

Arts and Culture Policy of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa: Bridging the Cultural Gap of Diverse Society

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Abstract

Kwa-Zulu Natal, on the East Coast of South Africa is blessed with a unique composition of cultural groups each one of them having their own distinctive cultural identity. Together they form part of a powerful and colourful tapestry, demonstrating how different communities can co-exist side-by-side in a panoramic South African Society. In this way, ethno-centricity in the treatment of any cultural complex can be avoided. Similarly, value judgements, which were the order of the day in the not too distant past, and which exist even today, can also be avoided. It is very important for people to learn to understand the cultural practices of different communities. This will assist in healing the wounds of the past and contribute towards nation building. It is the duty of any Government to provide opportunities for communities to achieve these objectives through carefully designed policies.

Keywords

African Renaissance, Cultural Diversity, redress, vision, access

Introduction and Background

The numerous cultural communities that constitute Kwa-Zulu Natal are the building blocks of a significant cultural centre, unrivalled in their cultural diversity and richness. Despite mistakes of the past and current circumstances that could foster cultural conflict, Kwa-Zulu Natal is in a position to demonstrate how multiple traditions can be manifested in both public policy and daily behaviour.

Arts and Culture are generally not viewed as priorities within a context in which there are many material legacies of apartheid to overcome, where development is the key driving

force to social policy and where public funding generally under huge pressure from competing, and legitimate areas of social and human endeavour.

However, recent international experience in the area of development has shown that culture is integral to sustainable development and the arts, based on freedom of expression and creative thought.

Kwa-Zulu Natal has the resources and human potential to become a great 21st Century provincial entity. We must view the diversity as a positive force and try to embrace it, nurture it and draw strength from it. Shaping the future of the Province is not just the responsibility of a few leaders and government institutions. External forces can play an important role in assisting them. The Kwa-Zulu Natal Directorate of Cultural services, the Arts and Culture Council and other structures with an exemplary track record can act as a catalyst, bringing together existing stakeholder organisations and key opinion leaders to assist the province in achieving its goals, which was set after that great miracle in 1994. With a proactive stance and a desire to make a difference the Department has made remarkable inroads in the Province and other parts of the country. The Directorate can broaden its base by continuing to support the remarkable achievements made in the arts and culture sector in Kwa-Zulu Natal over the past few years. This can be attributed to the assistance given by the Department of Education and Culture and other funding organisations, in the form of seed funding, financial grants, cultural exchanges, scholarships, professional support and guidance, and other innovative strategies.

The Department of Education and Culture as a policy making body must view Kwa-Zulu Natal as a broad and complex system of cultures- each with its own beliefs, social structures, and language and thought patterns. These cultures, and particularly their arts and craft forms and performing arts which is steeped in oral tradition, offer ways to know and respect each other, thereby enriching their diversity and contributing to the economic development of the Province and the Country as a whole. Kwa-Zulu Natal boasts an array of indigenous oral traditions- from the traditional Zulu to the vibrant and colourful people of Indian Origin. Tourists, researchers, academics and other interested parties can benefit from these communities. Therefore it is vital that the Department when formulation programmes and projects must realise the essential role that arts and culture can play in building a sense of community in a society that is presently healing the wounds of the past.

South African society has been undergoing fundamental transformation over the last ten years. In accordance with the principles of justice, democracy, non-racism and non-sexism, every sector of our society is facing change. While it may be unsettling for some, for many it brings hope that their needs, views and aspirations will now also become part of the mainstream. South Africa's first democratically elected Government has contributed to this process by creating the first Ministry of Arts and Culture at national and provincial levels

The most significant contribution to the arts and culture sector was the establishment of the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG). This process paved the way for the new South African cultural policy which was based on the 1996 Government White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage which lays down basic policy principles for establishing an optimal financial and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of South African arts, culture and heritage. South Africa was indeed on the brink of experiencing a cultural renaissance. The underlying values of this new development were based on constitutional guidelines. Access to, participation in, and enjoyment of the arts, cultural expression, and the preservation of one's heritage are basic human rights; they are not luxuries, nor are they privileges as we have generally been led to believe.

