



sport, arts & culture

Department:  
Sport, Arts and Culture  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## THEATRE AND DANCE POLICY

# *“Breathing New Vision into Theatre and Dance in South Africa”*

Policy Document for Consultations

# Contents

<b>Chapter One: A new National Theatre and Dance Policy</b>	4
1.1 Introduction	4
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Aims	5
1.4 Vision	5
1.5 Understanding of Theatre and Dance in a South African context	6
- Theatre and Dance for Human Development	6
- Theatre and Dance for Social Development	6
- Theatre and Dance for Economic Development	6
<b>Chapter Two: Historical, Social and Sector Context</b>	7
2.1 The Covid-19 Context	7
2.2 Contemporary Social Context	8
2.3 Creative Industries Masterplan, September 2021	9
2.4 Implications of the above for Theatre and Dance Policy	9
<b>Chapter Three: A New Vision for Theatre and Dance</b>	10
3.1 Leveling the Playfield	10
3.2 Introducing a Fresh Vision for Theatre and Dance in South Africa	10
3.3 Education and Training	11
3.4 Companies and Career Paths	13
3.5 Infrastructure	14
3.6 Research, Information and Documentation	16
3.7 Market development	17
3.8 Rights, Remuneration and Social Benefits	19
3.9 Networking and Representation	20
3.10 Awards and Recognition	21
3.11 Funding	22
<b>Chapter Four: Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	24
<b>Chapter Five: Conclusion</b>	26

# Chapter One: A New National Theatre and Dance Policy

## 1.1 Introduction

*Breathing New Vision into Theatre and Dance in South Africa*, a National Theatre and Dance Policy, aims to nurture and celebrate theatre and dance, embracing and celebrating the diversity of theatre and dance forms in South Africa.

The policy builds on a number of proposals that have been made by civil society and other organisations and institutions over the last decade.

This is a summary of the context and of the key recommendations in the policy document.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The basic requirement of any policy within the South African Theatre and Dance sector is that it recognises and responds to the inequalities within our society and affirms the right of all 'to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts' (Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), irrespective of whether they have the economic means to do so.

The relatively wealthy who earn 70% of the national income collectively will be able to purchase the public and private arts, culture and heritage services, goods and experiences on offer, just as they are able to purchase decent education, health and security services.

Besides apartheid's spatial geographies, the distribution of poverty, wealth and racially-defined communities continue, more than 27 years into our post-apartheid democracy. Substantive – rather than superficial demographic – transformation will require state subsidy and intervention, rather than reliance on "the market" to correct such historical maldistribution.

Thus, policy that foregrounds or preferences the creative and cultural industries that, by definition, require markets of people with disposable income, will in effect, continue to exclude and marginalise the poor, who comprise at least half of South Africa's population.

One of the biggest challenges within the arts, culture and heritage sector is to overcome the race, class, gender, provincial and other divides and bring together those who have - or who have access to - skills, resources, networks, experience, infrastructure and markets and those who do not, in order collectively to work for the greater good for all.

The beneficiary focus of cultural policy in a country such as ours should be on ensuring access to the arts for all citizens, the vision of the original White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage.

## 1.3 Aims

The primary aims of this Draft National Theatre and Dance Policy are:

- Aim one:** To set a vision and practical policies, strategies, implementation mechanisms and time frameworks that would result in a sustainable and vibrant theatre and dance sector in all nine provinces with South African dance and theatre makers representing the country with pride across the African continent and globally.
- Aim two:** To outline the unique dynamics, conditions and circumstances of theatre and dance, relative to other art disciplines, in order to ensure appropriate policies and strategies be devised for the sector that promote and celebrate excellence and diversity in the various forms of theatre and dance in the country.
- Aim three:** To ensure that all theatre and dance forms, traditional and contemporary are represented in the policy, and affirm the dignity and rights of those who seek to make their livelihoods within the theatre and dance sector.
- Aim four:** To ensure the vision of the country's constitution and the human rights of all South Africans – irrespective of economic means, social status or geography - are integrated into and served by theatre and dance policy and practice.
- Aim five:** To uphold the democratic rights of artists and co-workers to organise themselves independently and engage in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and strategies that directly affect them.
- Aim six:** To contribute to a mutually respectful relationship between civil society and different tiers of government – national, provincial and local - in order to create cooperation and mutual understanding.

## 1.4 Vision

The proposed Vision for theatre and dance is:

To nurture, support and celebrate South Africa's rich and diverse theatre and dance forms, thus enabling them to contribute to human, social and economic development and to the well-being of all who live here.

A secondary part of the vision is premised on Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

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

## 1.5 Understanding Theatre and Dance in a South African context

Given the range of lived experience in South Africa, this document proposes policies, strategies and funding mechanisms that recognise the different roles that theatre and dance play in different material and social conditions.

### **Theatre and Dance for Human Development**

This is about theatre and dance in their own rights, as integral to human development. It is about exercising the fundamental human right to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts. It is about exercising the constitutional right to freedom of creative expression. It is also about theatre and dance providing emotional, psychological and spiritual catharsis and sheer enjoyment. It is about building confidence, developing transversal problem-solving skills and indulging in creativity and innovation for those who participate actively in it.

### **Theatre and Dance for Social Development**

Given the unequal nature of our society, the high levels of poverty and unemployment and the myriad social problems that arise from these, the need for artistic interventions to contribute to socially-good ends is great. This need would see dance and theatre instrumentalised to achieve social well-being, to change behavior towards an end that would benefit a community or society as a whole e.g. a theatre company that educates a community about COVID-19; a photographic exhibition that affirms gay women; a dance piece that celebrates people living with disabilities and a music concert that addresses Afrophobia.

