

**RE-ENGAGING WITH ZIMBABWE  
THROUGH  
ARTS AND CULTURE**

**– A NEEDS AUDIT FOR COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES –**

*Which side of change do you want to be on?*  
Tsitsi Dangarembga, novelist and film-maker

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	2
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	3
1.1 The Commonwealth Organisations Committee on Zimbabwe.....	3
1.2. The Culture Cluster’s Visit to Zimbabwe.....	3
1.3. Outline of Activities.....	4
<b>2. Systemic Challenges</b> .....	5
2.1. Funding issues.....	5
2.2. Polarization and Mistrust.....	7
2.3. Marginalization of the Arts and Culture Sector.....	8
2.4. Indigenization: Defining a National Culture.....	9
2.5. Developing Audiences.....	10
<b>3 Needs Audit</b> .....	10
3.1. Overview.....	11
3.2. Theatre: Training & Capacity Building.....	11
3.2.1. Context.....	11
3.2.2. Challenges.....	12
3.2.3. Recommendation.....	13
3.3. Film.....	13
3.4. Training in Arts Administration and Corporate Governance.....	14
3.4.1. Recommendation.....	15
3.5. Museums and Heritage.....	15
3.5.1. Recommendations.....	16
3.6. Literature and Publishing.....	17
3.6.1. Recommendations.....	18
3.7. Libraries.....	19
3.7.1 Recommendations.....	20
3.8. Archiving and Conservation.....	20
3.8.1. Recommendation.....	20
3.9. Basic Equipment and Space.....	20
3.9.1. Recommendations.....	20
<b>4. Conclusion and Recommendations</b> .....	21
4.1. Conclusion.....	21
4.2. Future Actions from the Culture Cluster.....	22
4.2.1 Commonwealth Fellowships.....	22
4.3. General Core Recommendations.....	23
4.4. Specific Recommendations.....	24
4.4.1. Training.....	24
4.4.2 Creative Exchanges between Zimbabwe and Commonwealth countries.....	25
4.4.3. Basic material and equipment.....	25
APPENDIX 1: List of organisations contacted and individuals interviewed.....	26
APPENDIX 2: Original Letter Sent to Interviewees.....	30
APPENDIX 3: Profiles.....	31

## **Executive Summary**

From 1-10 May 2012 two members of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS) and the Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM) together with a Zimbabwean member of the Britain-Zimbabwe Society visited Zimbabwe to undertake a needs audit of the cultural sector. The visit was arranged to coincide with the 13<sup>th</sup> Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA).

Altogether, informal discussions were held with almost one hundred practitioners and administrators across the Zimbabwean arts and culture sector.

In addition, we attended a three-day symposium on “Giving Voice to the Artist: The Impact of Current Cultural Policy Discourse on Zimbabwean Arts”, visited events at the Arts Festival and made site several visits.

The focus of the discussions lay on the most pressing issues faced by the arts and culture sector as it emerges from a period of economic depression and continues to confront political responses to artistic expression ranging from indifference to repression.

Prime among these issues were funding, the role of foreign donors, the polarisation and mistrust which exists between government representatives and arts practitioners, the marginalisation of the arts sector, the policy of indigenisation being pursued by government, and the problem of audience development.

A central concern of this exploratory visit was an audit which sought both to identify the areas of greatest need in the arts sector and to consider how Commonwealth countries – in spite of the political complexities involved – might best address them.

With a view to hearing at first-hand how arts practitioners were dealing with the manifold problems they face, discussions were held particularly with museum and gallery directors, arts administrators, publishers, writers, and theatre practitioners.

Collating their combined experience and summarising the gaps in provision for culture and the arts they identified, the following core recommendations are to be made:

- The Commonwealth Professional Fellowships programme should be extended to include a number of Zimbabwean practitioners in the field of arts and culture particularly relating to arts management.
- Twinning should be organised with institutions in Commonwealth countries such as towns, museums, schools.
- Commonwealth embassies should consider working together in support of cultural initiatives, perhaps by offering bursaries to qualified Zimbabweans wishing to undertake study in Commonwealth countries.
- Training facilities in the arts, particularly in arts administration, management and fund-raising, but also in many aspects of basic artistic practice should be provided.
- Zimbabweans in the diaspora should be encouraged to provide networks to the Commonwealth countries and with Commonwealth organisations for arts practitioners inside the country and to pass on their skills and practical support.

- Representation and participation by Zimbabwean scholars and writers should be facilitated at conferences held in commonwealth countries by organisations involved in the cultural cluster, e.g. Museums (CAM), Literature (ACLALS), and other Commonwealth CSOs.

The following report contains a large number of further detailed recommendations.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. The Commonwealth Organisations Committee on Zimbabwe**

*We are part of the Commonwealth in every sense except the politics.* – Peter Churu, Global Arts Trust.

The Commonwealth Organisations Committee on Zimbabwe, now in its fourth year, exists to identify where help is needed to assist Zimbabwe’s development programme as well as its reintegration into the international community; to investigate gaps in technical, professional, and training capacity in Zimbabwe which could usefully be filled through Commonwealth initiatives and expertise; to develop effective contacts within Zimbabwe who can assist in identifying needs and provide local support for new initiatives; and to broker effective responses to identified needs in the wider Commonwealth. To support this work a number of cluster groups on key areas have been formed within the wider committee the most recent of which is the culture cluster. This consists of two members of cultural organisations which are funded in part by the Commonwealth Foundation, the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS) and the Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM).

The culture cluster’s prime aim is to try to build a relationship between the needs of the cultural sector in Zimbabwe and the assistance that can be provided from Commonwealth countries. In order to achieve this objective, the members of the culture cluster hope to work closely with cultural practitioners and organisations, first in Zimbabwe and later in the cultural diaspora to help determine priorities, by identifying those individuals and organisations working in the arts and culture that most require assistance in sustaining or re-establishing themselves. We wish to give special consideration to how cultural partnerships and training programmes for Zimbabwean cultural organisations might be facilitated with Commonwealth countries.

### **1. 2. The Culture Cluster’s Visit to Zimbabwe**

*Culture is the ideal means for re-engaging with Zimbabwe.* – Paul Brickhill, Founder of the Book Café and Winner of the Prince Claus Award.

From 1-10 May 2012, Geoffrey Davis (ACLALS) and Timothy Mason (CAM), the members of the “culture cluster”, together with Chipo Chung, a Zimbabwean arts consultant and member of the Britain-Zimbabwe Society (BZS), visited Zimbabwe to undertake a needs audit of the cultural sector.

Our visit was arranged to coincide with the 13<sup>th</sup> Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA), now the largest arts festival in the country, at which many of the members of Zimbabwe's cultural community, as well as many from further afield, participate as contributors, facilitators or audience members. Festivals are by definition special events and HIFA is no exception, creating an unmatched week of frenetic artistic activity. Although it tends to provide a somewhat false impression of what the levels of artistic activity might be for the other fifty-one weeks of the year, HIFA nevertheless enables a tantalizing glimpse of the potential of the arts to bind a nation together. As the Mayor of Harare, Muchadeyi Masunda, proudly put it, "HIFA has put the city and the country on the map."

We are grateful to all those who – without exception – showed such willingness to meet us. We were particularly impressed by the way in which arts practitioners and administrators gave so generously of their time and quite evidently welcomed our visit. To quote the Director of the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ), Dr. Mahachi: "After a decade of isolation, it's nice to get an email telling you that you don't walk alone."

In submitting this report, we trust that it fairly reflects the wide range of views we heard and activities we saw. In a hectic round of meetings, performances and discussion, there will inevitably have been some misunderstandings. If so the fault is ours.

### **1. 3. Outline of Activities**

*All dialogue is good* – Irene Staunton, publisher.

Between 1-10 May we held about thirty meetings with a great diversity of organisations and individuals ranging from the heads of the National Arts Council and representatives of the British Council and the Alliance Française to participants in a young people's arts club in the high-density area of Chitungwiza and craft makers at the open-air Annual General Meeting of the Zimbabwe Applied Arts and Crafts Association (ZAACA) held at HIFA. Altogether, informal discussions were held with almost one hundred practitioners and organisers across the Zimbabwean arts sector. A full list of the organisations we contacted and the individuals we interviewed is contained in Appendix 2.