Degenaar (1993: 55) argues that although a democratic culture protects cultural diversity it simultaneously promotes the crossing of boundaries. In order to accommodate this in our thinking it is important that we do not view cultures in a static way as “self-enclosed wholes” but in a dynamic way as resources of values, which can enrich a society.

The Bill of Rights of the Constitution states:

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes ...freedom of artistic creativity ... (paragraph 16)

And

Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice ... (paragraph 30)

It is the role of Government to facilitate the optimum conditions in which these rights may be enjoyed and practised.

Arts and culture may play a healing role through promoting reconciliation. The approach of the Provincial Department of Cultural Affairs is premised on International standards in which culture is understood as an important component of national life which enhances all of our freedom.

Based on the conviction that the political objective of transforming South African society must also encompass the cultural sector, there is a growing tendency to return to a specifically African cultural identity under the term "African Renaissance". This is why special attention is being paid to preserving South Africa's national cultural heritage, as well as projects focusing on Africa's unique identity. National cultural institutions are being reformed and reorganized with the aim of moving beyond apartheid era structures and enhancing the role of the regions in cultural promotion.

The Council of Culture Ministers oversees the process of carrying over the powers provinces are entitled to, and makes important decisions on policy matters of national impact. The council consists of the Minister and Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology and the Members of Provincial Executive Councils (MECs) responsible for Arts and Culture. Each Province has its own structure to oversee the promotion of arts and culture to obtain maximum results. In the Province of Kwa-Zulu Natal the Cultural Services Directorate is attached to the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Head Office is responsible for policy-making and the facilitation of Provincial projects. There are four regional offices which are responsible for the implementation of policy and the facilitation of regional projects.

Figure 1 - Structure of Head Office incorporating all the components of Cultural Services

