the economy is still largely determined by international corporations and highly industrialised countries that dominate the so-called 'free markets'. The impact of globalisation had a major impact on social and cultural development in two ways. First, the corrosive influence of Americanisation of culture and a tendency towards individualism, second, the need to satisfy markets for diverse cultural products, and a renewed awareness of diversity (Chidester 2003:2).

Transformation towards an inclusive society

South Africa goes through a turbulent transformation process, which aims to move the country from a deeply divided society to one in which "diverse people unite: (motto on the national coat of arms; Chidester 297).

Transformation has indeed become a key issue, with a tendency to become an objective in its own right, separate from critical analysis of the impact of various transformation processes. The transformation process itself is dynamic, with shifting positions of major role players, such as the government and unions, around issues such as labour, black empowerment, human rights and cultural diversity. This transformation process includes all sectors of life, political, social, economic, cultural en environmental. The underlying principles of transformation are summarised in the preamble of our Constitution, stating *inter alia* that we:

- Recognise the injustices of our past;
- Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity
- Aim to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
- Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society
- Improve the quality of life all citizens and free the potential of each person; and
- Build a untied and democratic South Africa

In the South African democratic context transformation aims for (RSA 1994):

- Equality for the law, in access to jobs and education, and requiring respect and tolerance
- Redistribution of resources, institutions, land and wealth
- Restructuring of institutions, the law, leading to social cohesion and inclusion
- Justice, in all legal matters, but also social justice

Foci in the struggle towards an inclusive South Africa

A number of foci have emerged in the struggle for transformation towards an inclusive South Africa. Most of the foci are determined by government strategies and policies for growth and development (RSA 1994; RSA 1996b), but the foci are also grounded in the broader debates around democratisation and nation-building, which have been taking place since the 1950s.

The first focus deals with the establishment of new democratic systems and legislation to provide for equality, redistribution and restructuring, e.g. the formulation of the South African Bill of Rights as enshrined in the Constitution and the legal system. The results are reflected in attempts to increase poor people's access to basic services and infrastructure (housing, water, electricity, communication), quality education and jobs and equal opportunities in the economic sector. Community arts are viewed as important entry points of cultural democratisation (see below). However, gaps remain between policies and their implementation and between theory and practice. It is clear that formal policies do not necessarily change people's minds and action (Pretorius 2003) and that practices in labour, the economy and service provision often remain inequal. In addition, particularly at local government level — where community arts take place —implementation is often insufficient due to a lack of human capacity and resources, and increasing

levels of self-promotion and corruption. In addition, particularly poor people lack the ability to negotiate for better treatment or leverage in the political sphere.

A second, economic, focus is around employment creation, narrowing the gap between the "first" and "second" economies, the redistribution of wealth, the tension between neo-liberal economics and trade unions, and the impact of HIV/AIDS on the economy. South Africa has a dual economy, a dual labour market and a society divided in *haves* and *have nots*. The need to link the 'first economy" and the "second economy" has become a core issue in presidential and ministerial speeches (Mbeki 2004, 2005). However, this attempt to fill the gap is marred by a pervasive competitiveness, which has become the prime objective not just of enterprises but also of society as a whole (Petrella in Bessis, 1995:18). As a result the power of trade unions has decreased substantially and the main national forum for negotiations between government, trade unions and civil society (Nedlac) has lately become almost non-functional. The rich increasingly fortify their positions through physical and economic means, often in an attempt to protect their property against crime (e.g. restricted access to their neighbourhoods). The poor are negatively affected by the industries' demand for higher skills (which the poor lack) and the impact of HIV/AIDS (between 15 and 24% of the South African population is HIV positive). The Gini Coefficient remains one of the highest in the world (.61).

In the social sphere the focus is on two main areas: a) the increase of social cohesion, social capital formation and identity formation, and b) reducing poverty by providing welfare support by the state. Social cohesion is built in two ways. First, in an attempt to reconcile the historical social rifts, government emphasises the need for a national identity, e.g. in the president's State of the Nation speeches (Mbeki, 2004; Chidester, 2003: 295), and a shared future through a social contract of citizenship (Roefs, 2004). A major role in reconciliation was played by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is believed that an increased alliance to a national identity will consolidate our new democracy, lead to a growing respect for human dignity and tolerance, to increased levels of political participation and the waning of all forms of discrimination (Chidester 2003:295). At the same time, there is an increasing demand for recognition of cultural diversity within the one nation, e.g. in the demand for mother-tongue education in all eleven official languages, and the establishment of a Commission for the Protection and Promotion of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (Emmett & Hagg 2000). The tension between a South African national identity and cultural group membership is part of an ongoing debate about the 'rainbow nation' concept. However, there is a need for more clarity on the notions that are used in the debates, such as social cohesion, inclusion, identity and social capital. The demand for welfare provision the state is a reaction to persistent poverty, loss of income due to HIV/AIDs (death of breadwinners), and an exclusion from basic services, career development and markets. Welfare support through children and pensioners grants presently reaches over 7 million people, and prevents a total collapse in poor communities. In many cases whole families of up to 10 members depend on the pension. On the

other hand the grant system is abused at a large scale by officials, of whom over 40,000 are presently investigated for fraude.

Of particular importance to our subject (i.e. community arts) is the role of culture in society. The abuse of the government-enforced cultural identity based on race and ethnicity under apartheid has made the concept and practice of cultural promotion unnameable during the 1970-1990s, except in a critical way. Since 1990 cultural identity has re-emerged in the political debates as a major issue for a number of reasons. First, local culture is seen as an antidote to the impact of globalisation and Westernisation. Global culture, mainly Americanisation, has made major inroads particularly among youth in South Africa. Status symbols, such as cars, cellphones and other material goods, have become important tools for social identity formation. Government has accepted the challenges of international "free" markets for economic reasons. However, in the cultural arena local cultural identity is actively promoted in the public media and funding of the arts. South Africa is one of the leaders in the International Network for Cultural Diversity (Hagg 2001). Second, political and cultural leaders increasingly emphasise the need for identification with Africa, and cultural identity is an important denominator in this regard (African Renaissance, NEPAD,) (Chidester 2003:309). African traditional and contemporary customs and products are promoted through training, product development and protection of local market shares (Proudly South Africa). Third, there is an attempt to make provision for diverse cultural groups, e.g. through the establishment of a Commission for the protection and promotion of rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities. There are a number of problems with these three approaches to cultural identity. In the political arena government is focusing simultaneously on Africanism, which would exclude Western cultural forms, and the right of non-African cultural group identity (Chidester 2003: 309). However, these are often in conflict or competition, and political statements often lead to friction. Furthermore, new cultural identities are created through merging global and local trends, particularly among the younger generation, which on the one hand enriches society, on the other hand undermine cultural traditions that are valued by the older generation.

Transformation as a systemic negotiated process

Two issues seem to be important at this stage in the discussion. First, the above trends and foci cannot be studied in isolation. As in the sustainable development debates, the foci are interdependent and intertwine, and must be studied systemically. This makes any discussion complex and lengthy, which may lead to a loss of interest among people. Second, as these changes have a high impact on both the privileged minority and the marginalised majority in the country, there is a strong need for negotiation and reconciliation to ensure that the processes are fully inclusive. South Africa has indeed become a country of negotiated deals, often highly successful, but requiring continuous attention and energy. Negotiation skills have become a primary requirement for participation in an equitable and inclusive society. Lack of such skills among the poorest often leads to their continued marginalisation and exclusion. Both issues contribute to high levels of crime and corruption.