In addition, the team were observers during a three-day symposium on "Giving Voice to the Artist: The Impact of Current Cultural Policy Discourse on Zimbabwean Arts" organized by Nhimbe Trust and held at the Book Café from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> May. Attended by numerous arts practitioners and prominent writers such as Stephen Chifunyise, this event also included the participation of Muchadeyi Masunda, the Mayor of Harare, of Tedeous Chifamba, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Regional Integration and International Cooperation, of Herbert Chimhundu, the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Great Zimbabwe University (which is scheduled eventually to become the arts training centre for the country), and of Peter Primus, Deputy Ambassador for Germany. This symposium was extremely useful for our project since it enabled us to familiarise ourselves with a broad spectrum of informed opinion and to listen to some lively debate about cultural policy in Zimbabwe.

During the Harare International Festival of the Arts we attended six theatre performances, five music events and two dance performances, and made six site visits to cultural centres, including the National Gallery, the National Museum of Human Sciences, and the Harare City Library.

We attempted to make our ten-day visit as comprehensive as possible. It provided us with a truly unique opportunity for dialogue with theatre practitioners and visual artists, with photographers and film-makers, with arts curators and musicians, with writers and publishers, as well as with academics and cultural policy makers. Nevertheless, we are aware that there will be some art forms that are not represented here and also some organisations and practitioners whose voices are not heard in this survey. Despite our best ambitions, transport difficulties meant that that we were unable to visit Bulawayo, although this was fortunately compensated for by the fact that so many artists from that city and other parts of the country were in Harare for HIFA.

## **2. Systemic Challenges**

### **2. 1. Funding issues**

*It's not artists who are poor in Zimbabwe. Everyone is poor* – Reverend Paul Damasane, Director of the Department of Arts and Culture, Ministry of Education.

*You'll never get a government that funds everything fully* – Prof. Chimhundu, Great Zimbabwe University.

In Zimbabwe responsibility for arts and culture is divided between no fewer than eleven different ministries including Home Affairs, Information, Small and Medium Enterprise, Tourism, Women's Affairs, Youth and Indigenization, and the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture itself. There appears to be little strategic coordination between them and funding is tight for all. Not surprisingly, we found no arts organisation that was not suffering from a lack of funding. There is, in the words of Farai Mpfunya, director of the Culture Fund, a quite basic need for “more funding for projects to transform society here.”

The total government funding provided to the development of the arts through the Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture is approximately \$1.6 million. This funding goes to two parastatals – the National Gallery and the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NAC). The National Gallery's \$1 million is split between five branches across the country while the Arts Council's total funding is only \$500,000 per annum; with this it operates a programme of registration of arts organisations and oversees the arts in ten provinces nationally. The Arts Council does not supply grants to artists or companies.

The inadequate funding made available to the arts, particularly of the National Arts Council itself which has a budget of only \$600,000, is symptomatic of a general lack of appreciation of the opportunities the creative sector might provide both to the economy and to the well-being of the nation. As the director of the NAC, Elvas Mari, concedes, “we are no longer the people with a bag full of money.” The NAC stopped being a provider of grants during the Structural Adjustment programme of the mid-1990s. It is now limited to a bureaucratic function and administers a few independent

projects, such as the National Arts Merit Awards (NAMA), the Jikinya Festival (for traditional dance), and the provision of funeral benefits to impoverished artists. Insufficient funding means that they are unable to contribute effectively to the strategic development of the sector.

Much arts activity is therefore dependent on the support of an impressive range of donor agencies such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), which channels its grant through the Culture Fund; Africalia (Belgium), which has supported film-making, dance and theatre; and the Dutch organisation HIVOS, which has been prominent in supporting publishing, dance and theatre. Annual budgets ranging from \$100,000 (Africalia) to \$1,000,000 (Culture Fund) are sub-divided into a number of small grants. Some, and not only those in government, have mixed feelings about such donor-dependency. Others, like Manuel Bagorro, director of HIFA, believe that in times of difficulty “donors kept the wheels on the bus.”

Both the British Council and the Alliance Française have lent important support to arts projects, the former largely funding Zimbabwean participation at the Venice Biennale, the latter promoting music performers and hosting innumerable cultural events. Other embassies such as the Norwegian, the Danish and the Swiss also fund arts initiatives. While we were in Harare an Australian Government art exhibition, *Message Stick, Exploring the reality of being an indigenous person living in urban Australia* was on show at the National Gallery. At the same time, the Spanish Embassy announced the imminent closure of its cultural department. Although not a significant component in the spectrum of arts funding this was yet another blow to Zimbabwe’s frail cultural economy.

Although we understand that the Commonwealth ambassadors do meet from time to time, we saw no evidence of their working together in support of cultural initiatives; for example, they could possibly offer bursaries to qualified Zimbabweans wishing to undertake study across a number of Commonwealth countries. We applaud the initiatives in the cultural sector being undertaken by the Australian embassy.

A small number of businesses and charities maintain particular projects, although the corporate sector remains largely absent from cultural funding with the exception of high-profile events like HIFA. Organisations like the Dance Theatre find it very difficult to access local sponsorship. As theatre promoter Daves Guzha pointed out, there is a basic need to “conscientize” the business sector with regard to arts and culture.

We came across few direct financial appeals to the local audience. The principal exception was the Dance Trust of Zimbabwe which sought donations from a full-house on a Sunday morning. This is not easy – the lack of coins means that not only is the smallest donation a dollar but there is also an absence of the satisfactory clunk of loose change hitting the bottom of a bucket. Nevertheless the old cardboard boxes for donations, a series of mixed messages and the lack of a sense of immediacy made the whole episode seem old-fashioned and amateur. A short training course dealing with the fundamentals of fund-raising could be enormously helpful not only for the Dance Trust but also for other arts organisations.

We were heartened by all these initiatives that have enabled the arts to survive through difficult times. It was clear however, that individual and independent artists in visual

art, drama, poetry, writing, music and dance are working within a largely unstructured environment with little financial protection, uncertain career prospects, considerable dependence on donors and poor representation, both legally and as a lobbying group, and with few structures for sustainable enterprise.

Several informants pointed to the need for the arts and culture sector to show that it can be viable as a financial investment. The notion that cultural industries need to be developed was frequently stressed. It is felt that structures need to be created that provide initiatives with a return and that business models need to be developed and to become at least partly self-sustaining. Dialogue with those Commonwealth countries such as South Africa which have developed fruitful creative economies would be of particular benefit here.

## **2. 2. Polarization and Mistrust**

*True excellence and artistry will not thrive in an environment of ideologization*

– Tsitsi Dangarembga, film-maker and novelist.

“How do you ensure a cultural policy in a climate of political polarization?” This question from a participant in the cultural symposium pointed to a central issue for the arts sector. Where the political parties in government are themselves currently so polarised, the relationship between artists and the establishment is necessarily uneasy. Artists are aware, as our informants pointed out, that “repressive ideology permeates everywhere,” that they are operating “in a very shadowy world with no rules,” and that “some organisations in the arts are infiltrated.” They know that “the authorities see the arts as a challenge,” as the Director of HIFA, Manuel Bagorro, put it, and regard theatre, for example, as suspect, especially when performed in the rural areas. There is a general perception that in such a complex political and social environment one should not antagonise the government, which in any case “does not regard arts and culture as a priority”, as Peter Churu, founder of Global Arts Trust, described the situation. This opinion was corroborated by Prof. Zimunya, chair of the Book Fair, who thought that “for all parties in Zimbabwe the intellectual and cultural sector is the last of all concerns.”

