Insights and learnings from the South African arts experience

Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) Workshop, August 2022

Country Context

Current Population: 59,62 m in mid-2020

Increased from 40,5 m in 1996 i.e. almost 50% increase in 25 years

Current population

Black African	Coloured	White	Asian/Indian	TOTAL
47,44m	5,18m	4.65m	1,5m	58.78m
80,7%	8.8%	7,9%	2,6%	100%

Inequality, Poverty and Unemployment

STATS SA 2020 Report on average monthly incomes per ‘population group’

- Black Africans: $462
- Coloureds: $626
- Indians: $823
- Whites: $1449

- Inequality: 20% of the population earns 70% of national income
- Bottom 40% make do with 7% of national income

Unemployment

- Unemployment
  - Narrow definition: 32,5%
  - Extended definition: 43,2%
- Last quarter of 2020
  - 15m employed
  - 7,2m unemployed
- 64% of the population is under 35
- 63% of 15-24 year-olds (job seekers) are unemployed

Distribution of poverty per province (less than R2400 per month, or R80 per day)

- Limpopo: 67,5%
- Eastern Cape: 67,3%
- KwaZulu Natal: 60,7%
- North West: 59,6%
- Mpumalanga: 54,6%
- Northern Cape: 54,3%
- Free State: 48,9%
- Western Cape: 33,2%
- Gauteng: 29,3%
- 60% of households are more dependent on social grants than on income derived through the labour market

Internet access

- More than 60% of the population has access to the internet
- However, less than 10% have access to the internet at home
- High costs of data mean that the internet is used more functionally rather than for browsing/surfing/streaming

Some key challenges in the country

- Inequality and the threats it poses
- Unemployment
- Poverty
- High levels of (violent) crime
- Gender-based violence
- Corruption
- Decline in democracy and the belief in it

Implications for the Arts

- Assumptions: “Everyone shall have the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community and to have access to the arts…” (Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
- Publicly-funded infrastructure, resources, funding, skills need to be more equitably distributed, and particularly to less-resourced provinces and communities
- Online platforms to distribute the arts still relatively elitist
- Formal arts industry dependent on a relatively small, but moneyed, market with disposable income (less than 20% of SA, but still 12m people)

Basic Arts Funding and Infrastructure Architecture

- National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (52% of budget on heritage)
- Nine provincial Departments responsible for arts and culture
- Larger cities have arts and culture units
- Public funding through National Arts Council, National Film and Video Foundation and National Heritage Council
- Lottery, Business and Arts South Africa, Arts and Culture Trust funding
- Corporate sector
- Public and private museums, galleries, theatres, movie houses, libraries, festivals
- Parallel worlds of high quality (private) and different levels of mediocrity (public)

Dept of Sport, Arts and Culture Budget (2021/22)

Total Country Budget: $5,77 billion for 41 departments/entities

Dept Sport, Arts and Culture: $334 million

19th of 41 entities

0,58% of budget

DSAC budget of relevance to theatre (and dance): Funding agencies

Entity	Amount (2021/22)
National Arts Council	$8,04m
National Film and Video Foundation	$8,52m
Business and Arts South Africa	$0,58m
Mzansi Golden Economy	$18,96m

Key challenges for artists

- Access to capital to create, distribute
- Access to infrastructure to create, distribute
- Access to markets
- Arts sector excluded from labour relations protections
- Inability to influence policy and funding
- Mental, emotional and physical unwellness

Not that there are no resources for arts and culture; rather, misspent by visionless authorities.

Obliges sector to act in parallel: Advocacy to government on the one hand, while on the other, searching for own sustainability

Acting in Parallel: what are artists doing, creating themselves?

- The music “Stokvel”
- Afrikaans festival circuit
- STAND Foundation subscriber programme
- Home-based infrastructure for galleries and theatres
- Fashion and other brands of income
- ‘Shack’ theatres, Backyard Theatre
- Public art (festivals, galleries)
- South African Theatre online (SATOD)
- Community arts centres and networks, circuits
- International travel and income (expatriate market)
- Television channel pop-ups
- Arts Advocacy organisations