2. *How can community arts in South Africa contribute to sustainable transformation?*

The arts as instruments for social change

Culture and the arts can be important aids for participation in a democratic society (Pinxten 2003:22). However, culture remains a vague concept and is difficult to use as a direct instrument for social development. The arts as tangible activities and products seem to be more useful when a need exists for visible change. Socio-artistic projects in many countries have contributed towards a more inclusive society. The arts in general can contribute effectively for at least two reasons. First, they are have always been integral to human existence. South Africa has thousands of rock paintings and engravings of high quality, and to date dance, music and story-telling remain important activities in all communities. Despite a trend in Western countries over the past five hundred years to make the arts a field of speciality (Alsop), communal art practices and collective participation in the arts persist in South Africa, although diminishing for reasons that will be discussed below. Human beings have a need to express their feelings, experiences and values through artistic practices. Second, the arts can be experienced, rather than be known, and thus impact more deeply on people's behaviour than printed knowledge exchange. Good writing and performances have a deep and long-lasting impact on people. This impact increases when audiences become participative or communities become involved, as in community arts (Matarasso 1997,).

Community arts and change towards an inclusive society in South Africa before 1994

In South Africa, with its scarce resources, clarity of definition is often ignored to ensure inclusivity of the maximum number of beneficiaries or stakeholders. Therefore, the concept community art is used here in its widest sense, that is, art produced collectively or communally, and art that is created at a community level (non-specialist or non-professional production). Community level production does not necessarily result in low quality, but that its nature is the sharing of production, internalisation and enjoyment. In the broadest sense community art is owned by the community, not the art market. Examples of community arts are local festivals, participatory activities in local arts or community centres or schools, and initiatives by individuals or organisations to activate communities in the participation in cultural days or celebrations.

The nature of community arts offers opportunities for contributing to the transformation of society, because it is at ground level where exclusion and its impact are felt most deeply. "Exclusion is very much a lived experience" (Salojee 2001:2). Individuals can ignore national political exclusion if basic life requirements are fulfilled. Particularly the poorest are more concerned about their food and shelter than democratic participation. As soon as it affects the daily lives of individuals and their families, e.g. through the lack of basic needs and self-fulfilment , exclusion becomes painful and traumatic.

The potential of community arts in bringing about social cohesion was evident in South Africa under apartheid. Through government subsidies the formal arts flourished among the privileged White minority. Infrastructure was well provided. Four major theatre complexes and many smaller local theatres, highly subsidised by government, provided for the artistic needs of Whites. Art education was offered in all white schools and a proportionally large number of universities. However, in the Black townships and rural villages, virtually none of these opportunities existed. This discrimination was managed through the designation of culture as an 'own affair', which meant that ethnically structured departments provided for separate services In reality this meant that extremely limited resources for African cultural development were provided. Black cultural organisations, like the Federated Union of Black Artists, Funda Arts Centre and African Cultural Centre, challenged the privileges of the White minorities and the undermining of cultural growth in the Black communities, by initiating community arts projects. These projects counter-acted the exclusion in a number of ways.

First, the projects contributed to the building of social and cultural capital among the oppressed. At an organisational level, harassment by the state resulted in cohesive informal structures in which loyalty and mutual trust and protection dominated. The projects also mobilised the oppressed community in a single mass-democratic movement, through protest theatre, film, posters, visual arts (Kavanagh 1985Campschreur & Divendal, 1989; Young 1988; Williamson 1989). The impact was experienced particularly among youth that fought against enforced language use in the education system (June 16, 1976). Government being a single enemy to all oppressed people resulted in social cohesion among a variety of cultural groups. Especially the government-enforced identity, based on race and ethnicity, led to the emergence of non-racial cultural alliances. Second, the community arts functioned as a platform for cultural production, so-called cultural weapons, against the state. The inaccessibility of formal infrastructure led to performances in the streets, backyards, shebeens, community halls and community arts centres. These locations became the cultural training grounds providing alternative education and training to young artists who were excluded from formal institutions, Many of the current famous artists went through these training process, e.g. Miriam Makeba, Abdullah Ebrahim, Jonas Gwanqa. These arts activities also led to an informal arts market, which was restrained in South Africa, but made its marks overseas, and providing economic empowerment to a number of community-based artists. Third, the community arts projects showed the fallacy of enforced segregation in the arts sector. For many years artists could only engage with audiences from their own ethnic group. A number of progressive White and Indian artists used the community projects to remain involved in Black empowerment, making nonsense of the artificial boundaries, "leaping over them with such insouciance as to make one wonder if indeed they exist at all" (Kahn in Matarasso 1997, 33). Lastly, community arts strongly contributed to international mobilisation. The export of community arts products and productions led to a cultural boycott against the South African state. Through international cultural conferences (Campschreur & Divendal, 1989) international solidarity was mobilised providing funds for South African

community art organisations and centres and exchange programmes (e.g. the Triangle Workshops initiated by UK based artist Anthony Caro).

Community arts and transformation after 1994

Cultural workers during the Constitutional transition period (1991-1995) strongly believed that community arts would significantly contribute to transformation in the post-apartheid South Africa. The transformation objectives originally focused on the issue of redistribution and redress. A report on the arts commissioned by the new government in 1995 consistently emphasised the need for transformation, and included a separate chapter on community arts, which, *inter alia,* stated as objectives "to promote and develop a tolerant, democratic and multi-cultural society ... to nurture artistic and cultural pluralism ... to make the arts and culture more accessible to all ...and to redress past imbalances in the arts and culture, including the affirmation, promotion and development of artistic practices and cultural manifestations which have been historically marginalised (ACTAG 1995:4,5). The 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage confirms these objectives of valuing diversity and equitable development, and highlights the healing role of arts and culture through promoting reconciliation (DACST 1996b:6). Both documents emphasise the role of community arts centres for the provision of access and redressing imbalances and past inequities (ACTAG 1995:175; DAC 1996b:17). However, the focus of these two key documents still remained on structural and institutional issues, such as infrastructure, organisation building, rather than on programmes and activities for service delivery. In the community arts sector itself, the interpretation of inclusiveness also remains focused on redress, and particularly more resources and infrastructure for community arts practices. The main subject is funding and organisational maintenance, rather than on activities and programmes, and their impact on society. As a result the nature of community arts and their impact on society in the new South Africa are not addressed. Very few evaluations have been made of the impact of community arts at ground level, and particularly in the areas of social cohesion and identity formation. It was only in recent discussions around cultural diversity and globalisation, that the issue of inclusion in terms of social cohesion and intercultural co-operation became relevant. These debates, however, take place at high political levels, rather than in communities.

The (potential and real) contribution of community arts to an inclusive society, as it appears in the debates can be summarised as follows:

- Community arts offer maximum participation in cultural activities, but also in democratisation processes. By accepting a low entry level and providing resources in poor communities, individuals and organisations are given access to the arts, e.g. as audiences or participants in local drama or music performances. This is particularly important as most formal infrastructure and 'high art' opportunities are far from the suburbs where the poor live. Participation in the arts increases people's ability to reflect and comment on life, and become critically experienced, communicative and able to negotiate (Gouws 2003: 60). These skills are important for participation in democratic processes, such as voicing community opinion at Ward meetings or political

gatherings and imbizos (meetings between Ministers and constituencies).