Such perceptions have led to the development of associations within limited spheres, with lack of communication between spheres. The NAC attempts to oversee the arts sector strategically, but is characterized by many as ‘the police’ of the arts sector, a controller rather than a catalyst. Under the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Censorship Board requires all performing artists to register for a licence. Artists, with little personal income, resent having to pay for their freedom of speech to be limited. But the polarization is two-way: distrust of government-associated bodies has led to poor dialogue and ineffective communication. As Peter Churu explained, “the biggest challenge is that government finds it difficult to dialogue with us.” And he added: “If all sat down at a table we could iron this out.” Indeed, without better communication between arts practitioners and government, structural change will not be possible. The Nhimbe Trust symposium on cultural policy was an important step towards attempting a more coordinated approach, but more work in this direction needs to be supported.

The lack of strong advocacy by arts administrators themselves contributes to the problem. In the present social and political climate there is a growing awareness of the



need for artists in whatever discipline to take a stronger advocacy role. We repeatedly heard calls for them to become pro-active, for instance from writer Virginia Phiri. The Ministry of Education, too, encourages stronger representation of arts organisations, citing ZIMURA (a music association protecting copyright) as a strong model.

More effective communication is also needed between the present government and non-governmental organisations on developing a creative economy and environment that is supportive of artists. Both representatives of the Ministry of Education and grassroots organisations identified the need for a point-person to represent the needs of the sector. Exchange visits for key individuals spearheading cultural policy could encourage more strategic coordination.

The media could play a critical role in developing public understanding and an appreciation of the arts and the contribution of culture to community development. At the cultural symposium the playwright Stephen Chifunyise complained vociferously that the opening event of HIFA, attended by thousands of enthusiastic Zimbabweans, had gone unreported on the radio.

It is worth noting, too, that during our stay in Harare, the Arts Section of one local newspaper, the *Daily News*, headlined its coverage of the Festival, not with the performances and events which formed the festival programme but with a conflict between the Festival and the Arts Council erupting over the number of free tickets offered to and used by the Arts Council's director. The fact that this was allowed to drag on over several days spoke volumes about the roles of both the press and the Arts Council as advocates of the arts in Zimbabwe.

Consideration should be given to ways in which arts journalists might broaden their experience, taking advantage of the Commonwealth's lingua franca, English.

### **2.3. Marginalization of the Arts and Culture Sector**

Both the Ministry of Education and the National Arts Council are aware of the need to introduce the value of arts and culture into the education system earlier, not only to foster young talents, but also to encourage 'appreciators of the arts', so that the arts are integrated into the needs and values of society in the future, both in the political or business spheres. Arts stakeholders are in need of support to lobby for greater investment from government.

Initiatives are needed from major decision-makers such as government ministries like the Ministry of Finance to give greater priority to the arts. Although the fundamental economic problems in the country are undeniable, as are the bureaucratic difficulties, a coordinated vision and strategy could offer significant benefits to the sector. The recognition of cultural activities as compulsory curricular activities in the school system could, for instance, provide employment and practice to graduates of the University of Zimbabwe, encouraging them to stay in-country instead of emigrating to South Africa or elsewhere. The kind of initiatives currently being taken by Nhimbe Trust and the Culture Fund constitute the first steps towards delivering this end.

### **2.4. Indigenization: Defining a National Culture**

*The politicians think that Zimbabwe's culture is in the past.* – Farai Mpfunya, Culture Fund.

Nationalist ideologies have led to a protectionist attitude towards indigenous culture. There is a distinction and separation between 'our' culture and 'foreign' cultures, as well as between 'traditional' and 'modern' or 'contemporary'. As the writer Tsitsi Dangarembga told us, "some people talk about culture and mean tradition." Shona sculpture has long been thought of as the archetypal Zimbabwean art form, as has traditional dance. While interest in Zimbabwean contemporary art grows abroad, it is much more difficult to interest people in contemporary painting inside the country, as Derek Huggins of Gallery Delta knows only too well; equally problematic is the promotion of the kind of contemporary art forms favoured by young people, as Farai Mpfunya of the Culture Fund seeks to do.

By contrast contemporary music based on traditional rhythms and sung in indigenous languages flourishes within Zimbabwe. However, a musician's ultimate success is based on his or her ability to tap into a world market, now frequently propagated through the web and social media. Cultural isolation is difficult to maintain in the globalized and digital world in which many musicians and audiences now move.

The conflation of culture with tradition leads to polarizing 'them vs. us' attitudes, mutual lack of respect for initiatives defined as 'other', limited choice and access to diverse learning opportunities, and a poor creative environment. Concern regarding the protection of traditional culture is necessary and must be acknowledged and given greater priority, but such concern should not exclude the many local, hybrid and contemporary cultures.

Differences between 'insider' and 'outsider' cultures, 'indigenous' and 'foreign' forms, (where an example of 'foreign' might be contemporary dance) lead to conflicts at a policy level resulting, for instance, in lack of government support for initiatives perceived as 'western' such as HIFA. However, government agencies' policy of protection for traditional culture is not translated into financial support across the board; for instance, the National Museum and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) protects ancient heritage sites, but is not funded substantially enough to fulfil its remit.

In bridging the divide between 'insider' and 'outsider' cultures diaspora practitioners have a strong role to play. 25% of the Zimbabwean population now lives outside Zimbabwe and has been exposed to cross-cultural experiences. Support from other African nations within the Commonwealth would also be more welcome and appropriate than interventions which can be perceived as 'foreign/ Western'.

There is no obvious attempt to 'indigenise' the visual arts, which are supported by the government-funded National Gallery. Perhaps ironically it is here that the nation's artists are being most recognised at an international level – for example with the success of four Zimbabwean artists at the 54<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale. With further irony but much deserved praise, this initiative was encouraged and assisted by the British Council.

However, a sharp counterpoint to this is the aggressive crackdown on political art that is thought to undermine 'patriotic history': in March 2010 the artist Owen Maseko was

arrested for an exhibition focussing on Gukurahundi. Parts of the Bulawayo National Gallery remain shut and the case against Maseko is on-going.

## **2.5. Developing Audiences**

*As artists we are never the main meal, we are always the starter or the dessert. Who values us? Who values our work?* – Participant at the cultural policy symposium.

HIFA has an audience of tens of thousands but most cultural organisations have much smaller audiences. The National Gallery claims one thousand visitors a month, the Gallery Delta only two hundred, the Museums are largely empty. A theatre like Reps caters to a largely white audience; music to a largely black one. Performance halls in the high-density areas, which charge only \$2 a ticket, attract large audiences for music.

One of the most successful ventures is the Book Café, which has consistently enjoyed considerable local support. Hosting a programme which is 70% music, it has furthered the careers of most musicians who have emerged in recent years and operates a very artist-friendly policy since it supplies equipment and passes on the whole of its box-office takings to the performing artists. Its economic model is based on the marriage of performance, with food and beverage. It boasts an attendance of over 100,000 a year, and site visits after HIFA confirmed that it was a popular venue. The visual arts, theatre and contemporary dance would greatly benefit from advice on audience development. The product could be made more appropriate or attractive, schools could be marketed to, and outreach programmes could be developed, although the latter would require further donor investment.

## **3. Needs Audit**

*People know they don't have skills and are desperate* – Tsitsi Dangarembga, writer and film-maker.

### **3.1. Overview**

The team observed world-class work in the field of visual art. The National Gallery's recent participation in the Venice Biennale and the Gallery Delta's exhibition in Munich have led to international interest and dialogue. The robust foundations laid in Zimbabwe some fifty years ago and subsequently supported by committed training institutes such as the Gallery Delta and the Harare Polytechnic mean that Zimbabwean visual art has grown in stature and quality so that it is now recognized by the international art market.

The range of contemporary music from urban grooves to Afro-fusion and contemporary mbira and marimba was impressive. The Church contributes to training, as do initiatives such as Pakare Paye, Oliver Mtukudzi's music academy. Music is well-grounded in traditional rhythms and practices. The quality of the work was extremely diverse and strong. However although musicians are able to earn a modest income, accessing

equipment, and breaking through the ceiling of local success into an international market are all major challenges.