It is through Theatre and Dance for Social Development that divides along lines of gender, language, urban/rural, race, class and disability will be addressed, and that projects that promote the development of skills, mentoring, and capacity-building among marginalised communities are supported. The provision of infrastructure in poorer districts and the support for projects and activities that utilise homes, schools, church halls, taverns and public spaces to promote the creation, distribution and enjoyment of theatre and dance, would be part of Theatre and Dance for Social Development.

### **Theatre and Dance for Economic Development**

Theatre and Dance for Economic Development is about commercial theatre and dance whose primary orientation is to generate wealth for shareholders and participants, and that do so by unashamedly creating and presenting theatre and dance productions for economic elites, most often reached through formal theatre spaces and festivals.

Theatre and Dance for Economic Development productions - stand-up comedy, musicals, local and international productions that tour with South African performers locally and abroad – are aimed at markets with disposable income, tourist markets and global markets.

Theatre and Dance for Human Development, for Social Development and for Economic Development require different strategies and different funding models for each rather than a one-size-fits all approach.

## Chapter 2: Historical, Social and Sector Context

### 2.1 The COVID-19 Context

The COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown restrictions have impacted heavily on the arts sector generally, but particularly on dance and theatre. The very definition of theatre as the live encounter between performers and audiences has been brought into question with audiences being banned as potential vectors of the coronavirus and as theatre-makers migrated to online platforms without live audiences in search of income.

The South African Cultural Observatory (SACO) reported that the contribution of the creative and cultural industries to the Gross Domestic Product shrank by R42,2 billion in 2020.

Unemployment across all sectors increased dramatically, with the 7,6 million people – 34,9% of the labour force - without work in the third quarter of 2021. 66,5% of job seekers aged 15-24 are unemployed.

COVID-19 has highlighted and exacerbated the inequalities in our society, highlighting the stark questions: For whom are we making theatre and dance? Who has access? Who is excluded?

### 2.2 Contemporary Social Context

The last census (2011) provides a useful starting point for understanding our current, post-apartheid context for policy-making.

South Africa’s current population estimate is 59,62 million.

Statistics South Africa’s population estimates for mid-2019 were as follows:

Province	Number	%	Province	Number	%
Gauteng	15,18m	25,8%	Mpumalanga	4,59m	7,8%
KwaZulu-Natal	11,29m	19,2%	North West	4,03m	6,8%
Western Cape	6,84m	11,6%	Free State	2,89m	4,9%
Eastern Cape	6,71m	11,4%	Northern Cape	1,26m	2,1%
Limpopo	5,98m	10,17%	TOTAL	58,78m	100%

The population increased from 40,5 million in 1996 when the first White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage was adopted to 59,62 million in mid-2020 (according to STATS SA estimates), an increase of nearly 20 million.

Numbers per ‘population group’ (terms as used by STATS SA) in 2019 were as follows:

Black African	Coloured	White	Indian/Asian	Total
47,44 m	5,18 m	4,65 m	1,5m	58,78m
80,7%	8,8%	7,9%	2,6%	100%

51,2% of the population are women.

64% of the population is under 35.

According to a STATS SA 2020 report on inequality in South Africa, Black Africans earn an average of R6899 per month, Coloureds R9339 per month, Indians/Asians R14235 per month and Whites R24646 per month.

The report states that the bottom 60% of households are more dependent on social grants than on income derived through the labour market.

According to STATS SA's 2014/15 Living Conditions Survey, nearly half – 49,2% - of South African adults live in poverty. The percentage of adults who live in poverty per province is as follows: Limpopo 67,5%; Eastern Cape 67,3%; KwaZulu-Natal 60,7%; North West 59,6%; Mpumalanga 54,6%; Northern ape 54,3%, Free State 48,9%, Western Cape 33,2% and Gauteng 29,3%.

Access to the internet is increasing with more than 60% of the population now having access to the internet. However, less than 10% have access to the internet at home.

### 2.3 Creative Industries Masterplan, September 2021

The Creative Industries Masterplan developed by SACO outlines the contribution of the creative industries to the South African economy in terms of GDP contribution and employment, as a basis for projecting future growth strategies.

According to the CIM, the creative industries contributed R74,4 billion to South Africa's GDP in 2018, which amounted to 1,7% of the GDP total. The biggest contributing creative industry was design and creative services (50%), followed by books and publishing (14%), arts education services (11%), audio-visual sector (11%), performance and celebration (7%) and visual arts (3%).

The creative industries contribute just over 4% to the employed labour force with visual arts and craft accounting for 44%, followed by books and published (14,5%), design and creative services (11,8%), audio visual sector (5%) and performance and celebration (which includes theatre and dance) (5%).

From this, it is clear that some sectors contribute significantly to employment but have a smaller impact on GDP (e.g., visual arts) while the theatre and dance sector (performance and celebration) contributes similarly to the GDP (7%) and employment (5%).

What is not clear is what constitutes 'employment' in the theatre and dance sector since much of the income-generation in the sector happens on an ad hoc, independent contractor basis, rather than as full-time employees.

The CIM's figures for export of cultural goods and services for 2014 are \$599 million in total with design goods accounting for 52% of export income (\$315 million), followed by books and publishing (\$118m, 20%), visual arts (\$55m, 9%), arts and crafts 6,5% (\$39m) and audio-visual material 5% (\$32m). Performance and celebration – including dance and theatre – do not feature at all in the exporting of cultural goods and services from South Africa which imports three times more cultural goods than we export.