- More than any other human activity, culture — and art as its most highly-charged expression — is concerned with values and meanings (Matarasso 1997: 84). Social inclusion at its deepest deals with sharing of values, and tolerating difference. Community arts allow people to express these different or shared values through mediums that simultaneously allow emotional involvement (through self-identification) and yet allow participants to maintain personal distance (through the medium)
- These values also play an important role in identity formation. Participation allows people to discover their own identity through self-expression, and enable them to make choices about cultural identity. This could be in terms of membership of a particular cultural community (through intercultural understanding) or emphasising national identity (broad shared values). The latter is often part of cultural citizenship, the right to belong in a participatory democratic sense, with free choice (Chidester 2003: 298)
- Participation in community art activities promotes respect for cultural differences (Matarasso 1997: 27). In South Africa different cultural identities often negotiate a shared understanding or future view through artistic participation. As Keil and Feld argue, and Kwenda illustrates (Kwenda 2003: 60): Africans prefer to dance together rather than use logical argument to overcome differences and animosity (in Pinxten, 2003: 17). The community arts are viewed as important for building social capital across cultural boundaries, or for intergenerational contact (Matarasso 1997: 34).
- Community arts enable participants to rediscover their past together, develop a collective memory, like an undiscovered territory (Chidester 2003: 312). Often youth feel trapped by their environment's definition of itself, while they realise that there is a cultural heritage that is shared by different generations (Matarasso 1997: 29). Particularly in South Africa the rediscovery of African roots (African Renaissance) occurs through community arts activities in which the older generation transfers its heritage to the youth.
- We live in a knowledge society, where everything is information, but little is experienced or internalised, increasing abstraction in our understanding. As Pinxten (2003:22) argues, philosophy, science and the arts are equal-value means of knowing and understanding reality, and mutually supportive. Community arts promote a knowing and understanding of reality, which is different from scientific knowledge, but as valuable, particularly in the transfer of knowledge. The arts provide a language of emotion which is crucial to such communication (Kwenda 2003: 70). This is particularly evident from festivals and celebrations of the past, which inform people in an experiential way.
- Social problems are never fully resolved but simply abate and re-emerge in different forms at different times. This requires creativity in breaking stereotyped views and roles, and finding new ways of addressing problems and new roles for people. Community arts projects and centres are safe locations for creative experiments and

experiences, that empower people to apply this creativity in other parts of life.

- South Africa experiences high levels of crime. A main cause is boredom and lack of self-fulfilment due to unemployment. With official unemployment figures of 35-40%, and more in the black township and rural areas, particularly youth lack opportunities for creative and stimulating activities. As in other parts of the world, art in prison projects facilitate better re-entry of society by ex-prisoners (Matarasso 1997: 36). In South Africa several community arts centres are involved in such projects, while national government has initiated a programme of action involving a large number of prisons.
- Community arts in South Africa aim at the increase of access to economic opportunities. Art and craft markets were traditionally dominated by white producers who had adequate training and infrastructure. Both the ACTAC report and the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage emphasise the use of community arts centres as bridges or platforms for training in skills, product development and marketing at a competitive level. A national investigation into the cultural industries, has identified the need for craft promotion at local level (CSG 1998). The National Department of Arts and Culture has an Investing in Culture Fund of over 10 million euro which invests heavily in community based production groups and small companies.

3. *What are the challenges to community arts projects and centres in their contribution towards an inclusive South Africa?*

There remains a vast gap between the high potential of community arts in contributing to an inclusive South Africa and the reality that community arts organisations and communities experience. Despite the high hopes during the political transformation process and the optimistic undertakings appearing in funding proposals from community art organisations, in reality this arts sector struggles to survive. In many cases community arts projects and centres have decreased their production, or stopped functioning completely (Hagg 2005). Many reasons for this deplorable state can be mentioned, but the following discussion will focus on those that are relevant to the issue of inclusiveness. The discussion is structured according to three types of challenges: conceptual, contextual, and implementation or practical.

Conceptual challenges

The first conceptual challenge is the difficulty of defining community arts. Without clarity on what community arts is and how it differs from other art forms, it is difficult to mobilise funders and community supporters. For example, the National Arts Council of South Africa for the first six years of its functioning refused to recognise community arts as a valid category for funding. Little theoretical work has been done on community arts in South Africa (van Robbroeck 1991; Hagg 1991, 2001). Under apartheid activists in

the community arts sector had little time to document or theorise, or had to work in secrecy, and after 1994 writing about the arts increasingly focused on art disciplines and broad cultural issues. The arts sector at large is also increasingly market-oriented, i.e. people are building professional careers for an income (and fame). Leaders in the community arts sector under apartheid have often entered the public service or specialise in community work that is more easily funded. Of all the proposals on community arts in the 1995 ACTAG report only the building of community arts centres has materialised (41), and this in such a way that they became liabilities rather than assets. The revival of these and other community arts centres is being addressed in the South African-Flemish Community Arts Centre project, and to some extent at provincial and local level (Hagg & Selepe 2002; Hagg et al. 2003). Most debates around inclusion and the revival of the community arts happen at a national level rather than at a community level. Few people on the ground have ever heard of, let alone understand the issues, of inclusion, social capital, social cohesion and identity formation.

As is well-known, the notion of community has many conceptual problems Its meaning is often determined by the users' political and social context (Thornton and Ramphele in Boonzaier & Sharp, 1988:29). Under apartheid government interpreted community as meaning people with a shared ethnicity, while for the resistance movement it meant deprived people living together due to state enforcement (Hagg 2001:39). Since 1994 new communities emerge, often transient and experimental, where freedom of movement and association stimulate people to cross traditional boundaries, and even create new identities. In many cases membership is on short notice and of short duration (Robins 243). It is expected that the formation of new communities will continue for a long time, and will probably remain an integral part of future social formation.

Similarly, identity formation is a complex phenomenon and conceptually difficult to define. People have different identities, under different circumstances and situations (Pinxten 2003: 84), and tension often exists between particular and universal identities. Community arts in the quest for an inclusive society often exposes members to new identity forms, even global trends that are attractive to community members. Pinxten (2003: 86) argues that the dynamics of identity develop through three different dimensions: the personality, the social and the cultural dimension[i]. The tension between individual and community has increased in South Africa, due to freedom of association, and makes it increasingly difficult to define community as a category that makes sense in political and cultural development. There is a pervasive tension between art as individual expression and the need for collectiveness (shared values and actions).

A related ambiguity is found in the terms social capital and social cohesion. The wide range of interpretations seem to make them vague terms, much like Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' of the markets (Chidester 2003, 301). Within a multi-cultural society social capital often means adherence to specific cultural groups, which easily leads to exclusion of 'others' (the downside of social capital, Woolcock 1998). Within the South African discussions social cohesion

refers to either accepting unity in diversity (government) or support to own cultural or ethnic group (Africanists, Afrikaners). From an Africanist view the concept of *Ubuntu* is promoted (Mbeki 2005), meaning that the individual's existence depends on membership of a group, and including the need for reconciliation and public showing of respect for others.

Contextual issues

On a contextual level, a number of challenges exist. First, South Africa belongs to both the Western and the African world, with a clear gap between them. On the one side one finds highly developed cultural industries, on the other hand survival craft production. In between an increasing number of entrepreneurs build linkages and mixtures, but aiming for the high ground. This gap and the intermediary activities impact on community arts. For example, powerful media companies and professional artists attract larger audiences and buying public than the low-capacitated arts projects. Government funds community-based productions but focus on cultural entrepreneurship, product development, market access and a requirement to show positive impact over the short term. However, community arts seldom show spectacular results and are less attractive to funders. Successful artists from community projects tend to migrate to the professional sector. This provides role models to youth, but deprives arts projects from their leadership.