Contemporary dance is largely supported by the Dance Trust of Zimbabwe. Although their initiatives are not national and training is needed in other provinces, DTZ has maintained training in classical and contemporary dance and provides a strong basic platform where the quality of the training appeared to be sound. Creative exchanges would boost the current product, for example through the presence of a visiting choreographer from a Commonwealth country or through the provision of a scholarship to enable a staff member or dancer to study in neighbouring South Africa; plans could also be made to make dance training more accessible nationally. Zimbabwean traditional dance is internationally recognized and locally supported by the National Arts Council's Children's Dance Festival, Jikinya.

Self-taught arts such as spoken-word and poetry were flourishing dynamically. However, on the evidence of performances we saw, theatre was notably the weakest performing art, both in the quality of writing, directing and performing, and in the technical crafts of lighting and set-design. The Head of the Theatre Department at the University of Zimbabwe, Dr. Chivandikwa confirmed that there is a "serious need for training in the theatre sector and in multimedia."

## **3.2. Theatre: Training & Capacity Building**

### **3.2.1. Context**

*Theatre should be talking about what is going on right now, all around us. There should be no more silence.* – English 'A' level student from Chitungwiza.

Zimbabwean community theatre has been strong in the past, and there remain a number of arts festivals, e.g. the Chimanimani Arts Festival and the National Schools Drama Competition. Local touring circuits were established and there was free movement within the country. However, unlike the visual arts, theatre has never had an established institution committed to training and development. Unlike Music and Visual Art, there is no archival record of theatre, so although there were exciting developments in the 1980s, the records have disappeared with the moment. Theatre History is taught at the University of Zimbabwe, but this benefits researchers and not practitioners. Community plays are rarely published, and unlike other art forms, the drama sector does not seem to be built on the foundations of the past.

The single training provider is the University of Zimbabwe's Theatre Arts course, which is grossly underfunded and has suffered from institutional isolation. The course is taught by graduates of the programme without academic exchange or cross-pollination from other institutes. Although the course aims to be practical, the training is largely theoretical and the university is without the resources to provide technical training

Producers such as Rooftop Promotions and experienced writers, such as, Stephen Chifunyise, have delivered productions that have toured successfully, most recently *Waiting for the Constitution* and *Rituals*, a piece on reconciliation following the violence in 2008. Theatre in the Park is a small space Rooftop has maintained in the

Harare Gardens for over fifteen years to great success. However, young practitioners do not have access to formal training which can prepare them to contribute strongly to the sector. The one established theatre in Harare with the infrastructure for design – Reps – is a private-members club catering to a largely white/elite audience.

The British Council's support of HIFA Direct has promoted a number of young writers; the model is however overly-ambitious. The combination of inexperienced writers with inexperienced directors and limited mentoring by international artists makes for poor product. More basic training is needed to take theatrical production beyond the 'poor theatre' of 'actors in an empty space', in collaboration with the visual arts and music sector.

### **3.2.2. Challenges**

*Without NGO support theatre would be dead* – Nehemiah Chivandikwa, Chair of the Theatre Arts Department, University of Zimbabwe.

The National Arts Council has been grappling with its remit to 'design programmes partnered with the private sector and NGOs to become the genesis of projects', and its lack of control of donor initiatives. NAC has been unable to provide quality control of the 'outsider' trainers, while being aware that expertise is not available in-country to provide the necessary boost to the provision of training. The Council received complaints about 'foreign' trainers working in the sector illegally; this led to the arrest and deportation of Melissa Eveleigh who had been delivering projects for the British Council and Savannah Trust. Although Eveleigh's deportation has since been repealed, the incident is a marker of the difficulties for outside practitioners. NAC's current position is that in-country structures for training need to be developed first, so that outside trainers are inputting into an already existing framework in order to fulfil an identified need. Collaboration with African diaspora partners are more likely to be trusted than those from overtly Western backgrounds.

The national policy on culture translates culture as 'tradition and heritage' and does not view culture as the free and artistic expression of contemporary society. The pressure of being watched by the Central Intelligence Organisation and risking arrest is an additional stress for performing artists. Even respected practitioners like Daves Guzha and Stephen Chifunyise cannot escape the predations of the Censorship Board: in March 2011, actors in a performance of *Rituals* were arrested.

An additional challenge is the need to raise standards across the sector. Without professional structures, anyone is free to claim the title of 'actor'. There are no unions and little training, abundant talent, but little skill. In order to develop the sector, systems need to be put in place that identify talent with true potential and provide specialist training and experience for them. Raising the standard of a small part of the sector will help to raise expectations and standards of the sector as a whole.

### **3.2.3. Recommendation**

Strategic support of the theatre sector through a comprehensive training programme of workshops in writing, directing, acting and set design is strongly recommended. To make a true impact such intervention would have to be long-term and build on poorly-

funded but already existing structures, such as the University of Zimbabwe Theatre Arts Degree Programme, and the Amakhosi theatre group in Bulawayo. We noted that the Zimbabwean playwright Danai Gurira, who is based in the United States, is currently attempting to set up a workshop for women playwrights. The London Royal Court Theatre's International Department is currently developing a long-term programme to develop Zimbabwean writers.

A strategic plan needs to be developed with major stakeholders e.g. the National Arts Council, the British Council, the Culture Fund, Savannah Arts, the University of Zimbabwe, Amakhosi and CHIPAWO, to develop a comprehensive 5-10 week course in Acting and Directing. External trainers would be essential in providing classes in voice, movement and acting as there are no practitioners who are qualified to teach these crafts. Diaspora practitioners could be engaged to guide directors and writers. Follow-up courses could focus on set and lighting design, and arts administration.

### **3. 3. Film**

In 2000 the late Ben Zulu defined the success of Zimbabwe as a filming location: "We have very beautiful locations. We also, in terms of crew, have enough people who have worked on big productions and have very good skills. And we have a very good banking infrastructure. People can bring in money here and know that they are not going to be dealing with weak and corrupt institutions that you see in other countries. They know that they can transfer their money here to a reputable bank. They can withdraw their money. And there are services as well. They can go and contract somebody who can feed their crew and cast. There are people who have worked with big productions here and can supply those services."<sup>1</sup>

A number of international films such as *Cry Freedom* and *A World Apart* were made in Zimbabwe, but today, while the locations remain, the elements of late 20<sup>th</sup> century success have mostly drifted away. However, the Zimbabwe International Film Festival took place for the fourteenth time in 2011 and the Film Makers Guild of Zimbabwe runs training sessions for amateur film makers. Only lately have some international film-makers started to return. Film-maker Tsitsi Dangarembga thought that "good things [were] happening in film" and that the industry faced a positive future since government, realising that "popular arts are a way of reaching youth" and that film could be used for their own ends, "[would] put money into it." Dangarembga, who believes that "any story can be told from a woman-friendly perspective," is primarily involved in the Women Filmmakers of Zimbabwe organisation, which hosts an annual feminist film festival.

The British Council is exploring opportunities for mentoring a new generation of film production workers in collaboration with Nick Marcq of Latimer Films. We endorse this initiative, which is being discussed across Southern Africa.

### **3. 4. Training in Arts Administration and Corporate Governance**

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<sup>1</sup> Kedman Nyasha Hungwe, *Narrative and Ideology: 50 years of Film-making in Zimbabwe*. p. 6.

“The lack of training,” as an informant observed, “is a measure of what Zimbabwe, which used to have a high educational level, has lost.” And indeed, across the board, the need for trained, competent and visionary administrators was repeatedly expressed as a requirement to pull the sector into a professional industry.

To judge from our informants across the cultural sector, the lack of adequate training is a deficiency perhaps most keenly felt in the area of arts administration and corporate governance. In the view of Charles Houdart of the Alliance Française the biggest problem in the arts is “the lack of structure and management.” This problem is compounded by the fact that there is no opportunity to study arts management anywhere in the country; the only option is to go abroad. Leaders of major cultural institutions such as Dr Mahachi of the National Museums and Doreen Sibanda, the director of the National Gallery, stressed the need for training in arts administration. Such training would greatly contribute to professionalization of the arts, as photographer Calvin Dondo also emphasised.

Much emphasised, too, was the need for artists to develop business skills, to be trained in marketing, so as to be able to set up creative enterprises operating according to professional standards. In order for Zimbabwe to turn around, its economy needs to be developed, and this includes SMEs such as arts companies.