In its opening paragraphs, the CIM states:

The creation of decent work in the Creative Sector is a challenge. Employment in the Creative Sector exhibits a high degree of precarity. “jobs are often short-term, contractual and intermittent. The hours are long and dynamics of work bulimic”. Some of the features of work in the Creative Sector include work organised on a project-by-project basis, flexibility and intensification of work and widespread informality in hiring practices which could lead to substantial amounts of unpaid time. The degree of precarity of work differs across the sub-sectors of the Creative Sector with those domains that are labour intensive exhibiting higher degrees of precarity and relative decline in their contribution to the economic value produced by the Creative Sector.

## 2.4 Implications of the above for theatre and dance policy

We require a policy that recognises and responds to these factors and affirms the right of all “to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts” (Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), irrespective of whether they have the economic means to do so.

Gauteng and Western Cape with their relatively high levels of education and income, would appear to be the best provinces in which to pursue cultural activities that may be supported by the market, but there is a great need for a “developmental state” approach (where government intervenes and supports programmes and initiatives to enable citizens to enjoy their constitutional rights) and the re-prioritisation of resources, infrastructure and expertise to the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, North West, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and Free State and parts of KwaZulu-Natal. (Notwithstanding this, given the inherited spatial arrangements of apartheid, there are many locations within Gauteng and the Western Cape – and other urban centres – that do not have access to cultural infrastructure, resources and expertise, thus requiring similar interventions as the less-resourced provinces).

The vision and strategies articulated in this document are premised on those who seek to make their livelihoods within the dance and theatre ecosystems, working together for the benefit of all within the sector, and in so doing, for the benefit of all the citizens of the country, irrespective of class, education level, geographical location, ‘race’ or gender. The policy seeks to make this possible.



# Chapter Three: A New Vision for Theatre and Dance

## 3.1 Leveling the Playing Field

The theatre and dance sectors mirror the socio-political historical reality of the history of the country which has resulted in present-day disparities. To level the playing fields, there needs to be mechanisms in place in all areas of theatre and dance, that further the vision inherent in the policy, and address issues of disparity.

Levelling the playing field and distributing services and material support to the majority of theatre and dance practitioners in the country requires far greater synergy between national, provincial and local levels of government.

## 3.2 Introducing a fresh vision for Theatre and Dance in South Africa

As stated earlier, the proposed vision for theatre and dance articulated in this National Theatre and Dance Policy is:

To nurture, support and celebrate South Africa's rich and diverse theatre and dance forms, thus enabling them to contribute to human, social and economic development and to the well-being of all who live here.

To give practical effect to this vision, our future would include:

- A vibrant theatre and dance sector with companies based in, producing and touring excellent work in every province
- A national circuit of publicly-funded venues (formal and community-based) in every province to facilitate national tours by independent and publicly-funded dance and theatre production
- Festivals promoting and celebrating dance and theatre in every province, with a national network of such festivals coordinating the co-production and distribution of work
- Access to skills and mentorships in dance and theatre (choreography, dance, acting, directing, playwriting, stage management, producing, etc.) and in cultural entrepreneurship at post-school level through accredited institutions in every province
- Dance and theatre education at school levels
- Annual school play and dance festivals, facilitated through an artists-in-schools programme
- Greater understanding and integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and indigenous languages into theatre productions and dance forms
- Translation of plays into the primary provincial languages at publicly-funded theatres and festivals through technology
- International and African tours by South African theatre and dance companies

- Greater inclusivity with strong emphasis on integrating people with disabilities and greater gender diversity both in those who make their livelihoods in the sector and in audiences
- Funding mechanisms that are efficient, empathetic and that reflect an understanding of the diversity of theatre and dance practice and the different roles they play in human, social and economic development
- Better alignment between national, provincial and local government policies, strategies and funding of dance and theatre.
- A sector Code of Conduct to spell out minimal standards of acceptable behaviour – including themes of gender-based violence, fraud and corruption, anti-social behaviour - and the consequences of contravention of the Code
- Legal protection of practitioners as independent contractors with the same rights and protections as workers in other sectors of the economy, and with social benefits such as medical aid, unemployment insurance and support during disasters that affect their employment such as pandemics
- The use of technology to increase access to theatre and dance and to develop global audiences and markets
- Representative and well-governed and led advocacy networks and representative structures for the dance and theatre sector engaging with government and other entities to devise, implement and monitor policies and strategies affecting the sector
- A socially-cohesive and integrated dance and theatre industry that is representative of and consciously works together to affirm the country's diversity.

If the above outlines a possible vision and some of its practical manifestations, the following sections spell out how we may pursue and achieve this vision

### 3.3 Education and Training

- Dance and theatre are to be integrated into the curriculum at primary and secondary school levels both for vocational purposes and in order for learners to benefit from the cognitive, creative and problem-solving skills that engagement in the arts enhances
- There must be at least one publicly-funded tertiary education and training institution/department teaching theatre and dance, in each province that provides certificate, diploma and undergraduate courses for practitioners as well as educators, producers, technicians, designers, administrators and entrepreneurs in the dance and theatre sector.