As mentioned above, globalisation creates a totally new arena for community-based activities. On the one hand international, and particularly American, entertainment industries draw major audiences, leading to global cultural consumerism. These cultural forms influence productions in the arts centres as untrained youth come with expectations based on Hollywood culture. Global cultural tourism also influences production to satisfy the ignorant taste of visiting tourists. On the other hand, as Pinxten (2003:14) argues, such globally produced or superficial knowledge and information does not necessarily make citizens more mature, but often rather mightless and alienated from concrete experiences. Many people want to remain actively involved in creative work as an alternative to passive entertainment. However, this is often absorbed by computer games or social engagement, especially if artistic leadership and infrastructure are lacking. The community arts are challenged to provide creative and imaginative participatory activities that remain authentic for the local participants.

Cultural diversity receives increasing attention, in a variety of ways. Government officially promotes cultural diversity, and community arts centres are viewed as locations for the needs of specific cultural groups. Simultaneously, there is a need for social cohesion around national issues and nation building, and community arts projects are often recruited for this purpose. Through national programmes communities are exposed to different cultural expressions. National government also subsidises international exchanges. At a community level cultural organisations often promote the cultural roots and heritage through the arts, e.g. traditional music or dance, cuisine and clothing. Debates on what is authentic to a community are prevalent. Community art projects stimulate cultural pride and offer

opportunities to showcase diversity to own people and tourists. However, the chance of ghettoism is real, particularly in isolated communities (Pinxten 2003:70)

South Africa is still characterised by an entrenched geographical segregation, resulting in little intercultural contact. Although many Africans have moved into traditional White suburbs, there are seldom completely accepted, and often maintain their links to the black township community. Most community projects take place in the black townships, and draw very few participants from other communities, partly due to fear for crime or distrust.[11] This easily leads to ghettoism and isolation, which is even more evident against exposure of users to the mass media. The most successful cultural interaction takes place in metropolitan central areas, such as Newtown in Johannesburg, or at large festivals, such as Grahamstown Arts Festival.

Although a separate Department of Arts and Culture provides for artistic needs in general, as a whole culture has become a supportive phenomenon for government strategies on economic empowerment, youth development or identity formation. No sector-specific policies exist for community arts. As the arts are a provincial competency, local government as the main government stakeholder, generally support community arts only for non-artistic purposes, such as enlivening political rallies, embellishing local offices, tourism attraction and youth development. The lack of partnership between local government and community arts projects has impoverished both, and mostly, the community.

Lastly, the HIV and AIDS pandemic impacts on community art projects in at least two ways. On the one hand, the organisations are mobilised for AIDS awareness productions. This results in the best cases in influential productions and some income for the artists, but more often alienate audiences, and particularly youth, from the message due to overfeeding with artistically mediocre productions. On the other hand the pandemic takes its toll, depleting the capacity of the arts project through the deaths of capable and trained artists, role models and followers.

The complexity of these contextual challenges seems to have a negative impact on creativity in the community arts sector. Under apartheid it was much simpler: there is one enemy, the state, and culture is a weapon in the hands of the oppressed. Already in 1991 ANC stalwart Albie Sachs analysed the coming challenges in the post-apartheid era. In a provocative paper he asked whether South Africans would have enough cultural imagination to adequately depict the new South Africa. How would artists and cultural commissars move from a narrow view of culture and solidarity criticism to real social criticism, which embraces ambiguity and beauty (Sachs 1991:20). Indeed the arts between 1994 and 2004 went through identity crises, as reflected in the stereotyped productions at major cultural festivals. However, the emerging revival was led by professional artists and often by-passed community arts projects that did not have regular contact with progressive art organisations or training institutes.

Challenges at a practical implementation level

For most community arts projects the prime challenges remain at a very practical level, related to implementation. Debates about identity, social cohesion and capital building do exist among community members, e.g. what are authentic Zulu, Ndebele or Sotho cultural heritage and products. However, the more comprehensive debates take place in the realm of politicians and academics. On the ground inclusion often means access to resources to ensure survival and sustainability of projects, or access to a community project for non-members. Practical challenges often prevent community leaders from strategizing around more conceptual and contextual issues, resulting in short-term planning and deterioration of visions and strategies. However, community art project generally have little choice.

Practically South African community arts are severely limited by the lack of champions in decision-making environments, such as government and funders. Research on the community arts centre sector in South Africa highlighted the importance of political leaders as champions to ensure that community arts are included in national, provincial or local budgets (Hagg & Selepe 2002). A formal declaration of the Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture that community arts would become a departmental anchor programme paved the way for multi-million Rand funding for arts centres, which allowed them to become more inclusive. In contrast the disinterest of a provincial head of department resulted in non-funding for its own arts centres for years and excluding their communities from arts practices (Hagg et al. 2003). Champions can be local cultural leaders with good communication skills. In many community arts projects prominent local artists lobby among politicians and funders for support, after having successfully mobilised the community. Lack of government support is often the result of lack of policies that would strengthen the case of community art organisations in lobbying. In addition, South African local cultural leaders are often unaware of policies that would support their cases. Part of the South African-Flemish community arts project was the dissemination of such policies and capacity building of community arts leaders about legislation and policy.

No community arts policies exist in South Africa, and Constitutional allocations of municipal functions do not include culture. As a result most municipalities excuse themselves from the responsibility for local artistic development. This is exacerbated by the fact that most municipalities are poor and lack the capacity to deliver even basic services. As a result local art initiatives have to find funds at provincial and national level, where competition is higher and requirements more stringent. Research on community arts centres highlighted the difficulty for arts centres to be included in funding initiatives due to low capacity for proposal writing and project design, resulting in lack of funds to acquire the staff for this much-needed capacity.

Very few community arts organisations have the capacity to satisfy the requirements for financial and other types of accountability. Although logical for government, the financial management legislation poses serious challenges for local organisations with regard to appointment of qualified

people in their administration. On the other hand, provinces and municipalities also lack the ability to manage the development of community arts projects, which form part of their mandate. As a result evaluation of project is often insufficient for long-term empowerment of both parties, and relationships easily go wrong, with negative results for both.

The complex South African situation of community arts requires multi-skilled managers who can handle relationships with government, artists and audiences, manage organisational systems and facilities, and can lead artists and educators for service delivery with a minimum of resources. As no specialised training has been available in South Africa, most community arts leaders are self-made and taught, or come from other sectors such as social welfare or industries. Increasingly university graduates accept the challenge of managing community arts projects, due to a scarcity of formal jobs and the need to remain involved in arts practice. However, they often experience a gap between their own training and the understanding of issues by community members. Conflict and exits of managers and artists are prevalent in all community arts projects. Those managers that grow their capacity through education and training are often lured to the more lucrative formal cultural sector or government, leaving collapsing organisations behind.

Inclusion in South Africa is often interpreted as equal rights to resources for all applicants. This has a positive and negative impact. Increasingly the poorest organisations get a chance to be funded and perform. On the other hand to ensure an equitable share, resources are widely and thinly spread, and allocations are often insufficient for full implementation of proposals. Funding is often limited to a maximum of three years, which is too short for community-based development.