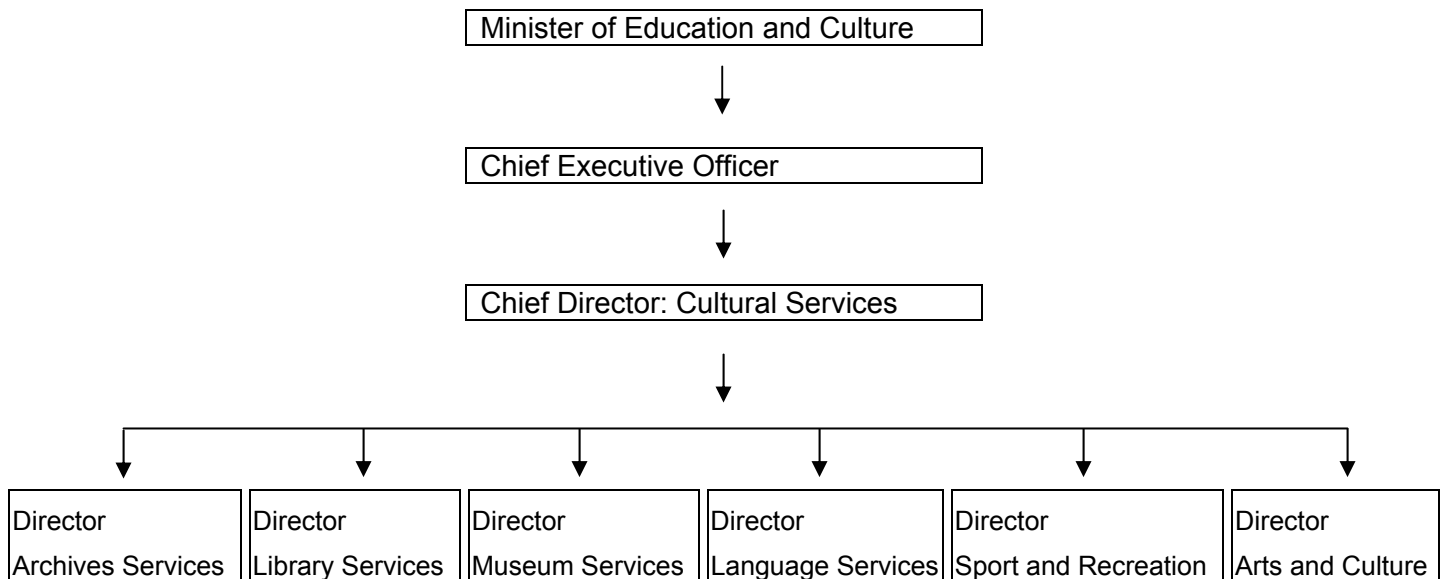
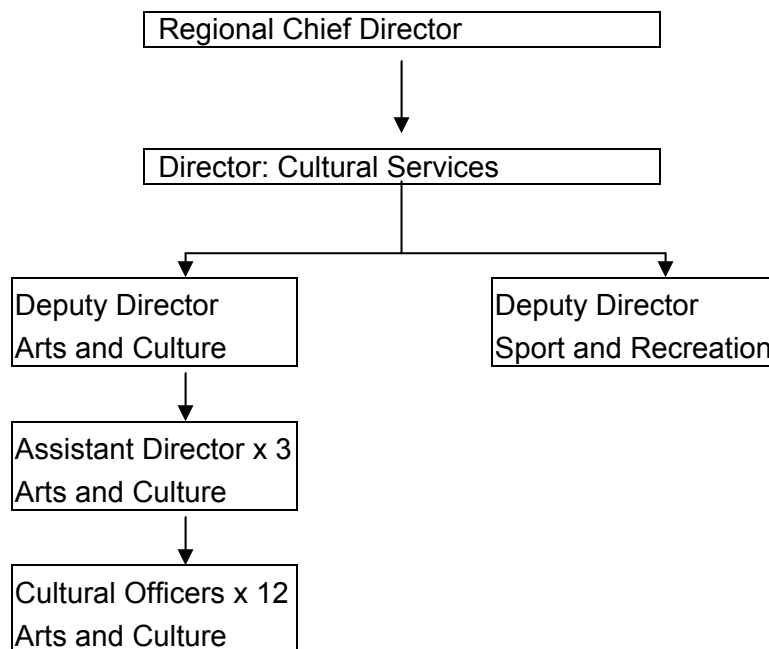


Figure 2 – Structure of the Regional Offices



Through its varied programmes the Provincial Department and its regional structures ensures that the cultural needs of a diverse society are satisfied in all respects. The beautiful province of Kwa-Zulu Natal is home for a true rainbow nation that possesses a rich cultural diversity, which makes the region a fertile cultural and religious rendezvous. The Department acknowledges that the Province is rich in oral tradition, where ideas,

words, customs, art forms, culinary and religious practices contribute towards a colourful tapestry. The White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage states:

This dynamic interaction has always played a role in cultural enrichment which has resulted in an extraordinarily fertile and unique South African culture which binds our nation in linguistic, cultural, culinary, and religious diversity in so many forms. (1996:14)

The arts certainly offer one of the most accessible entrees to experiencing cultures different from one's own. However, arts and culture, like real life, is dynamic and refuses to stand still. The prime role of the Provincial Department's arts and culture policy is to ensure the survival and development of all art forms and genres, cultural diversity and mutual respect and tolerance, heritage recognition and advancement, education in arts and culture, access to funding, the promotion of oral history and cultural industries. In order to achieve all this funding is provided in the form of a provincial budget allocation for the Department of Cultural Services which is attached to the broader Department of Education and Culture.

