



Arts 05

## Task and Finish Group on Participation in the Arts

### Response from TAN Dance – Dawns TAN

TAN is a community dance organisation (CDO), a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. TAN is a revenue client of The Arts Council of Wales and received their Beacon Award in 2008/9. ACW funding supports the running of our organisation but does not extend to activity costs. We have to create partnerships or raise funds to deliver all our participatory activities.

TAN operates primarily in the Local Government areas of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the City and County of Swansea. Both authorities revenue fund the organisation. TAN has two offices in Baglan Community Centre offered at lower than commercial rate by NPTCBC.

TAN offers the people of Neath Port Talbot and Swansea the opportunity to explore, experience and create through the art form of dance. We work predominantly in areas of social and economic deprivation.

With the equivalent of 3 administration posts plus a freelance tutor team we have achieved **participation figures topping 40,000 annually** in recent years. We have organised international cultural exchanges and taken our performance groups to 11 different countries. Members of our staff have taken up invitations to work in other parts of the UK, Europe and Africa. We are known in the dance world as pioneers in male dance having set up the first all male dance company in Wales in the 1980s. We have an ambition to set up a Wales International Centre for Male Dance in Swansea.

As well as putting art at the heart of all we do we use dance as a tool for education, integration and social change. We have built up a reputation locally, nationally and internationally for accessible and exciting projects and

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performances. We believe in the transformational power of art and the creative potential of everyone.

### **Impact of Budget Cuts**

TAN lost 26% of its revenue support from C&C Swansea in 2011/12. We are, as yet, unclear as to whether they will continue to support us in 2012/13. NPTCBC have maintained their level of revenue support to us and have indicated that they will continue to do so in 2012/13 although it is not yet clear if we will sustain a slight reduction or a slight increase.

TAN staff have not had a pay rise for several years.

We are proud of our record of bringing in funds to our area having raised around a half a million for arts projects in the beginning of this decade. We enjoyed around a 45% success rate with the applications we submitted to Trusts, Foundations and Government Bodies. In the past 3 years this has plummeted to 14%. We have somehow maintained both quality and quantity in our outputs but the amount of time taken to find the money to respond to need and realise our ambitions is onerous and the many failed attempts impacts negatively on staff morale.

### **Alternative Funding Sources**

TAN is constantly searching for, and open to, new ways of bringing money into the organisation and always welcomes advice and training in how to do so. It can, however, be frustrating to attend training where good ideas are gleaned but lack of capacity prevents pursuit when considerable staff time is required to achieve success. The maintaining of quality and quantity in hard times takes up considerable staff hours.

We note that Arts and Heritage in England have set up a Catalyst Arts and Catalyst Heritage fundraising capacity building grants programme and wonder if it would be possible to set up a similar programme in Wales? A grant from such a programme would solve our problem of insufficient capacity to pursue new funding avenues.

### **Delivering Equality Objectives**

#### People Living in Areas of Deprivation

The majority of our work takes place in Communities First areas and Designated Areas of Deprivation and so consequently the majority of our participants are socially and economically deprived. Children and Young People make up the lion's share of our participation figures. We have recently sent our current programme and future plans for engaging children and young people in poverty to ACW

We target marginalised groups for specific projects e.g.:

- Traveller Children
- Young Carers
- Underachieving children in education
- Asylum Seekers & Refugees
- Elderly People
- NEETs
- People with disabilities

### Young Men & Boys – still marginalised in access to dance

We pioneered male dance from the mid 1980s and continue to do so. Wales has been profiled at festivals and events in the UK, Southern, Eastern and Western Europe, Asia Minor and Africa by our male dance company Dynion. We have brought young people from Denmark, Germany, South Africa and Uganda to Wales to work with local people as part of our international exchange programme.

We are constantly encouraging young men and boys to participate in dance, not just in the currently acceptable street dance genre, but also in dance as a serious art form. Our most recent project was “Resistance” where 230 boys and young men performed a piece about The Arab Spring to an audience of over 700.