Community arts project experience heavy competition for audiences which cannot afford to support all artistic productions, and often prefer passive entertainment rather than joint action. It is not unusual to have a small permanent core group that supports a project, while audiences fluctuate according to the quality or fame of the performer during a festival. As a result funders and art organisers tend to prefer events in which artists of national stature perform (consuming a large part of the budget), often to the detriment of the local artists. The capacity of community arts centres for mobilisation of communities and organisation of appropriate projects also remains low due to lack of local communication facilities, such as community radio, or the high cost of posters and banners.

Experience in managing community arts exists in South Africa, particularly in urban areas. A number of older experienced arts centres exist in the major cities. Attempts to bring together vanguard and new community arts centres in order to empower the full sector, are slowly developing, but may be too late for many arts centres and projects.

Conclusion

Theoretically community arts are ideal vehicles for the promotion of a socially, economically and culturally inclusive society. It appears that in practice the challenges and constraints have led to a deterioration of community arts projects. There is still a need for an overarching vision and strategy, both in government and civil society. References to social inclusion, identity formation, nation building and cultural promotion are increasing in speeches by political leaders. The building blocks for the use of community arts in these strategies are emerging slowly from government initiatives, but there remains a dire need for consultation, co-operation, theoretical discourse, policy formulation and willingness to place community arts higher on the agenda of government departments, funders and communities.

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[i] "Identiteits dynamieken worden via drie verschillende dimensies ingevuld: de persoonlijkheids-, de socialiteits- en de culturaliteits dimensie." Pinxten, R. 2003: 86.

[ii] For example, a government contract music teacher in the (traditionally white) Sasolburg refused to teach at the arts centre in the black township of Zamdela due to fear of crime. Much social interaction is needed to draw white people to the black townships. An increasing exception are the black cultural tourist operators who arrange trips to historically important sites in the townships.

Community arts and the struggle for an inclusive South Africa

(summarised text)

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South African-Flemish Community Arts Centre Project

Introduction

South Africa has been a divided society for more than a century, a time in which the majority of the population was excluded from political, social, economic and cultural rights that are typical of a democratic state. This segregation was institutionalised by the apartheid government between 1948 and 1986. In 1994 a democratic government was elected, which adopted as one of its main objectives the transformation of South Africa into an inclusive society. Although you may be generally aware of this history, I will touch on some of its elements as a background to the main discussion on community arts and an inclusive South Africa. You will understand that for this occasion the analysis will be highly simplified.

I would like to discuss the topic by addressing three questions:

- What are the main issues in the transformation of South Africa towards an inclusive society?
- How can community arts in South Africa contribute to sustainable transformation?
- What are the challenges to community arts projects in their contribution towards an inclusive society

Main issues in the transformation of South Africa towards an inclusive society

Despite significant progress towards a democratic state, the apartheid legacy of exclusion has in many respects continued after 1994. The integration of segregated services at community level has only partly succeeded, due to limited resources and a pervasive lack of capacity in government departments and civil society. Particularly in the poorest areas many people have no access to sustainable basic services, such as water, electricity or communication technology. With respect to the economy, South Africa still has a dual economy and labour market, with a vast gap between the formal ('first') and informal ('second') economy. The majority of people are still excluded from the benefits of the first economy, such as full-time work, surplus money and consumer services, and often lack the ability to negotiate for the necessary inclusion. Criminality and corruption are rife, undermining sustainable development. Distrust and fear between people are wide-spread, are often linked to racial stereotyping.

Social interaction across the ethnic boundaries that were enforced under apartheid, is today much more prevalent due to anti-discriminatory and pro-inclusive policies. However, this interaction is often limited to sport, entertainment and the work situation. People still largely live apart and don't mix in their social and cultural lives. For example, celebrations of national days are usually attended by single ethnic groups depending on the locality. The debate about group or cultural identity versus national identity is high on the political and academic agendas, but less so in communities. The latter tend to focus on sustainable livelihoods (income, housing, education, health). Among the poor social capital is deteriorating due to persistent poverty, the generation gap and the death toll from HIV and AIDS. Social capital among the well-off is often related to business relationships.

The Western cultural paradigm remains dominant, mainly through the entertainment and mass media. Globalisation impacts negatively on inclusion strategies of government. For example, cheap or illegally copied products enter local markets and there is a visible impact of Hollywood and Bollywood on cultural identity formation among youth. On the other hand, one finds a growing trend to produce and support local cultural production, both traditional and newly mixed. Cultural diversity is an accepted phenomenon, both politically and socially. However, most people are still excluded from access to cultural participation and its benefits due to poverty, lack of infrastructure and a low capacity for accessing markets.

For government and civil society leaders transformation is a cross-cutting objective, which is embedded in the Constitution. The latter refers to the need to recognise past injustices, to strive for unity in diversity, to heal divisions by building social capital and social cohesion, and to promote equality, redistribution, restructuring and social justice in the access to opportunities. This encompassing nature of transformation is reflected in the recurrence of strategies for inclusion across social, economic and cultural sectors, and the realisation that they are interdependent and intertwined.

The contribution of community arts to an inclusive society

The arts are recognised in South Africa as valuable instruments for social change and participation in a democratic society. Artistic production and participation are considered integral to human existence, and we find the evidence in rock paintings from paleolithic times to protest art under apartheid. While culture as a concept often remains vague and less visible, the arts are tangible, and their activities and products are operationable in our daily lives. In South Africa there are two main streams with regard to the renewed interest in the arts. First, there is an increase in professionalism and career building in the arts

sector, with a resulting tendency towards individualism and materialism, usually in the cultural industries. Second, we find the use of socio-artistic projects for community development. Under influence of international markets the first trend dominates, while government supports the second one, although within constraints.

Community arts take a particular place in the quest for an inclusive society. This type of art refers to art produced in communities, either collectively or by individuals, often within a community facility and usually guided by professional or locally acknowledged amateur artists. Community facilities range from public spaces to backyards, and from general community halls to purpose-built community arts centers. South Africa has a rich tradition of community arts and communal cultural practices. This is partly due to the traditional communal nature of cultural expression in Africa, and partly due to the community mobilization by artists under apartheid for the purpose of resistance.

There is much qualitative, but little quantitative evidence of the contribution of community arts to an inclusive society in South Africa. We know that the nature of community art lends it to the inclusion of people in processes outside the formal art markets, and that it can mobilise people around political, social and economic issues. This is based on the experience that community arts offers people the opportunity to participate from a position of strength, rather than as victims. This was already evident in South Africa under apartheid. Community art, in the black townships, was used to build social capital among the oppressed and excluded people, it provided platforms for production and cultural education (art as cultural weapons), and allowed social bonding across artificial, state-enforced segregation boundaries. In addition community arts succeeded in mobilising the international community for cultural boycotts of the apartheid government.