- All tertiary institutions that provide training for dance and theatre practitioners, include in their training an arts administration/management foundation module that covers areas such as cultural policy, entrepreneurship (marketing, raising capital, financial management, budgeting, etc) and the rights of artists.
- Monitoring the implementation of Arts Education curriculum in all schools and grades to ensure that such education is delivered by qualified arts practitioners,
- Each year, a minimum of ten administrators/entrepreneurs under the age of 35 be identified through an open, competitive process, with at least 50% being women; that they be placed with ten of the country's leading arts administrators for at least a twelve-month period to be mentored by them, to acquire hands-on experience, with both the mentors and mentees being paid stipends.
- Through open and competitive processes, at least ten directors and ten choreographers be identified annually, and be provided with stipends to work with, and/or observe the country's established directors, playwrights and choreographers over a 12-month period.
- Playwriting courses be offered in each province annually, with selected writers – particularly those under 35 - in each province being mentored by an experienced playwright (remotely over email and zoom-type technology if necessary).
- Annually, technical training courses with a number of people proportionate to provincial populations being trained in the technical aspects of theatre and dance production, and being provided with opportunities to acquire practical experience at the country's festivals and theatres.
- Annual online and physical courses for arts critics (including dance and theatre critics) be offered, with mentors working with selected new critics over a year-long period.
- All training, mentoring and human resource, development programmes should be inclusive and reflect the demographics of the area, and have at least equal number of men and women, or favouring women as well as people with disabilities
- Courses and training be developed particularly to cater for individuals with physical, mental or other disabilities, to allow them to operate independently or to be integrated into mainstream work as they choose.
- The establishment of a National Theatre and Dance Education and Training Foundation should be established by the DSAC in partnership with the theatre and dance sector, consisting of ten skilled members nominated from within the formal and non-formal education. Members should serve up to three years, renewable for a second term. This Foundation will set industry standards of training; monitor and coordinate human resource development; facilitate through training, mentorships; and promote the provision of opportunities; within the dance and theatre sectors.

## 3.4 Companies and Career Paths

### Mainstream Dance and Theatre Companies

- Given the provincial population distributions, that there be at least one full-time theatre company of up to 12 members (including administrative and technical staff) and one full-time dance company of 12 members (including administrative and technical staff) per province in each of Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape and Free State, two such dance and theatre companies in each of Eastern Cape and Western Cape, and three dance and three theatre companies in each of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal for a total of at least 15 dance and 15 theatre companies employing a total of at least 360 workers (including dancers, actors, technicians, managers, choreographers, directors and writers)
- At least one nationally-subsidised theatre and one dance company should comprise and be devoted to people with disabilities
- These companies must be independent entities, with their own legal statutes, governance structures, etc., but they are to be given preferential bases at nationally and provincially-subsidised theatre infrastructure, should they so choose (they will not be obliged to be based at such infrastructure, but will have first option)
- That the mandates of such companies be to deliver a minimum of five productions per year, inclusive of productions for children and young people; such funded companies are to provide access to theatre and dance for those who may not be able to afford tickets to traditional theatre spaces
- Such companies are to be provided with a core subsidy appropriate to the living conditions/standards of each region e.g., house rents may be more expensive in Johannesburg than Kimberley
- Generally, such core subsidies would be between R2m and R4m per year at 2021 rates, or an average of R3,5m for 30 companies or a total of R105 million, with companies guaranteed funding in one-to-three-year cycles so that they may plan in advance and provide a degree of job security.

### Theatre and Dance for Development Companies

In addition to the provincial companies outlined above that will operate more in mainstream activities, theatre and dance companies that focus on social development should be similarly supported.

The number of theatre and dance companies for social development should be distributed across the country proportionate to the population of each province.

An initial commitment to 50 such companies comprising an average of 7 members should be recommended, with an average subsidy of R1 million per company.

Choreographers, directors and playwrights would be provided with residencies at the theatres on the national circuit (each theatre would be obliged to have at least one such residency per year), and/or be attached to subsidised theatre or dance company as appropriate.

Individual residencies for directors, writers, composers and choreographers at publicly-funded institutions should not last longer than 3 years, and should be available on a competitive basis.

No publicly-funded institution should contract an artistic director for a period exceeding 5 years, renewable for a maximum of a further three years. This will allow more people with the necessary expertise to acquire experience, and to build their brands and networks.

### 3.5 Infrastructure

- A Review Panel comprising reputable and knowledgeable individuals within the theatre sector, is to evaluate the performances and outputs of the nationally-subsidised theatres over the last 5 years (relative to each other and other theatres that are not nationally-subsidised) to determine whether the country and the dance and theatre sectors are deriving the maximum or best benefits from these theatres for the amounts of public funds allocated to them. Where some of these theatres fall short, their subsidies should be cut and/or responsibility for them should be devolved to the province and/or city in which they are located, and the funds saved from the national purse should be spent on infrastructure in other provinces that do not have subsidised infrastructure and on dance and theatre companies as outlined above.
- A national circuit of theatre venues – subsidised by the national purse – must be created; at least one in each of Limpopo, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga, Free State, North West, Western Cape and Eastern Cape – and two in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, with this national circuit largely comprising existing theatres or multi-functional arts spaces that could host professional theatre and dance productions (such infrastructure does not have to be the buildings of the apartheid era currently subsidised by the DSAC; less expensive buildings more appropriate to the forms of theatre and contemporary audiences can be supported), and where inclusivity and access are mainstreamed
- Theatres on the national circuit are to be provided with three-year budget cycles to facilitate planning
- Theatres on the national circuit are to be evaluated by an independent entity of theatre experts at least every two years in terms of their mandates and administration, with corrective action being taken where necessary and with penalties being imposed – including the loss of national circuit status – when such theatres have grossly underperformed
- National Circuit venues will be required to offer a balanced programme comprising work that they themselves initiate, produce or co-produce; work that is produced by the independent theatre and/or dance company housed within the theatre, and work that is produced by external hirers. They should also serve as hubs for 4IR capacity building/content development so that there can be linkages between live performance and design, animation, broadcasting, live-streaming of events, etc.

- In addition to theatres that comprise the national circuit, creating a natural touring circuit for dance and theatre productions to traverse the country, theatres that play roles of national significance, are to be supported with a public subsidy primarily to support the production of new work, and the provision of opportunities to new entrants into the industry e.g., Baxter Theatre, Theatre on the Square. Such theatres are to be invited to apply for such status and be granted three-year subsidies (not exceeding R5 million annually in the initial phase).