### Integration

As well as hard statistics we have much anecdotal evidence of the personal and social achievements of our integration programmes. Eg.

“I am grateful to TAN. My son can be very naughty and is very busy; he has been stopped from going to after school club and cubs because he has been naughty there. So I was really surprised and pleased when I was told he was doing well at the workshops and he wasn’t asked to leave. I was so proud of them both. I didn’t know either of them could dance, least of all Beleddar. I cried from start to finish. We were made to feel very special at the theatre, like stars. Lots of people spoke to my husband and I and everyone made us feel really welcome. I was very happy. Can you tell everyone who was involved with this project that we all had a wonderful time, my husband, myself and my children are all very grateful to you, you are all wonderful people, thank you very much.”

Genie, Turkish Kurd Asylum Seeker

Over the years our performance projects have integrated different ethnic groups and demographics and bring new audiences into our local venues. E.g.

“All Our Citizens” an evening showcasing culture from all sectors of people living in Swansea brought in people from the following demographics, many of whom had never been to a theatre in Wales before:

- Asylum seekers & Refugees
- Homeless People
- Chinese Community
- Bangladeshi Community

- African Community
- Philipino Community

“Broken Free” partnering with Swansea University we researched the experiences of French speaking African asylum seekers and created a company of 25 asylum seekers and 25 local people to perform a piece created from the research. Participant and audience evaluation at Taliesin Arts Centre showed that the production had changed many people’s perception of asylum seekers.

“Oyster Bay” a project involving 700 people, 300 of whom performed at Swansea Grand Theatre in a production about the history of Oyster fishing in Swansea Bay with live original music and text by a local poet.

“Blitz” a cast of 200 local people performing to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the bombing of Swansea.

Our annual intergenerational performance projects have included people aged from 3yrs to 65 yrs and in 2011 included incomers from Iraq, Africa and Poland.

### Diverse Capacity

We work with children and adults with learning and physical disabilities. Currently our diverse capacity work is led by our Take This company of learning disabled adults who have performed in theatres, conferences and festivals and at the opening ceremony of the Special Olympics. Take This have organised cultural exchanges with groups in Wales, Scotland and Spain and have flown the flag for Wales by dancing and teaching at the Itinere Festival in Murcia, Spain. Take This open opportunities to many other learning disabled adults by organising performance projects that involve around 50 dancers. These projects have been performed locally and at the WMC.

### Conclusion

**I have listed these projects as examples of the extent to which community art delivers the equality objectives. These special projects are on top of our core programme of between 50-90 weekly sessions (depending on time of year).**

**As well as our own valued staff my organisation bring arts professionals from across Wales, UK and internationally to work with local people widening their horizons, making them feel valued and giving a quality arts participatory experience....and all this on very little money!**

### **Gaps in Provision**

We strive to provide to a wide constituency. Any gaps we are currently experiencing (and we are) are due to the difficulty in drawing in funds to undertake the programmes we know would benefit our communities, e.g. “Moving

On Up” a project for Elderly, Disabled and Chronically sick people. We have been searching for funds to deliver Moving on Up for several years.

### **Role of the Voluntary Sector**

The Voluntary Arts Sector knows its people. CDOs work with people of all ages and abilities and participation is our raison d'être

Speaking for CDOs, our discreet areas are all very different from each other and one size does not fit all. Local CDOs knows what the needs and barriers to participation are in its own specific area. TAN has 25 years experience of working in NPTCBC and C&C Swansea. We know the geography, we know the people, we know the other organisations and the key people to create partnerships with. This local knowledge is invaluable in achieving our local and national government objectives.

As evidenced above, TAN, for one, is an operating arm for delivering WAG's Equality Objectives, Child Poverty Action Plan and a very cost effective provider of high quality and quantity Participation in the Arts statistics.