There are a few organisations which have overcome these problems. One of them is CHIPAWO (Children’s Performing Arts Workshop) which was founded by noted theatre critic and academic Dr Robert McLaren and playwright Stephen Chifunyise and works with young people from age four to twenty-eight. CHIPAWO now has young professionals who have grown up through the programme and have acquired practical expertise both in performance and in administration. However, even within this organisation the request was for further management training, for example, in conflict management and strategic planning. CHIPAWO has developed a sophisticated education programme that has been maintained over time. It was founded in 1989 and has lobbied for the Rights of the Child and for cultural activities to be taken more seriously by the Ministry of Education. CHIPAWO has had a long-term vision and plan.

The low level of earned income that can be achieved from the arts sector provides little incentive for current managers to build a career; as a result, the quality of event management and administration is frequently unprofessional. The availability of training in administration and management could allow the sector to become more strategic in its planning, lobbying and negotiating, as well as providing a supportive environment in which artists can thrive.

Some donor agencies have supported training in administration, but participants found that the courses were too short (only one week) or inappropriate to the challenges on the ground.

Mentoring was also a request; young managers need to be supported as they face difficult challenges. For instance, chasing donor funds can lead to undertaking projects beyond their skills and can result in unsustainable work-loads. This has been observed by Patrice Naiambana, a Sierra Leonian actor who has been mentoring a group of Zimbabwean actors for the past two years.

Although a number of organisations had contributing boards of trustees, the sense was that boards could be more supportive of their organisations and would benefit from training in governance. Developing appropriate skill-sets might help organisations expand their networks of support e.g. into the business world, help their fundraising efforts, and link them to the outside world through the diaspora.

#### **3.4.1. Recommendation:**

Existing courses, for instance, the University of Zimbabwe's Business Management Course, could be adapted with a view to catering specifically to the arts with a long-term course in arts administration. Expert 'outsider' consultants should work hand-in-hand with already existing 'insider' trainers, thus filling the gap and acting as advisors.

### **3. 5. Museums and Heritage**

*You can't expect someone to come back to see an exhibition that has been in place since the 1960s* – Dr. Godfrey Mahachi, Director of the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has a rich cultural heritage. Indeed it claims to be the only country in the world named after a cultural heritage site – the Great Zimbabwe Ruins.<sup>2</sup> The Baseline study on the Culture Sector in Zimbabwe (2009) lists five museums, two monuments, eight historic sites and a number of 'traditional institutions' with a focus on intangible heritage.<sup>3</sup> As the Director of the National Museums explained, these include the Museum of Human Sciences in Harare, the Mutare Museum, the Zimbabwe Military Museum at Gweru and the planned National Mining Museum.

Statistics for visits to heritage site and museums are not readily available but figures for attendance at the Bulawayo National History Museum show a dramatic decline in attendance from 33076 in 2005 to 7279 in 2007. This is partly because of a lack of disposable income in the local market, which means for instance that outreach programmes in rural areas fail because schools cannot afford buses, and partly because international tourism has been reduced to a trickle.

Equally important is the museums' inability to renew their displays. As the Baseline Study rightly points out "most of the current museums were established during the colonial era"<sup>4</sup> and this was certainly the case in the Museum of Human Sciences in Harare, the only museum that time allowed us to visit. This felt very much like a museum of Rhodesia. Almost devoid of visitors and with out-dated displays and presentation, the museum had little to attract even the most dedicated of museophiles.

Lack of investment and training opportunities result in a high turnover of staff and while museum salaries are now benchmarked with university posts, pay remains low. Staff members sent abroad for training all too often find the opportunities offered in museums abroad to be more attractive than those at home. There were threats to the conservation programme; the lack of relatively unsophisticated equipment made it difficult to monitor changes in the physical state of the historic ruins in their care,

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<sup>2</sup> The Baseline study on the Culture Sector in Zimbabwe (2009) p. 52

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



including the walls of Great Zimbabwe. There has also been a problem of theft from museum collections due to security shortcomings.

Despite these problems, the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) have succeeded in establishing a community museums programme which aims to revive and encourage the culture of under-represented local communities. There are now six of these up and running.

When he heard of our intended visit to Harare, the NMMZ director wrote, “It was indeed a relief to learn that there are initiatives that are being taken to get some of our institutions reintegrated into the international community for purposes of enabling and creating partnerships that will make possible capacity redevelopment after several years of inactivity in this critical area.” As elsewhere in Zimbabwe’s cultural community museums and monuments appeared to be isolated, cut off from the oxygen of international networks journals, conference, seminars and training courses that sustain colleagues elsewhere,. The significant difference which contact of this kind can make is only too clear from the example of the comparatively well-funded National Gallery which has been able to have some staff members trained overseas, which has collaborated successfully with institutions in Botswana, Nigeria and Senegal and which, exceptionally, has grown in stature with its participation in the 2011 Venice Biennale.

### **3.5.1. Recommendations**

There are several specific actions that can be taken both within and outside the framework of the Commonwealth to help draw the museum service back into the international museum community:

- Participating in the work of the International Council of Museums and taking advantage of the bursaries regularly offered for those museums workers from developing countries wishing to attend specialist conferences. <http://icom.museum/>
- Becoming a member of Commonwealth Association of Museums and participating in its conference and seminars, which often offer special rates for members of museum services in developing countries in the Commonwealth. CAM has exceptionally agreed to welcome membership from Zimbabwe. [www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/](http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/)
- CAM has also agreed to consider applications to its distance learning museum studies programme from those working in Zimbabwean museums as paid staff or students enrolled in an appropriate area of study, who are seriously considering a career in the museum field. The course should be considered the basic professional level training for all museum personnel. The programme is designed to serve as an introductory course in Museum Studies. It deals with two types of information: the history and philosophy of museums, and the basic procedures involved in museum operation. The course topics are divided into six units of study: Introduction to Museum Studies; Organization and Management; Collections; Conservation; Exhibitions; and Education & Programming. [http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/programs/distance\\_learning.html](http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/programs/distance_learning.html)

- Apply for a place on the British Museum’s International Training Programme. [http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/ITP2011\\_report.pdf](http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/ITP2011_report.pdf) This programme has now had some three hundred participants who spend four weeks at the British Museum and two at a regional museum. Preliminary enquiries made of the BM have shown some interest in Zimbabwean participation.
- Support southern African initiatives to establish, maintain and strengthen relations among those concerned with the study, practice, preservation, protection and promotion of national heritage, building relationships with museum services elsewhere in southern Africa. Opportunities already exist but Zimbabwe often appears reluctant to commit itself to external initiatives such as the SADC convention on cultural diversity which eleven other countries have already signed. Eleven of the fifteen members of SADC, Zimbabwe’s neighbours, are incidentally members of the Commonwealth.
- Encourage twinning of museums with those in Commonwealth countries and support the exchange of exhibitions, even if on the modest scale represented by the Australian “Message Stick” show at the National Gallery.
- Provide a professional fellowship in a Commonwealth country in the field of conservation, documentation, archiving

### **3. 6. Literature and Publishing**

*The book remains what it has always been* – Prof. Musaemura Zimunya, chair of the Zimbabwe International Book Fair.

Zimbabwe has long been known for the quality of its writers whose works achieved success at home and abroad. Because of the political dissension of recent years, a number of them have gone into exile or have chosen to live abroad.

At the present time, inside the country writers are unable to live from their work unless they write texts for schools or compile reports for NGOs. Some seek the alternative of publishing overseas, which is difficult to negotiate but has the added advantage of giving them access to a wider market.

Younger writers have little contact internationally. As the chair of the Zimbabwe Book Fair, Prof. Zimunya indicated, “there has never been institutional funding to assist serious writers with fellowships” to travel overseas.

The censorship board currently shows little interest in literature and books do not have to be submitted prior to publication.

Weaver Press, the major literary publisher in the country, has published some eighty Zimbabwean writers to date, while most other publishers specialise in school books. Many people try their hand at writing short stories, while few succeed with novels. Play texts are not usually published at all. Many young people who aspire to be writers lack the necessary basic skills. Some however, among them Petina Gappah and Blessing Musariri, are viewed as having real potential. Book launches are well supported.