Since 1994 community arts have officially been a priority in the national government's strategy towards an inclusive cultural society, for a number of reasons. First, community arts encourage participation rather than passive consumption of cultural products. This is viewed as important for the development of a distinct South African cultural identity. Ironically, the influence of television, video and movie industries tends to make people less culturally involved than under apartheid, when access to international products was limited. Second, art as an expression of community values contributes to the formation and questioning of one's group identity, e.g. where traditional cultural values are both transferred across generations and challenged or amended by the youth. Third, participation in arts activities brings people together, builds networks, and promotes intercultural understanding, respect, social cohesion and social capital, e.g. by listening to the same music irrespective of one's own background. A famous example was the

Nelson Mandela rock concerts in the 1990s. Four, community arts can contribute to heritage awareness by building collective memory through joint activities. Five, for many people, and particularly youth, community arts projects are sources of knowledge, additional to formal education and the media. Six, South Africa as a society with high levels of conflict and crime, benefits from shared artistic projects where mutual respect and tolerance are cultivated. Playing together in an orchestra or band remains one of the best ways to internalise harmony and co-operation. Seven, participation in the arts heightens creativity which can be applied in other life situations, stimulating entrepreneurship and social skills. Lastly, community arts projects provide access to income generation through arts and craft production.

Challenges to community arts in present South Africa

Community arts in South Africa are faced with a number of challenges on conceptual, contextual and practical levels. First, the concepts of community arts and culture are differently interpreted by role players, depending on their context, education and interests. The multiple meanings result in a lack of clarity in arguments. This affects the way in which support is mobilised, e.g. among funders (including government) and communities. The arts are still considered glamorous or exclusive, due to ignorance or media exposure. Lack of clarity also makes it difficult to project a strong vision of community arts among artists and to recruit their involvement. In addition, the concept of community has become increasingly complex, with membership becoming multiple and often short-lived, determined by fads and immediate needs. Similarly identity formation has become a complex phenomenon, different from the uniform one that centred onto the opposition against apartheid. People have multiple identities, depending on their contexts and situations. The meaning of identity is often adapted to suit specific purposes, such as the emphasis on one distinct cultural aspect to get access to scarce resources, which then may lead to the isolation of such cultural groups. Furthermore, there is growing tension between art as an expression and reflection of individual values and needs, and the need for collectiveness in cultural expression. Like the term social capital, identity and community arts remain ambiguous, which undermines their usefulness in a society that is focused on economic and material redress. Lastly, inclusion is a dynamic process which takes time to mature, and is characterised by shifting points of growth and deterioration.

On a contextual level, a number of challenges exist. First, South Africa belongs to the Western, African and Eastern world, with a clear gap between them. Government is promoting both Africanist and Western economic strategies, which are difficult to reconcile without clarity on values and best practices. Second, South Africa still has an entrenched

geographical segregation, through which communities have little intercultural contact. For government culture has increasingly become a political phenomenon, dealing with identity etc. rather than artistic action. This gives community arts a specific direction, sometimes undermining creativity and independent production. Third, global consumerist tourism affects local cultural life. On the one hand it enriches local production, on the other hand we find a trend towards sacrificing local arts for the promotion of tourism, leading to artificiality in cultural production and villages. Four, South Africa is a poor country, and access to resources - and particularly capable staff, infrastructure and funding - remain problematic. Most poor people experience constraints to participation due to distance, lack of time and low motivation. Government also increasingly focuses on cultural development for economic purposes. However, while the cultural industries grow, community based projects struggle to survive. Low entrepreneurial levels in this sector have led to a decrease in activities and the closure of projects. Lastly, the capacity for community arts production is steadily decreasing as the impact of HIV and AIDS takes its toll on artists. What is clear, is that the sustainability of community participation is dependent on factors outside the cultural sector.

For most community arts projects the prime challenges remain at a very practical level, related to implementation. Debates about identity, social cohesion and capital building do exist among community members, e.g. what are authentic Zulu, Ndebele or Sotho cultural heritage and products? However, the more serious debates take place in the realm of politicians and academics. On the ground the struggle is often about survival and the sustainability of projects. Practical challenges often prevent the strategizing around more conceptual and contextual issues, resulting in short-term planning and the deterioration of visions and strategies. Some practical challenges are the following. First, South African community arts are severely limited by the lack of champions in the environment of decision-makers, such as government and funders. Economic development models remains dominant, imposing requirements on community groups for which they are not equipped. Second, there is severe competition for resources. While democratic principles promote the equal spreading of access to the small resource base, this leaves individual organisations with small grants. Funding is often limited to a maximum of three years, which is short for community-based development. Three, there is stringent competition for audiences. We must remember that participation is a choice, which can focus on other activities than arts and culture. Poor people cannot afford to support all artistic productions, and often prefer passive entertainment rather than cultural engagement. In addition, the capacity of community arts centres for the mobilisation of communities, the mediation between the arts on offer and potential audiences, and the organisation of appropriate programmes remains low. The complex South African

situation requires multi-skilled managers, while appropriate training is still emerging. Those managers that grow their capacity are often lured to the more lucrative formal cultural sector or government. Four, in South Africa no community arts policies exist that would place these arts high on the government agenda, except in the Department of Arts and Culture. Of particular concern is the fact that culture is Constitutionally not a local government mandate, which allows local government to excuse themselves from responsibility for local artistic development. This hits particularly community arts very hard. An iterative process of policy formulation and practice is emerging in government, but it is severely constrained by competition for resources at a local level. Most municipalities are poor and cannot even deliver full basic services. The lack of policy includes the absence of predictable institutional frameworks for the accountability of the community arts sector. Attempts to bring vanguard community arts centres and new ones together in order to empower the whole sector, are slowly developing, but may be too late for many arts centres and projects.

Conclusion

Theoretically community arts are ideal vehicles for the promotion of a socially, economically and culturally inclusive society. There is evidence that it can work. In South Africa it appears that in practice the challenges and constraints have led to a deterioration of community arts projects and a shift towards the promotion of arts and craft for economic reasons. Our society has won a struggle for political democracy, although it remains fragile. There remains a continued struggle for an overarching vision and strategy, both in government and civil society, for vibrant community arts centers and projects. References to social inclusion, identity formation, nation building and cultural promotion are increasing in speeches by political leaders. The building blocks for the use of community arts in these strategies are emerging slowly from government and civil society initiatives, but there remains a dire need for theoretical discourse, consultation, co-operation, policy formulation which could lead to a willingness to place community arts higher on the agenda of government departments, funders and communities.

arts towards an inclusive society

Arts - Towards an inclusive society

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Encompassing three days, 18 nationalities, 20 venues, 26 speakers, 200 delegates and one aim - to make the world a better place through creativity - ***Arts towards an inclusive society*** was much more than your average conference.

Between 21 and 23 October 2005, Belfast's Waterfront Hall played host to the leading lights in international community arts, arts practitioners, policy makers and administrators came together to look at the role the arts have played in promoting more peaceful, prosperous and inclusive societies from South Africa to the Shankill Road.

Of course, being a community arts event, delegates had plenty of opportunity to put theory into practice through an extensive programme of workshops held in community centres throughout Belfast. Not only did this give Northern Ireland's community arts sector the opportunity to showcase some of its brightest and most innovative projects - many delegates have expressed an interest in transferring what they have learnt to their own communities.

Comment Form

The conference, however, only marks the starting point. Let us know what you thought of the conference and its themes via the CAblog or our online comments form and contact CAF to find out how you can get involved over the next year.

CAF would like to offers its thanks to all our speakers and delegates who brought so much to the conference.

arts towards an inclusive society

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David Boyd
David Boyd is director of the Beat Initiative, Northern Ireland's carnival arts company. David has been active in developing carnival arts in Belfast and is involved in Irish, UK and European arts and cultural networks. He has participated in the Worldwide Carnival Conference; is involved with Welfare State International (progenitors of much street art and spectacle in Britain); is a member of Trans Europe Halles; is on the Council of Banlieues d'Europe; ten years ago was a founder and an active member of an Irish network of street arts /spectacle companies and of the Community Arts Forum and last year formed Belfast Carnival Arts Development Consortium. He has served as a member of the Arts Council Northern Ireland.