Table 1 – Arts and Culture Budget (2002-2003)

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Administrative Services	R 3 422 400
Stores and Livestock	R 1 282 000
Equipment	R 1 435 000
Land and Buildings	R 220 000
Professional and Special Services	R 2 819 000
Transfer Payments: <u>Subsidies:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision made for transfer payments to Arts Centres - R 3 000 000 • KwaZulu-Natal Arts and Culture Council – R 3 000 000 • Poverty Alleviation Projects – R 1 500 000 • Creative Art Centre for development of preproduction of TV & Film – R 300 000 • Provincial Geographic Names Committee – R 200 000 • Playhouse Company – R 5 000 000 <p>All the above have policy mandate from National Department</p>	R 13 000 000
TOTAL – ARTS AND CULTURE	R 22 178 400

Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals

The vision of the Directorate of Cultural services is:

To support a democratic and just cultural dispensation which will meet the needs of the people and to develop, promote, protect and preserve the diverse cultures of KZN.

While the mission statement is:

- To encourage self-sufficiency and sustainability in the Art and Culture.
- To protect the rights of all artists and crafters, fair employment practices and to protect their intellectual, artistic and cultural rights.

The Strategic Goals of the Department is to:

- Give recognition and encouragement to the diverse art forms in the province and enhance economic development
- Give recognition to all languages and facilitate multilingualism
- Support freedom of artistic and cultural development as guaranteed in Article 31 in the Bill of Rights
- Promote the democratic development and management of the Arts
- Promote the equitable distribution of cultural infrastructure, skills and resources throughout the province
- Address the social and health threats brought by HIV/AIDS.

To guide the realisation of the above vision, mission statement and strategic goals, and to facilitate practical programmes to this end, the Provincial Arts and Culture policy is guided by the following operational principles which is enshrined in the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996:18)

- Human Rights: Shall ensure that all persons, group and communities have the right to equal opportunities to participate in the arts and culture, to conserve and develop their cultural heritage.
- Freedom of Expression: Shall ensure that all persons are free to pursue their vision of artistic creativity without interference, victimization and censorship.
- Access: Shall ensure unhindered access to the means of artistic and cultural activity, information and enjoyment in both financial and geographical senses.
- Equity: Shall ensure the equitable distribution of resources to all forms of art and culture, with due regard to the specific needs of each art form.
- Redress: Shall ensure the correction of historical and existing imbalances through development, education, training and affirmative action with regard to race, gender, rural and urban considerations.
- Nation building: Shall foster a sense of pride and knowledge in all aspects of South African culture, heritage and the arts. Shall further encourage mutual respect and tolerance and inter-cultural exchange between the various cultures and forms of art to facilitate the emergence of a shared cultural identity constituted by diversity.
- Multilingualism: Shall promote multilingualism in the arts in accordance with the Constitution.
- Diversity: Shall ensure the recognition of aesthetic pluralism and a diversity of artistic forms, within a multicultural context.
- Autonomy: Shall ensure the full independence of publicly-funded arts institutions, organizations and practitioners from party political and state interference.
- Arms length: The state shall facilitate mechanism for peer evaluation and decision-making regarding the funding of arts and culture activities.
- Participation: Shall ensure the right of artists and the public to participate in all aspects of the arts, including participation in decision-making structures.
- Accountability: Shall ensure that all arts bodies and institutions receiving public funds are accountable to the arts community, the public and a democratically elected government.
- Transparency: Shall ensure that all decisions and information pertaining to the arts, culture and heritage are open to public scrutiny.

- Conservation: Shall be committed to conserve the full diversity of South African heritage and traditions.
- Achievement: Shall recognize achievement and foster the development of shared standards of excellence.
- Innovation: Shall encourage artistic creativity, experimentation and artistic renewal.
- Co-operation: Shall encourage inter-disciplinary co-operation and resource sharing between different art forms and institutions.
- Exchange: Shall encourage exchange and interaction between local, regional, continental and international culture.
- Security: Shall protect the rights of all artists to fair employment practices, to protect their intellectual, artistic and cultural rights.