The book trade in general is not in a healthy condition. The poor economic situation means that few people buy books, which are perceived as expensive, and in any case few people read for pleasure. As one informant told us, people will read if they are given books, but they will rarely purchase them. The books people do buy are mainly set texts for schools, and then they share them. There is no tradition of pre-school reading and few schools are able to maintain libraries. The result is that young people are not being educated to read, literary texts are difficult to sell and print-runs are declining.

The situation in publishing is rendered more difficult for the smaller publishers by changes in the book trade such as the emergence of multinationals. Some titles have been successfully published through joint ventures with publishers in the UK. Weaver Press was only able to develop its fiction list with the aid of the Dutch agency HIVOS, but not surprisingly the publishers sometimes feel that they are “surviving more as an NGO than as a publisher.”

Due to the unavailability of books many Zimbabwean writers tend to be somewhat isolated from international trends. The lack of participation in the Commonwealth Writers Prize is regretted. The relative paucity of significant local publishing and declining standards contributed to the demise of the Zimbabwe Book Fair, which had regularly attracted much overseas interest. Now that the attempt is being made to revive its fortunes, the new chair of the Book Fair, Prof. Zimunya, buoyed by substantial Norwegian support, is convinced that as long as there is a digital divide in the country, the book will remain important.

### **3.6.1. Recommendations**

There are a number of measures, which should be supported or initiated:

- Twinning of schools, which the British Council is organising, should be expanded
- Literary events such as book launches and literary festivals should be sponsored (as the Australians have done with the launching of an important book on the HIV/AIDS pandemic).
- Visits by writers and publishers should be hosted. The Zimbabwe Book Fair would greatly appreciate the presence of a writer from a Commonwealth country, possibly from an African country.
- Zimbabwean writers could be invited to take up positions as writers in residence overseas. If the Commonwealth cultural sector could assist in this way it would, as Prof. Zimunya emphasised, “be an enormous help.” As a result of this trip, ACLALS will invite writers and academics from inside the country to participate in international conferences. Negotiations have already taken place with Tsitsi Dangarembga who has agreed to attend the next European ACLALS conference in Innsbruck and to take up an extended writer in residence position there which the University of Innsbruck has agreed to fund.

### **3.7. Libraries**

*Libraries have been underfunded since day one* – Irene Staunton, publisher.

Libraries, our contacts told us, have never been a priority in Zimbabwe, and consequently have no funds. Through difficult times, however, “badly paid librarians have managed to keep the libraries open.” Publishers are trying to obtain funds to get books to libraries. The Swiss and US Embassies have recently made book donations.

The University of Zimbabwe library is not well endowed and consequently collections are not up to date, so much so that academics have to have recourse to libraries in South Africa.

Although the Harare City Library, once the Queen Victoria Memorial Library, is in a poor state of repair, it is much used by students as a work space. There are, however few new books on the library shelves and the place has the air of a second-hand bookshop. Its holdings of African and Zimbabwean writing are extremely limited. There is no money to buy new books and the library is therefore dependent on donations.

Like several institutions we visited, the library is in a state of disrepair. The roof leaks and modern library technology is not available. The British ambassador, Deborah Bronnert, recently hosted a fund-raising dinner which raised \$20,000 towards improvements. To quote her: “this is an opportunity to really make a difference to the future of Zimbabwe; to invest in the human capital of Zimbabwe to encourage students and adults to enjoy using a properly equipped library for their studies and leisure and to restore the library to its former glory.” To this end a website [www.hararecitylibrary.org](http://www.hararecitylibrary.org) is being developed to enable Zimbabweans in the diaspora and others to make donations. In August this year the US embassy donated three Kindles to the library.

### **3.7.1. Recommendations**

- Send a librarian for training in a Commonwealth country
- Donate books to Zimbabwean libraries
- Support the campaign to help the Harare City Library.

### **3. 8. Archiving and Conservation**

There is, as Manuel Bagorro of HIFA, pointed out, a general need for documentation, archival work and evaluation in the arts, especially where nothing of the kind is happening. The National Gallery, Gwanza and the NMMZ specifically identified an urgent need for training and materials to support the archiving and preservation of artefacts, photographs, and art works. Expertise was lacking to the point that materials were disintegrating; for example, the National Museum of Bulawayo recently suffered a major crisis when their collections of animal skins became infested with insects. The relevant electronic equipment for the documentation of collections is not available.

#### **3.8.1. Recommendation**

This area could be supported with a strategic exchange. Exposure to museums and galleries in Commonwealth countries would encourage young curators to re-imagine

the National Museums and commit to reviving this poorly supported parastatal. Skilled ‘outsider’ personnel could identify needs, provide training to existing human resources, and help access the necessary materials for archiving and documentation.

### **3.9. Basic Equipment and Space**

*We survive by the grace of God* – Derek Huggins, Gallery Delta

Many of the needs articulated to us were absolutely basic to any artistic practice. The Dance Theatre representatives spoke of a need for dance books, pens, CDs, and a practice mat; the Gallery Delta needs paints and brushes for artists; Calvin Dondo told us that cameras were needed for photography courses. Young musicians identified the need for access to instruments such as guitars and drum kits with which to begin training. All organisations, whether libraries, museums or the arts and crafts association, are in need of computers and of the basic IT training and support which goes with them. The NMMZ needed a major upgrade of computers and IT technology.

Some organisations identified the need for work-spaces e.g. artists studios and galleries. The main projects needing capital support were the Dance Trust of Zimbabwe and the Gwanza initiative for photographers.

#### **3.9.1. Recommendations**

Potential solutions could include:

(i) The donation of computers and other equipment from the developed world. Agreements could be made through Zimbabwean embassies to ensure that new or used equipment is transported without duty. Partnerships could be made with external institutions and particularly with diaspora organisations to source and manage the transportation of equipment.

(ii) Businesses could be cultivated to donate support-in-kind, for example, access to unused warehouses or office space for artistic projects. World-renowned musician Oliver Mtukudzi has already shown the way by initiating an intervention for the music sector, providing equipment and space for developing musicians at Pakare Paye Music Academy in Norton.

## **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **4.1. Conclusion**

*We can't do anything about food shortages or poverty, but we can do something to enrich life* – Manuel Bagorro, Director of HIFA

As Paul Brickhill, the self-confessed “incurable optimist” who has run the Book Café for over thirty years, asserted “cultural people are the very people who allow us to understand who we are and to reflect on who we are.” In the toughest conditions, in a difficult economic and political climate, Zimbabwean cultural organisations have survived through resilience and personal sacrifice, keeping basic infrastructure going,

fighting for freedom of expression, and finding new ways of building business models. Young people continue to be optimistic and commit themselves to the arts as their vocation, with little hope of securing an income. Committed individuals are running organisations that have a strategic agenda to promote a healthy environment for culture and creativity, prime among them the Culture Fund and Nhimbe Trust. We were greatly impressed by the spirit of survival, the solidarity, the optimism, the evidence of enormous talent and potential, and indeed “the capacity for laughter,” which pervaded many of our discussions.

All organisations were operating under extreme stress and duress, but were managing to step forward with courage, none more so than the Harare International Festival of the Arts itself, which has achieved a feat over the past twelve years. HIFA delivers a festival of world-class standards, supported by efficient and professional staff, encouraging the return of diasporans as performers and audience members and bringing the diverse community of privileged and disadvantaged, black, white, coloured, young, old, international and other, together to celebrate itself in a multi-cultural environment. The theme of the 2012 festival was “A Show of Spirit”. Following on the 2011 festival’s overtly political opening, HIFA 2012 was largely apolitical but nevertheless it still demonstrated the power of the arts to contribute to social transformation. In the midst of negativity and polarization in the media and in politics, the gathering of tens of thousands at HIFA 2012 was full of positivity, creativity and aspiration: the show of spirit of a society which wants to move forward embracing its diversity and celebrating its many talents.