### Community Arts Centres

It is recommended that:

- A moratorium be placed on the building of mono-purpose theatre structures by the public sector at all levels, in favour of multi-purpose arts centres that include the facilities and human resources to stage professional dance and theatre performances, and that areas in which cultural infrastructure generally does not exist, be prioritised.
- No multi-purpose arts centre be built without a concomitant programme of developing, training and mentoring the human resources required to administer and effectively manage such a centre.
- Multi-purpose arts centres be linked to the national circuit theatres in order to benefit from their experience, networks, expertise and productions.
- Multi-purpose arts centres also be capacitated to be hubs for their capacity building so that there can be linkages into design, animation, broadcasting and live-streaming of events.
- Centres are inclusive and have accessibility to people with disabilities, and that
- Multi-purpose arts centres also be provided with different tiers of funding depending on their governance, management, community impact, etc. and that such centres be the joint responsibility of national, provincial and local government

### Community Infrastructure

It is further recommended that:

- Efforts to create and distribute theatre and dance in peri-urban (township) and rural areas, using existing infrastructure such as school, church and community halls as well as people's homes (garages, backyards, lounges) and the creation of new or conversion of existing spaces into theatres, be strongly supported with public funding, equipment, security, training of human resources, audience development, touring of work, etc.
- Mappings of infrastructure be undertaken in various townships and rural areas to determine what exists, and what may be used for creating, producing and distributing theatre and dance and that such mapping be updated on an annual basis
- Mainstream theatres which receive public subsidy, be required to work with, and help to mentor, support and equip such theatre spaces

- Non-traditional theatre spaces in urban centres be identified and placed on local databases for use/hire by theatre and dance companies in need of rehearsal and production space
- Festivals and performances in people’s homes – such as the former Voorkamerfees in Darling - be encouraged and supported
- Community-based theatre/dance companies be paired with schools, to provide support in and access to the arts in education; and that
- Independent theatre spaces/community spaces be linked with schools without these facilities, so that children and young people are able to access spaces to showcase their work.
- Circuits of community arts centres and of spaces within provinces are to be strongly encouraged and supported to ensure effective production and distribution of work through such circuits.

### **Municipal and independent theatres**

It is recommended that

- A survey be done of all existing municipal and independent theatres to ascertain the distribution of theatre infrastructure across the country, as well as their current capacity to produce or host professional theatre and dance productions.
- Where such infrastructure is identified as having potential to be part of a national or regional circuit of venues, they should receive the necessary funding to upgrade their physical infrastructure if necessary and to operate effectively
- A national – publicly accessible - database be maintained of all theatre infrastructure in the country, including their contact details, seating capacities, rental rates, rehearsal spaces, etc so that dance and theatre companies may engage with them in planning and conducting tours

## **3.6 Research, Information and Documentation**

**It is recommended**

- That a national website/portal be created and be regularly updated that will include a listing of all theatre and dance spaces, festivals, dance and theatre companies, education and training institutions, etc in each city/province
- That the website includes listings of the plays/dances and other events taking place at such institutions with links to the websites of all theatres, festivals, etc.
- That the website includes publications and articles detailing the latest research that is relevant to the theatre and dance industries e.g., economic impact studies of festivals, marketing research in particular provinces, as well as all the post-graduate theses done annually (titles, brief synopsis, author, institution, availability, etc)
- That a national database be created of practitioners in all theatre and dance categories of work, outlining each one’s bio, photograph, skills, achievements, etc as a means of marketing each one, but also to ascertain the skills base which may be drawn on for mentorships, training, etc. Importantly too, this database would serve the purpose of



corroborating employment and work within the sector for purposes of UIF and other benefits for those who make their living within the dance and theatre sector

- That a monthly online newsletter be developed and distributed to the national database to keep them informed of developments and opportunities within the sector
- That a specialist committee from the theatre and dance community be established to determine the most pressing research that is required in advance of each year, and that bursaries are made available for post-graduate students to undertake some of such research
- That the theatre sector and the dance sector host annual national and/or regional and/or online conferences and seminars, to reflect on progress and challenges within their respective sectors, to share learnings and insights, with a publication of papers presented at each conference, made available afterwards in hard copy and on-line form
- That a quarterly journal with academic papers and general research in theatre and/or dance be produced
- That all theatres, independent companies and producers be required to deposit a comprehensive package of each production in a national theatre and dance archive, with each package including details of the show, the cast, the script, posters and programmes, reviews, etc.
- That a monthly on-line publication combining reviews of all theatre and dance shows in the previous month be created and distributed, and be posted on a national theatre website
- That relationships be established with relevant bodies such as South African Cultural Observatory (SACO), Human Sciences Research Council (HRSC), National Research Foundation (NRF), etc. in order to engage in active and ongoing research to review and constantly renew all aspects of theatre and dance

### 3.7 Market development

It is recommended

- That publicly funded dance and theatre companies have a schools' programme where they take specially-crafted shows to creches schools in the province to inspire children and young people
- That all nine provinces host annual schools dance and theatre competitions, with professional theatre- and dance-makers working with schools (so providing employment for artists) over at least a six-month period to produce plays and dance pieces, which compete for prizes at a provincial level, and the winning provincial plays and dance pieces competing at a national level; such competitions will generate schools' and parental/family audiences that can be built upon as markets for the future
- That each school be partnered with a local artist who is trained to work in that school to support the curricular or co-curricular Creative Arts needs of the school
- That live theatre and dance performances and companies be supported to tour schools thereby encouraging a vocational and/or audience interest in theatre and dance
- That training institutions include, and that funding be set aside by public funding agencies for street theatre and dance, and theatre and dance and festivals of theatre and dance in public spaces so that these become a common occurrence in South African public life