Linda Frye Burnham
Linda Frye Burnham is a writer of national reputation on a variety of subjects, with special emphasis in artists working in community, education and activism. She was the founder of High Performance magazine (1978), The 18th St. Arts Complex (with Susanna Dakin, 1988), Highways Performance Space (with Tim Miller, 1989), Art in the Public Interest (with Steven Durland, 1995) and the Community Arts Network (with Durland, Bob Leonard and Ann Kilkelly, 1999). Burnham is an arts consultant and she lectures and teaches in the arts. She is the editor of APInews on the Community Arts Network; a contributing writer for national arts publications; a writer on general subjects for The Independent Weekly of North Carolina, and editor (with Durland) of The Citizen Artist: 20 Years of Art in the Public Arena (Gardiner, N.Y.: Critical Press, 1998).

Comment Form

Top

Moyra Donaldson
Moyra Donaldson is an award-winning poet, editor, and creative writing tutor whose poetry collections, Snakeskin Stilettos (1998), and Beneath the Ice (2001), were published by Lagan Press to critical acclaim. Moyra's third collection, The Hummingbird Case, is forthcoming this year. Her poems have been anthologised and have featured on BBC radio and television, including the Channel 4 production, Poems to Fall in Love With, and she has read at festivals in Ireland, England, Canada and Hungary. Moyra has also written for the stage and worked with community theatre. She is a founding member of the Creative Writers' Network and serves as current co-chair, and has recently been commissioned to edit an anthology of 20th century Northern Irish women poets.

Heather Floyd
Heather Floyd has been director of Community Arts Forum since 2002. Coming from a community education background, she was originally training officer at CAF and later became director. Formerly, she worked for eight years with Shankill Women's Centre where she organised the Centre's education and culture programmes. She also worked in Downtown Women's Centre, Gingerbread (lone parents' organisation) and the Ulster Peoples' College. Heather is a keen Irish language enthusiast and was, until recently on the board of local Irish language cultural centre An Droichead. She is also interested in cross border and reconciliation work and sat on the board of Women Educating for Transformation (WEFT), an all-island organisation exploring issues of culture and policy.

Top

Antoni Gabarre
Antoni Gabarre, director, Programa Pintamuro, Delegacion Juventud, Jerez, Spain, is an artist and expert in urban mural-making, environmental education and youth. He has created more than 30,000 square metres of murals in different countries and holds eight Guinness world records, including: the largest mural in the shortest time (2,200 square metres in 48 hours. Antoni has been working with young people for more than 30 years. He is specialized in putting into action civic-artistic mural programmes in conflict zones. He has created and carried out mural programmes in Mostar, Sarajevo, and Klujk (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Havana (Cuba), Puspokladany

(Hungary), Bologna (Italy), Lisbon (Portugal), Lyon (France), Barcelona, Seville, Jerez, Olvera, Valencia and San Fernando (Spain).

Katrina Goldstone
Katrina Goldstone is the communications and membership officer of CREATE, a leading national arts support organisation in Ireland. She has also worked as anti racism officer for Amnesty International Irish section where she was part of their working group on gender awareness policy. She co-scripted and researched a documentary, No More Blooms, on Irish government policy towards Jewish refugees in World War II. She has contributed regularly as a reviewer and critic to the Irish Times, and radio arts programmes. She was a founder member of the Irish Association for Minority Ethnic Women.

Top

Gerard Hagg
Gerard Hagg trained as an artist and taught sculpture, drawing and history of art at the University of South Africa and the University of the Free State. In 1986 he joined the cultural unit of the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa. In 2002 he completed a national audit of community arts centers in South Africa which led to a three-year bi-lateral project with the Flemish government for the upgrading of community arts centers in South Africa. In 2002 he obtained his D Litt et Phil from the University of South Africa on a thesis titled "The contribution of community arts centres to capital building for socio-economic development in South Africa". His recent research focuses on the role of community arts in the promotion of social cohesion and social capital.

David Grant
David Grant has worked extensively in theatre throughout Ireland as a director and critic. He has been managing editor of Theatre Ireland magazine, programme director of the Dublin Theatre Festival and artistic director of the Lyric Theatre, Belfast. He is author of Playing the Wild Card: Community Drama and Small Scale Theatre in Northern Ireland, and edited The Crack in the Emerald, a collection of new Irish plays for Nick Hern Books. Recently he has been working mainly in the field of Applied Theatre, including a recent visit to Jersualem to work with Jewish and Palestinian school teachers.

Top

Stella Hall
In 1999 Stella Hall took on the role of director of Belfast Festival at Queen's, and has focused both on increasing its accessibility and developing its international status. In 2004 she became the University's first head of culture and arts, overseeing the Festival, Queen's Film Theatre and Naughton Gallery at Queen's and leading on the University's wider cultural agenda. Stella maintains links with Europe and beyond through regular travel to speak at and attend cultural events and festivals and board membership of the London International Festival of Theatre and queerupnorth in Manchester. She began as creative director Newcastle Gateshead Initiative on Sept 1st 2005 but will return to Belfast Festival at Queen's for final Festival 05.

Top

Maureen Harkins
Maureen Harkins is development officer with the Community Arts Forum. Her background in community arts has been focused around community theatre. She is a member of the Ballybeen Community Theatre Group which produced the first large scale community play, The Mourning Ring, in 1995. The play celebrated culture and tradition from a Protestant working class community perspective. Maureen has also performed in a number of other productions including the award-wining Wedding Community Play. She has been with the Community Arts Forum since 1996 and has represented the organisation at various local and international events. Maureen is an experienced drama facilitator and produced and supported the development of both small and large scale community theatre productions.

Sarah Levin
Since 2002, Sarah Levin has directed the Banlieues d'Europe Network where she has been developed research activities and expertise across Europe around questions of artistic practices and cultural innovation. Trained as a specialist practitioner in international cultural exchanges, and following several experiences of intercultural exchanges with Germany and Poland, Sarah worked on various projects for the Dance Biennial and the Contemporary Art Biennial in Lyon (France). After working as an exhibitions officer at the French Institute of Rabat (Morocco), she worked as promotion and international relations officer for the Pays de Savoie Chamber Orchestra, Chambéry and then as the dissemination representative for the Laura

Tanner Dance Company (Geneva).

Top

Martin Lynch
Martin Lynch has written extensively for radio, film, television and the stage. He began his writing career in 1976 with the Fellowship Community Theatre at Turf Lodge, west Belfast. During the 1980's he was resident writer at the Lyric Theatre and the University of Ulster and he has written for the Arts Theatre, Charabanc Theatre Company, and the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. Work includes Dockers, The Interrogation of Ambrose Fogarty, and the hugely successful Wedding Community Play in 1999, (co-written with Marie Jones and the company) He was co-ordinator of the Community Arts Forum 1997-2000. His recent success, The History of the Troubles (accordin' to my Da) has been seen by over 125,000 people.