## **4.2. Future Actions from the Culture Cluster**

### **4.2.1 Commonwealth Fellowships**

*The increasing isolation between neighbouring countries is a source of real sadness – Paul Brickhill, founder of the Book Café*

The Cluster believes that The Commonwealth Fellowship Scheme is a programme that could directly impact on the cultural sector in Zimbabwe and will apply to host up to three Zimbabwean artists or arts administrators in October 2013.

By working with fellows from differing organizations and marrying their visits with a symposium with diaspora practitioners, the intervention will hopefully foster relationships between a number of individuals, who will likely contribute to progressive developments in the future. Discussions are already in progress in the UK with Equity, the actors’ union, to host artists and arrange sessions with their Parliamentary Officer on developing policy and presenting to Government, with Assistant General Secretaries on communicating the union’s aims and objectives to members and to the wider world, and on negotiating with employers in theatre, film and television and organising members across the union. The General Secretary has agreed to give a session on Equity in the national context and the challenges of running such an organisation.

The Cluster will build similar relationships during 2013 with other organisations. In the UK these might include, for example, The Performance Alliance Parliamentary Group, the Arts Council of England, Amnesty International, PEN, the National Theatre Policy-Making Division, the Department for Sports and Culture (DCMS), appropriate museums, the National Youth Theatre and smaller arts organizations which might be relevant to Zimbabwean arts practitioners. We hope to implement preliminary discussions with institutions in other Commonwealth countries, particularly the SADC ones. To achieve this we shall have to seek assistance from other organisations, from members of the COCZ and from our own overseas branches.

Although ACLALS and CAM are committed to facilitating this process, neither organization has capacity in Britain to act as formal host. Support would be needed from an organization such as the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC) which has previously acted as an umbrella-organization for Zimbabwean fellows. Further support could also be given by the Zimbabwean diaspora (see below).

Throughout this exercise the Cultural Cluster has worked hand-in-hand with the Zimbabwean diaspora, represented by Chipo Chung. This has had the two-way benefit of providing the team with insider knowledge, and also developing the capacity and knowledge base of an artist with a long-term commitment to Zimbabwe. The work of the cluster has the potential to become truly sustainable if other Zimbabwean artists in Britain and in the wider Commonwealth are encouraged to engage with the cultural sector in Zimbabwe. Many of the recommendations would best be delivered by people with a personal connection to the country. Many Zimbabweans are successful in the arts abroad. To quote examples from theatre in the UK the Shona performance of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was a highlight of the Globe's Globe to Globe season of international Shakespeare. Zimbabwean Lucian Msamati is the artistic director of Tiata Fahodzi, one of the premiere African diaspora theatre companies in England, and a number of Zimbabweans work in arts administration. Chipo Chung acts as an advisor to the Royal Court and Young Vic theatres on projects in Zimbabwe. Hopefully other Commonwealth countries will wish to assist in similar fashion.

The Cluster has undertaken to deliver a feed-back session in partnership with the Britain-Zimbabwe Society (BZS) during 2013, and to facilitate a structured workshop symposium with Zimbabwean fellows at a later date. BZS are interested in further developing this project and working as partners

#### **4.3. General Core Recommendations.**

*People are not served by doing nothing* – Manuel Bagorro, Director of HIFA

In the light of this above report we should like to make the following recommendations which are core to further development in the arts and culture and which address quite basic needs for material and equipment.

- Extend Commonwealth Professional Fellowships to the field of arts and culture. Arts administrators and managers in cultural institutions, lobbying organisations and those involved in governance, capacity building and fund-

raising would benefit from exchange with Commonwealth-based arts organisations.

- Organise twinning with institutions in Commonwealth countries such as towns, museums, schools. Harare's twinning with Munich has been extremely fruitful. Already a small number of other 'Commonwealth' town twinings are in place: Bulawayo is twinned with Durban, RSA and Aberdeen, UK; Harare is twinned with Nottingham, UK; and Kadoma is twinned with Stevenage (UK).

A telephone discussion with the Twinning Officer at Nottingham City Council suggests that certainly the UK links are lying dormant. Nottingham has only limited funds for activities of this kind (and none for travel) and at present these are focussed on Karlsruhe and China. However, Nottingham would be open to suggestions and ideas such as an exchange of museum staff.

Twinning need not be limited to towns. The Church of Scotland Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley is already twinned with the Presbytery of Zimbabwe. As well as the National Museums organizations that could benefit from twinning with partners in the Commonwealth include the Dance Trust of Zimbabwe and other performing arts organisations. Twinning could lead to donations of basic resources and equipment as well as to staff exchanges.

Twinning of schools, which the British Council is organising, should be expanded.

- Encourage Commonwealth embassies to consider working together in support of cultural initiatives, perhaps by offering bursaries to qualified Zimbabweans wishing to undertake study in a number of Commonwealth countries.
- Provide training facilities in the arts, particularly in arts administration, management and fund-raising, but also in many aspects of basic artistic practice (detailed below).
- Work together with Zimbabwean diasporans to provide networks to the Commonwealth countries, and to pass on their skills and practical support.
- Facilitate representation and participation by Zimbabwean scholars and writers in conferences of organisations involved in the cultural cluster, e.g. Museums (CAM) and Literature (ACLALS), and of other Commonwealth CSOs.

#### **4.4. Specific Recommendations**

##### **4.4.1. Training**

- Organise a course on arts administration and management in Bulawayo and/or Harare to be run by consultants or board members of arts organisations from Commonwealth countries.
- Facilitate participation by Zimbabweans in such courses in Commonwealth countries.



- Organise a short training course on the fundamentals of fundraising for arts organisations.
- Involve Zimbabwean arts practitioners in distance learning courses, for instance in the field of museum studies.
- Provide support for the theatre sector through developing a strategic plan with major stakeholders such as the National Arts Council, the British Council, the Culture Fund, Savannah Arts, the University of Zimbabwe, Amakhosi and CHIPAWO, to develop a comprehensive 5-10 week course in Acting and Directing.
- Establish specific mentoring projects such as on film and museum conservation.
- Provide assistance in adapting existing courses, for instance, the University of Zimbabwe's Business Management Course, with a view to catering specifically to the arts with a long-term course in arts administration.
- Supply selected organisations, whether libraries, museums or the arts and crafts association, with computers and the basic IT training and support which goes with them.
- Upgrade computers and IT technology for the NMMZ.

#### **4.4.2. Creative Exchanges between Zimbabwe and Commonwealth countries**

- Enable a Zimbabwean librarian to undertake training at a major library in a Commonwealth country.
- Facilitate a visit by a Zimbabwean theatre director to a Commonwealth country at the time of a major arts festival (eg. Grahamstown, South Africa, or Edinburgh, Scotland).
- Provide some exposure to museums and galleries in Commonwealth countries for Zimbabweans working at museums and monuments in the country.
- Invite Zimbabwean writers to take up positions as writers in residence in Commonwealth countries.
- Fund cultural visits, particularly by mentors from Africa or the African diaspora, which would encourage greater respect for cultural and artistic expression.
- Support writers in residence from neighbouring African Commonwealth countries or from the wider Commonwealth at the Book Fair or Book Café.
- Enable a visiting choreographer from a Commonwealth country to work with the Dance Trust or to enable a staff member or dancer to study in neighbouring South Africa through the provision of a scholarship.
- Identify needs and provide training for archiving and documentation.
- Encourage dialogue with Commonwealth countries which have developed fruitful creative economies.

#### **4.4.3. Basic material and equipment**

- Identify and lobby institutions that could fill gaps in resources e.g. the development of a library of filmed theatre for the University of Zimbabwe
- Organise a coordinated charitable response to the direct need for equipment e.g. donation of computers, of basic arts material for dance, visual arts, and of books to libraries. Set up partnerships with external institutions and particularly

with diaspora organisations to source and manage the transportation of equipment.

- Help the National Gallery to produce a catalogue of its holdings
- Advise those working in the visual arts, theatre and contemporary dance on audience development.
- Sponsor literary events such as book launches and support literary festivals.
- Further encourage the campaign to help the Harare City Library supported by the British ambassador
- Provide capital support for the Dance Trust of Zimbabwe and the Gwanza initiative for photographers.