- That theatre in indigenous African languages be encouraged through increased funding incentives, competitions and touring support
- That citizens who are unemployed or who earn less than R6500 per month – and their households – be provided with vouchers that entitle them to attend at least four theatre and dance performances per year in institutions or by companies supported by the public purse
- That all theatre and dance training institutions include an introduction to marketing for theatre and/or dance productions
- Theatre/dance marketing entrepreneurs in each province be encouraged with initial grants to develop the tools they require, effectively to market theatre and dance productions
- Those who are engaged in theatre and dance publicity and marketing, form a network that meets at an annual conference to keep in touch with best international practice, share local experiences and ideas and develop marketing and publicity strategies relevant to the varying conditions of our country
- All theatres that form part of the national circuit establish marketing departments to ensure maximum audiences for the shows that are staged there (current experience is that outside hirers also have to do their own marketing), and that staff in marketing departments at these theatres receive training on at least an annual basis
- A new generation of publicists and/or marketers be identified and be mentored over at least a 12-month period by marketers and/or publicists with recognised experience
- Theatres comprising the national circuit of venues be equipped with sub-title facilities so that works in original languages may be made available to audiences in other languages
- With the Afrikaans festival circuit being a key producer and supporter of theatre – particularly in Afrikaans – works are translated into Afrikaans, and/or that works in languages other than Afrikaans, are made available to markets at such festivals through the use of technology and sub-titles
- Excellence in theatre and dance marketing is recognised and honoured at annual theatre and/or dance awards events
- Regular training workshops in marketing are provided for theatre and dance companies in all nine-provinces, and for those who intend participating on the fringe of the National Arts Festival and in other festivals
- Emphasis be placed on building sustainable markets for professional dance and theatre in township areas where regular cultural infrastructure may be absent, but where dance and theatre productions are being distributed in people’s homes, in makeshift spaces and in community, school and church halls
- Arts practitioners visit and engage international festivals and theatres to learn best practice and benchmarking with international trends. This will be inclusive of African festivals and institutions; and that
- South African theatre and dance companies be supported to do international works that can be toured internationally and earn foreign income (South Africa has world class talent that can stage plays by African American, British and other playwrights at far cheaper costs than their American or British counterparts).

### 3.8 Rights, Remuneration and Social Benefits

#### It is recommended

- That relevant organisations within the dance and theatre sector undertake research and set minimum wage guidelines for different categories of work and that these minimum wages be legislated by the Department of Employment and Labour, with appropriate annual increases.
- That weekly and monthly remuneration rates (not minimum wages, but rates for leads, chorus members, etc.) for members of dance and theatre companies (ad hoc, permanent or semi-permanent), daily rates for individual dancers and actors contracted for corporate jobs, and royalty fees for playwrights, choreographers, designers, etc. be formulated and be updated on an annual basis, and published on an appropriate website
- That standard templates for various contracts (year-long engagements in companies, engagements for one particular production, etc.) be created and posted on an appropriate website for use as required by anyone in the dance and theatre sector
- That a medical aid scheme – or options – for the theatre and dance fraternity be researched and developed, taking account of the itinerant nature of their work
- That a pension scheme/provident fund scheme for the performing arts fraternity be researched and developed, taking account of the nature of the current conditions, the desired conditions and the itinerant nature of current work
- That a national Performing Arts Labour Desk/Ombudsman be established to advise practitioners about their rights, provide access to contractual templates and refer practitioners to labour lawyers or agents in their respective provinces to act on their behalf when necessary
- That at least annual training workshops be held for managers and practitioners in each province, to brief them about the rights of practitioners, and related matters, with a toolkit created and updated on an annual basis with all relevant information
- That, through their representative structure/s, the theatre and dance community establish a relationship with UNESCO's Observatory on the Status of the Artist to ensure that local standards comply with international best practice
- That the practice of paying half- or lower fees for rehearsals be abolished at all publicly-funded theatres, in companies and projects funded by national, public funding agencies and that promoters and producers using publicly-funded facilities, be required to pay full fees for rehearsals
- That retirement homes for those who made their livelihoods in the arts sector be established, starting with Gauteng in the north and the Western Cape in the south
- That the Theatre Benevolent Fund be provided with more regular and sustainable streams of income e.g., R0,50 in every theatre and dance ticket
- That particular categories of dance and theatre work which have time/age limits e.g., dancers, be identified and that opportunities for retraining of such workers for alternative careers be provided

- That a commission to investigate best practice with regard to taxation of performing artists be established to make recommendations about how those active in dance and theatre should be taxed
- That the dance and theatre sector joins with artists in other disciplines to promote the Charter of Rights for South African Artists both to educate practitioners about their rights and to mobilise them to advocate for these rights to be realised in practice.