Robbie McVeigh
Robbie McVeigh is research director with An Dúchán - a Derry-based partnership providing community based consultancy, evaluation and research services. In 1992, he wrote, 'The Specificity of Irish Racism' (Race and Class vol. 33, no. 4) and much of his subsequent work has focused on racism in Ireland, north and south. His work has been highly critical of community relations analyses of conflict in the north of Ireland. His publications include 'Theorising the Racism/Sectarianism Interface' in Rethinking Northern Ireland: Culture, Ideology and Colonialism; 'Between Reconciliation and Pacification:The British State and Community Relations in the north of Ireland' in the Community Development Journal and 'Racism and anti-racism in Ireland' (Beyond the Pale, 2002). He is currently working on a new book on racism in Ireland After Optimism? Ireland, Racism and Globalisation (forthcoming in 2005) as well as conducting a research project on racist violence in the north.

Top

Lab Ky Mo
Belfast born and bred, Lab graduated from Central St. Martin's College of Art in London with a degree in Fine Art, before winning the prestigious Carl Foreman Screenwriting Fellowship to California, in conjunction with Bafta. After shooting three award-winning short films (one in Belfast) that have been screened internationally at various film festivals, Lab went on to make his debut feature film -

"Nine Dead Gay Guys". At the conference, Lab will show a promotion for a Belfast-based feature film, "Oranges Are Blue". The film, which is loosely biographical, has been a pet project of his for many years and highlights amusingly the conflict of growing up Chinese in Belfast.

Gerri Moriarty
Gerri Moriarty works as a community artist and arts consultant in the UK, Ireland and internationally, particularly in East Africa. She has many years experience in devising and directing community theatre and pioneered the use of arts in public consultation in the UK. She has helped local authorities and central government to develop and implement cultural policies and strategies and has written extensively on community arts, arts and regeneration and evaluation. Her particular interests are urban regeneration, social justice and multi-disciplinary ways of working.

Top

Ereshnee Naidu
Ereshnee Naidu is senior educationalist and researcher at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, presently in the Transition and Reconciliation Programme (TRP), working on symbolic reparations and living memory. As a consultant on the Constitution Hill Project she conducted research for the associative communities and the Kliptown Ecomuseum Development for which she has developed policy guidelines for community participation over the next five years. Most of her work around memory is focused on using participatory arts methodologies to empower communities to participate in memory projects to facilitate their own processes of reconciliation and healing. She has, most recently, developed a model to ensure the inclusion of marginal communities into memorialisation processes.

Jeton Neziraj
Jeton Neziraj is a playwright from Kosova. He is author of two books, eight plays (performed in different stages abroad) and more than 100 articles and studies on theatre and dramaturgy. He is also author of many screenplays for short and long feature films, and also over ten screenplays for television. Some of his plays and articles are published in other languages; English, French, Macedonian and Bulgarian. He has run theatre workshops locally and internationally and was a key speaker at several international conferences and meetings. Currently he is the executive director of MULTIMEDIA / Center for Children's Theatre Development in Prishtina.

Top

David Oddie
David Oddie is Senior Lecturer in Drama at the College of St Mark & St John, Plymouth, UK (Marjon) where he offers a BA Drama programme based on his own educational and community practice. He has conducted research on arts in schools and worked to support community drama in other countries. In response to the current world situation he has launched a new programme, ARROW (Art: a Resource for Reconciliation Over the world), which focuses on the systematic development of the creative arts as a resource for reconciliation, cross cultural understanding and enhanced awareness of the reality of global interdependence.

Sean Paul O'Hare
Sean Paul O'Hare is director of Féile An Phobail. With a background in community work in west Belfast, Sean Paul took over the leadership of Féile An Phobail in early 2005. Féile An Phobail, which means 'festival of the people,' programmes throughout the year with one major festival, the August Féile for ten days and an increasing number of specialist festivals and events. August Féile, now entering its 18th year, is the largest community-led festival in Europe with attendance in excess of 250,000.

Top

Conor Shields
An alumnus of the London School of Economics and the University of Ulster, Conor is a multi-instrumentalist and has been a performing musician for over twenty years, writing songs and collaborating with a wide variety of artists. He has co-founded theatre companies, worked in television and radio and facilitated workshops in a range of disciplines in theatres, community settings and prisons. He is passionate about the role that arts can play in society and is the programme director of New Belfast Community Arts Initiative, a city-wide multi-discipline arts programme. Conor sits on the Community Arts Forum's executive committee.

Bill Strickland
Bill Strickland is president of Manchester Craftsmen's Guild and the Bidwell Training Center in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia. With little more than immense willpower and an undying belief in the goodness of human beings, he turned a near bankrupt community training center in Pittsburgh into one of the most successful organizations

in America. New centers have been built in Cincinnatti and San Francisco, and more are planned. Along Bill Strickland's remarkable journey he has received a MacArthur Genius grant, lectured at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and served on the Board of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Top

Nisha Tandon
Born and educated in India, Nisha Tandon has been a citizen of Northern Ireland for 28 years. She is currently the arts development officer at the Indian Community Centre where her role is to promote Indian culture within the local community and deliver many cross cultural activities, and promote good relations with local communities. Nisha has been a dedicated worker in the community sector for the last 20 years as a volunteer delivering training in the Indian artistic subjects. She has recently been elected chair of CAF's executive.

James Thompson
James Thompson is professor of applied and social theatre at the University of Manchester and director of the Centre for Applied Theatre Research. He has worked for UNICEF Sri Lanka as part of the Children Affected by Armed Conflict Unit and has been working on theatre programmes in the war-affected areas of the country since 2000. He is currently the director of In Place of War - a project developing and researching theatre practice in situations of armed conflict and with refugee communities in the UK who have fled war. He is author of Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond (Peter Lang, 2003) and the forthcoming Digging Up Stories: Applied Theatre, Performance and War (Manchester University Press, 2005).

Top

Adam Turkington
Adam has been arts and community co-ordinator at Belfast Waterfront Hall for nearly five years and represents his organisation on the CAF board. Charged with increasing access to the Hall to minority groups and underprivileged communities, he has successfully introduced policies, pricing structures and access schemes which have impacted not only how the community perceives the Waterfront but on how the Waterfront's staff and board perceive the community. His current focus is a youth development strategy to build on the success of this summer's Urban Arts Academy

and the recent creation of a youth arts worker post. Previously Adam ran the Greater Shankill Community Festival.

Jennifer Williams
Jennifer Williams is the executive director of the Centre for Creative Communities, London, which she founded in 1978. The Centre promotes the building of sustainable communities where education and the arts have pivotal roles to play in personal, social, cultural and economic development. The Centre conducts research, works as evaluator of a number of large and small projects throughout Europe and in the United States, and maintains a website. Jennifer regularly speaks at national and international conferences, and writes articles and books. Her latest book, Common Threads Uncommon People, was published in 2004. She also works as a professional artist making and teaching how to make hand-made books, illustrations, etchings and photographs. For ten years, before starting the Centre, she ran a touring puppet theatre.

Top

Katherine Zeserson
Katherine Zeserson is director of learning and participation at The Sage Gateshead. She is responsible for the strategic development and implementation of the organisation's community music, early years, further and higher education and practitioner development initiatives, in addition to jointly leading and managing the programme as a whole. She has a national reputation as a community musician and trainer, and has worked in a notably wide range of community, educational and social contexts. From 1984 -1994, Katherine was community music development worker for Them Wifies, the North East's longest established community arts project, as well as establishing a close involvement with Folkworks. She spent 1998 - 2000 as community and education advisor to Northern Sinfonia, prior to taking up her current post.

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Friday • Saturday • Sunday • Speakers • Venues • Workshops