***APPENDIX 1: List of organisations contacted and individuals interviewed***

Alliance Française

Charles Houdart,  
Executive Director

Australian Embassy

Matthew Neuhaus,  
Ambassador

Book Café

Paul Brickhill,  
Founder

British Council

Jill Coates,  
Director

CHIPAWO (Children's Performing Arts Workshop)

Chipo Basopo,  
Executive Director

The Culture Fund

Farai Mpfunya,  
Executive Director

Dance Trust of Zimbabwe

(Tumbuka, National Ballet, Dance Foundation Course, Outreach)

Theresa De Chaby Carter,

Chairman

YE (Evie) Stranix,

Administrator

Choice Satiyi,

Outreach

Marie-Laure Edom (Soukiana),

Dance Foundation Course

Developing Artists

Giles Ramsay,

Founder

Gallery Delta

Derek Huggins, Helen Lieros,

Founders

Gina Maxim,

Administrator

Wallen Mapondera,

Visual Artist  
Masimba Hwati,  
Visual Artist, Lecturer at Harare Polytechnic

Global Arts Trust

Peter Churu,  
Director

Gwanza Photography Initiative

Calvin Dondo  
Founder

Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA)

Manuel Bagorro,  
Executive and Artistic Director

The Hot Haus (Bulawayo Theatre Group)

Patrice Naiambana  
Izzy Tredinnick  
Zanele Maseko

Images of Women Film Festival

Tsitsi Dangarembga,  
Founder, Writer and Film-maker

Masvingo Schools Drama Festival

Leeroy Gono,  
Director

Ministry of Education, Sports, Art and Culture

Reverend Damasane,  
Director of Arts and Culture  
Mutuwira,  
Deputy Director

National Arts Council

Elvas Mari,  
Director  
Nicholas Moyo,  
Deputy Director

National Gallery of Zimbabwe

Doreen Sibanda,  
Director  
Raphael Chikukwa,  
Curator

National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe

Dr. Godfrey Mahachi,  
Director

Nhimbe Trust  
Josh Nyaphile,  
Founder

Pamberi Trust  
Victor Moyo

Reps Theatre  
Zane Lucas,  
Director of Productions

Rooftop Promotions and Theatre in the Park  
Daves Guzha,  
Founder

University of Zimbabwe Theatre Arts Department  
Nehemiah Chivandikwa,  
Senior Lecturer

Weaver Press  
Irene Staunton,  
Director  
Murray McCartney

Young Africa Skills Centre Arts Club  
Bob Tafadzwa  
Enet Mukurazita

Zimbabwe Applied Arts and Craft Association  
Enock Kolimbo,  
Coordinator  
Jane Parsons,  
Crafter

Zimbabwean Embassy  
Gabriel Machinga,  
Ambassador to UK and Ireland

Cecil Chinere,  
Deputy Ambassador

Zimbabwe International Book Fair  
Prof Musaemura Zimunya (University of Zimbabwe),  
Chair, Zimbabwe International Book Fair

**and**

Heeten Bhagat,  
Film maker, curator

Stephen Chifunyise,  
Playwright, most recently of *Waiting for the Constitution*, former Permanent Secretary  
at the Ministry of Education, co-founder of CHIPAWO, Board Member of HIFA, the  
Zimbabwe International Book Fair, and Great Zimbabwe University

Nicholas Marcq,  
Film-maker

Tswarelo Mthobe,  
Bulawayo Events Manager

Blessing Musariri,  
Writer

David Neshita,  
Sculptor

Netsayi,  
Musician

Michelle Peters,  
Jeweller

Virginia Phiri,  
Writer

Derek Smail,  
Media consultant

## ***APPENDIX 2: Original Letter Sent to Interviewees***

Dear

We are writing to you as members of the small "cultural cluster" within the Commonwealth Organisations Committee on Zimbabwe. This Committee, now in its fourth year, exists to identify where help is needed to assist Zimbabwe's development programme, as well as its reintegration into the international community; to investigate gaps in technical, professional, and training capacity in Zimbabwe which could usefully be filled through Commonwealth initiatives and expertise; to develop effective contacts within Zimbabwe, who can assist in identifying needs and provide local support for new initiatives; and to broker effective responses to identified needs in the wider Commonwealth. To support this work a number of cluster groups on key areas have been formed within the wider committee to drive their own agendas forward. The most recent of these is the cultural cluster, consisting of members of the two cultural organisations funded by the Commonwealth Foundation, the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS) and the Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM).

The cultural cluster's prime aim is to try to build a relationship between the needs of the cultural sector in Zimbabwe and the assistance that can be provided from within the Commonwealth. In order to achieve this objective, the members of the cultural cluster hope to work closely with cultural practitioners and organisations, first in Zimbabwe and later in the cultural diaspora to help determine priorities, by identifying those individuals and organisations working in the arts and culture that most require assistance in re-establishing themselves. We wish to give special consideration as to how cultural partnerships and training programmes for Zimbabwean cultural organisations might be facilitated with a range of Commonwealth countries.

Thanks to very much valued funding from the Commonwealth Foundation, we will be in Zimbabwe from May 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, dates chosen partly with a view to visiting the Harare International Festival of the Arts. We shall also be visiting Bulawayo. We hope to be able to hold informal discussions with representatives of publishing, literature, theatre, music, film, dance, the visual and applied arts, museums & galleries, heritage protection and youth culture. The principal output of this work will be a report setting out a needs analysis and proposing priorities for consideration by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation.

We should add that this work is also being carried out as a cultural research project under the auspices of the Britain Zimbabwe Society. We are particularly happy to acknowledge the valuable support of Chipso Chung, who has been with us on this project and will be part of our small team on our forthcoming visit to the country.

At present we aim to be in Harare from 1-5 May and then again from 8-10 May. We are contacting you in advance of our visit in the hope that it will be possible for us to meet during our visit. If you are able to make the time, we should be most grateful if you could get back to us as soon as possible, suggesting a date, a time and venue.

### **APPENDIX 3: Profiles**

Geoffrey Davis *has retired from the Chair of Anglophone Postcolonial Literatures at Aachen University, Germany.*

*He has taught at universities in France and Italy, and has held research fellowships at St. John's College, Cambridge, Curtin University (Perth, Australia) and the University of Texas. Since 2006 he has been working on the cultures of indigenous peoples with the Bhasha Research Centre in Baroda, India. He recently co-edited volumes on Zimbabwean literature, Indigenous cultures, and Black and South Asian British theatre practice, and has just completed a volume on Sources and Resources in African Literature. He co-edits the Cross/Cultures: Readings in the Post/Colonial Literatures in English series and the Matatu African studies series. He is currently chair of the European branch of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies.*

Timothy Mason *is a cultural consultant with substantial experience of the arts and heritage, both in the UK and abroad.*

*From 1995-2000 Timothy Mason was Director of the Museums & Galleries Commission and prior to that was Chief Executive of the London Arts Board. He has been the Director of the Scottish Arts Council and of the Western Australian Arts Council. He has had extensive professional engagements abroad including in Western and Eastern Europe, Canada, United States, New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Barbados, Singapore, the South Caucasus and South America.*

*Earlier in his career Timothy Mason worked in the performing arts including the Royal Exchange, Manchester, Ballet Rambert, the Actor's Company, the World Theatre Season and the Oxford Playhouse.*

*Timothy Mason lives in London.*

Chipo Chung *is a professional actor and arts consultant.*

*Chipo began her training with the Children's Performing Arts Workshop (CHIPAWO) in Harare. She went on to study theatre at Yale University (BA cum laude) and at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA). She now sits on the RADA Council and is the Vice-Chair of the school's Training Committee. Chipo has helped start a number of arts charities, including Sponsored Arts for Education (SAFE) in Kenya, and Envision Zimbabwe in Zimbabwe. Chipo is an active member of the Zimbabwean diaspora community in Britain and a member of the Britain-Zimbabwe Society (BZS). She works as a professional actress in film, television and theatre.*