### 3.9 Networking and Representation

The roles of independent, democratic and representative artist-led organisations should include:

- Monitoring government and its agencies (funding agencies, publicly funded institutions, etc) and their activities in the arts, culture and heritage sector at international, national, provincial and local levels and to expose, engage and confront the relevant authorities on behalf of the theatre and dance sectors where necessary.
- Act on behalf of its membership in policy formulation, implementation, evaluation and corrective action.
- Keep the dance and theatre sectors informed of developments that affect them through regular newsletters, news alerts, social media, workshops and other means.
- Actively and proactively defend those active in the theatre and dance sectors, including the establishment of an independent ombudsperson to investigate and act on relevant cases, and to provide legal assistance to members and others involved in the sector when they are victims of corruption, non-payments, suppression of freedom of expression, physical and other abuse, etc.
- Build capacity within the dance and theatre sectors through workshops and courses, particularly with regard to leadership and advocacy skills, sustainable artistic and organisational practice, cultural policy, entrepreneurship and information technology/social media.
- Pursue the implementation of a social welfare system for workers in the dance and theatre sectors, particularly with regard to medical care, pension schemes, funeral cover, unemployment insurance, etc.
- Initiate and coordinate – in partnership with members as appropriate – arts events and activities that encourage and defend independent, bold theatre and dance practice accessible to all.
- Build relationships with partners in Africa and across the globe in order to provide opportunities for collaboration, residencies, joint ventures and exchanges for its members.
- Undertake research to inform its activities, its advocacy and its engagement with issues relevant to its members and strategic plans.
- Encourage a culture of debate, critical discourse and independent thinking through internal education, public events, seminars and conferences.
- Maintain a national website/portal that will include a listing of all theatre and dance spaces, festivals, dance and theatre companies, education and training institutions, etc in each city/province.

It is further recommended that nationally representative organisations that are legally founded, that have proven membership, that are democratic with elected and accountable leadership, are provided with public funding of R500 000 to R1 500 000.00 per year to cover their coordination and administrative costs, and so help to ensure their effectiveness.

### 3.10 Awards and Recognition

It is recommended that

- Individuals who have achieved great distinction as choreographers, directors, writers, designers, etc, be recognised and rewarded as “national assets” – based on public and sector nominations (with very competitive criteria and rigorous selection processes) – and that they are supported with monthly stipends for one-to-three-year periods. They would then be available to work with the various professional companies and other entities including schools and community groups to share their expertise and knowledge.
- Provincial awards systems also recognise other categories that make significant contributions e.g., “Best Research”, “Best Reviewer/Arts Journalist of the Year”, “Theatre Marketer/Publicist of the Year”, “Arts administrator of the Year”, “Front of House Manager of the Year”, etc, since all of these contribute to the theatre and dance sectors.
- That younger theatre-makers (35 and under) who achieve distinction in a particular year, are rewarded with a trip of 5-10 fellows to at least one international theatre festival where they may observe and learn from international productions

#### Competitions

- Annual playwriting competitions in all official languages, and in different categories – children, youth, adults, etc. - be held with the best works selected for production.
- New scripts produced annually be collected in a publication of play scripts
- Annual competitions in choreography be held, with the best works being rewarded financially.
- Annual competitions in writing new musicals be held, with the winning musical being staged.
- Competitions are held annually to nurture new stand-up comics.

#### Residencies, mentorships and bursaries

- Directors, playwrights, choreographers, etc. with great potential and/or who win awards be provided with opportunities for further growth and to produce new work through local and/or international residencies
- Emerging leaders, researchers, academics in the dance and theatre sector be identified and provided with bursaries and mentorships to boost their careers and impact

## 3.11 Funding

### It is recommended that

- DSAC hosts a forum of all funding agencies (public, private, international, etc) to determine areas and strategies of funding in the various agencies, in order to standardise funding and minimise duplication.
- Changes be made to the budget allocations of DSAC and provincial departments to align with the vision and strategies of the National Theatre and Dance Policy and Strategy.
- Standardisation of application forms to be effected with space for questions relevant to each agency
- Consideration be given to funding deadlines to be aligned so that applicants may have knowledge of the outcomes at a similar time
- Funding outcomes should not be more than two months after the closing dates for applications.
- Help desks for artists to be established in each province to assist them with the application and compliance processes, and all forms take artists with disabilities into account in their design.
- Funding generally to shift from project-by-project funding to include and enhance the more sustainable models, with more consideration to yearly grants, and 3-year funding cycles in order to build the sustainability and enhance more effective planning within the sector.
- Different funding mechanisms be established to fund theatre and dance for human development, social development and economic development respectively
- The policy of subsidised theatres being “receiving houses” available only for rent from outside parties be rescinded and that each of these theatres is provided with a production budget in their annual subsidies to commission, purchase, produce or co-produce work
- The agreed policy and strategic proposals arising from this Policy Document be costed by the Task Team working with DSAC, that current allocations and expenditure be evaluated, and that the agreed proposals be implemented over a phased period of 3-5 years (2022/3-2026/7), with 1 April 2023 heralding the start of a fully-integrated, vibrant national theatre and dance practice reflecting most of the structural changes recommended in this Document.

## Chapter Four: Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

From the experience of the last twenty-seven years, we have learned that it is not sufficient to have visionary policy and strategic proposals; the dance and theatre sector has to be engaged both in the implementation of these policies and strategies, and in the regular monitoring and evaluation of their implementation, proposing and taking corrective action as necessary.

There are some proposals that the dance and theatre sectors may pursue themselves, and there are other proposals that have to be implemented by government (various national departments, provincial and local government departments) and government-related agencies such as the National Arts Council.

### Minimum ideal features of a dance and theatre practice by 1 April 2025

Based on this National Theatre and Dance Policy, the following would be minimum ideal features of a dance and theatre practice in, or by 1 April 2025 (with elements phased in over the next three years):

1. An independent theatre company and an independent dance company with 8-12 members each, subsidised for 1-3 years, in each of each of Mpumalanga, Limpopo, North West, Northern Cape and Free State, two such dance and 2 theatre companies in Eastern Cape and Western Cape, and three such dance and theatre companies in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. 30 companies producing 4-5 productions per year, and touring these in their respective provinces as well as bringing their work to national festivals will form the core of a vibrant dance and theatre sector.
2. In addition to these 'mainstream' companies, a similar number of 30 community theatre and theatre-for-development companies with up to 6 members each, distributed across the 9 provinces with subsidies of up to R0.5-R1,5 million per year
3. One nationally-subsidised theatre space in Polokwane, Nelspruit, Mahikeng, Kimberley, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, East London, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town, with these comprising a national circuit of theatres, able to support national tours by theatre and dance companies, and with production budgets to purchase, commission and co-produce work.
4. Twenty-five community arts centres with at least one in each province, distributed between the 9 provinces and supported by national/provincial/local governments with fully trained administrators/managers and sound governance structures
5. At least one training institution offering a year-long course for managers/administrators of community arts centres.
6. A resident director, dramaturge and playwright at each of the subsidized theatre companies and/or nationally-subsidised theatres.
7. A resident choreographer based at each of the nationally-subsidised dance companies and/or nationally subsidised theatres.

8. At least one education and training institution – university or TVET college - per province offering certificate, diploma and degree courses in dance, theatre, entrepreneurship, marketing, administration, policy, dance and theatre criticism/journalism. Such institutions would recognise prior learning to allow entry notwithstanding good candidates lacking formal academic qualifications.
9. A national network of 8-15 festivals that include theatre and dance.
10. A network of theatres, particularly subsidised (national, provincial or local) theatres.
11. At least annual meetings of artistic directors of festivals and theatres to plan theatre and dance productions and tours.
12. A touring agency with at least ten theatre and ten dance productions travelling abroad each year.
13. A national database of 10 000 people making their living in the dance and theatre sectors, each receiving a monthly newsletter about developments in their sector.
14. An online archive of all theatre and dance productions of the previous two years.
15. Nine provincial schools dance festivals and nine provincial schools theatre festivals.
16. Recommended minimum wages for dance and theatre workers and approved remuneration scales used by all theatres, festivals and independent companies.
17. A social security system for those in the dance and theatre ecosystems with customised medical, pension and unemployment schemes.
18. A Code of Conduct adopted across the dance and theatre sectors, integrated into all employment contracts.
19. An Ombudsman dedicated to the theatre and dance sector with a panel of lawyers connected to the Ombudsman's office to deal with contractual issues, allegations of corruption, and allegations of contraventions of the Industry Code of Conduct
20. An annual national theatre conference
21. An annual national dance conference.
22. A quarterly publication on theatre and dance related research.
23. A politically independent, non-partisan national theatre and dance structure that actively advocates for, monitors, helps to implement and evaluates policies and strategies affecting the dance and theatre sectors, and which receives a grant from the state.
24. A national network of publicity and marketing entrepreneurs and companies in each of the nine provinces.
25. Funding structures and strategies in place that recognize the different functions of theatre and dance, and that assure the sustainability of these sectors.
26. Constructive and mutually-respectful working relationships between government and funding agencies on the one hand and civil society structures and practitioners on the other.
27. Annual playwrighting and choreographic competitions and mentoring programmes to encourage new work.
28. Festivals and theatre and dance performances in people's homes and community-initiated infrastructure, particularly in townships
29. An annual women's theatre festival of at least ten productions to encourage new women writers, directors, designers and technicians



30. An annual women's dance festival of at least ten productions to encourage new women choreographers and designers
31. An annual student theatre festival with private and publicly-funded theatre training institutions entering original productions or productions of South African playwrights
32. An annual student dance festival with private and publicly-funded dance training institutions entering original choreographic productions or productions by established South African choreographers
33. Funding for independent theatres to be able to produce, commission or co-produce new work

### **It is strongly recommended**

- That a National Theatre And Dance Team be established comprising representatives of legitimate representative organisations in the dance and theatre sector, and nominees of academic and other relevant institutions in the sector as well as provincial representatives from all nine provinces and from civil society organisations, to drive – with DSAC – the implementation of this Policy Document within the agreed time frameworks
- That the National Theatre and Dance Team and DSAC devises a comprehensive and detailed time framework and budget- taking the above recommendations and other recommendations into account - over three years for the implementation and full realisation of the recommendations in this National Theatre and Dance Policy, which shall be made public
- That the national theatre and dance team reports on a regular basis (at least quarterly) on the progress being made with regard to the implementation of the policies
- That DSAC equips and funds the National Theatre and Dance Team sufficiently for it to be able to commission or undertake rigorous research, to monitor and evaluate the implementation of policy
- That the National Theatre and Dance Team's mandate includes proposing corrective action where necessary, and the allocation of responsibility for such corrective action
- That, on an annual basis, the National Theatre and Dance Team submits a report on the progress being made to the Portfolio Committee on Sport, Arts and Culture and to provincial equivalents of this committee



## Chapter Five: Conclusion

COVID-19 has highlighted the precarity of the dance and theatre sector in particular.

However, this Policy Document represents an opportunity for a fresh start and for a more co-operative (even if still robust) relationship between DSAC, government agencies and publicly-funded institutions on the one hand, and Civil Society organizations.

There is no doubt that we have incredible expertise, resources, infrastructure, networks and experience within the country's theatre and dance sector, that if combined, would make a major contribution to the sustainability and growth of the sector itself. What the coronavirus pandemic has shown is that we need to work together, to act with courage and vision if we are rebuild and sustain our sector.

The vision contained in this document, if implemented, will have far-reaching positive and constructive consequences for the quality of life and emotional well-being of South African citizens in all provinces, for the health and sustainability of the dance and theatre community, for South Africa's international image and for its economy.

After nearly two years of devastation and immense loss caused by the pandemic, we now have an opportunity to deliver a more optimistic future.

Let us take it with both hands.