Access to Arts and Culture

The Provincial Department provides access to the arts in two ways:

Firstly the Department commits a portion of its own budget specifically to run provincial and regional projects in order to:

- Promote the full range of art forms, cultural activities and heritage.
- Develop cultural industries
- Empower individuals and organisations to be self-sustainable

Table 2 - Provincial Cultural Programmes

PROGRAMME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP
King Shaka Day	Commemoration	Zulu
Eastern Rendezvous	Song, music and dance	Indian community
Reed Dance Festival	Celebration of virginity	Zulu
Umkhosi Wokweshwama	Celebration of first fruits	Zulu
Choral Music Festival	Choral music	Zulu
Maskanda Competition	Traditional Music	Zulu
Isicathamiya Music	Traditional Music	Zulu
Gospel Music Festival	Music	Zulu
Traditional Dance Competition	Dance	Zulu
Taking Arts to the People	Various	Zulu
Deepavali Celebrations	Variety cultural programme	Indian
1860 Celebrations	Various – oral history	Indian
Wild fees	Music and cuisine	Afrikaans
Freedom Day Celebrations	Music, dance, exhibitions	All cultural groups
Human Rights Celebration	Music, song, dance, poetry	All cultural groups
World Aids Day	Music, exhibitions	All cultural groups

Table 3 – Examples of Regional Programmes

PROGRAMME	DESCRIPTION	TARGET GROUP
Heritage Day Celebration	Music, dance, academic seminar, poetry,	All cultural groups
Craft Development skills	Craft	Black
Traditional cuisine demo.	Cuisine	All cultural groups
Skills development Workshops	Empowerment	All cultural groups
Entrepreneurial skills	Empowerment	All cultural groups
Garment making	Empowerment	Zulu
Cultural Diversity Celebration	Music, song and dance	All cultural groups
Artistic Rights	Empowerment	All cultural groups
Koligfees	Festival of Afrikaans culture	Afrikaner
Music development	Awareness programme	All cultural groups
Gay and lesbian empowerment	Developmental	Gay and Lesbians
Designers Emporium	Design and craft	All cultural groups
Indigenous Knowledge System	Promoting Oral tradition	All cultural groups

Secondly, the Department distributes cultural grants on an annual basis through the Kwa-Zulu Natal Arts and Culture Council. This Council is made up of nominated members of community organisations and appointed by the Provincial Minister of Education and Culture, to serve for a period not exceeding three years. The members of the Council are persons who have special knowledge or experience, or who have achieved distinction in the field of arts and culture, arts education or cultural management.

Some of the powers and duties of The Council are:

- to advise the Minister on all matters concerning Arts and Culture;
- to evaluate all applications for grants and make recommendations for distribution of funds;
- give advice and information to persons and organizations concerned with creativity, conservation and the development and promotion of Arts and Culture;
- facilitate and promote liaison between individuals, organizations and institutions concerned with the Arts and Culture.

The processes involved in the distribution of grants are as follows:

- Adverts are placed in all major newspapers calling for proposals and business plans from constituted arts and culture organisations.
- The applications are processed and prepared for the Arts and Culture Council.
- The applications are evaluated and rated according to specific guidelines.
- Recommendations are made for the approval of the Provincial Minister of Education and Culture.
- Funds are distributed.
- The projects are monitored by cultural officers attached to the Department of Cultural Service

Figure 3 – Population statistics – Kwa-Zulu Natal (1996)

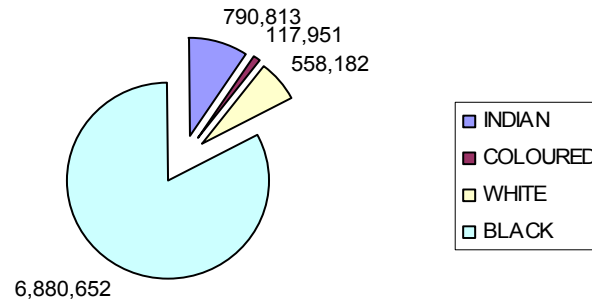
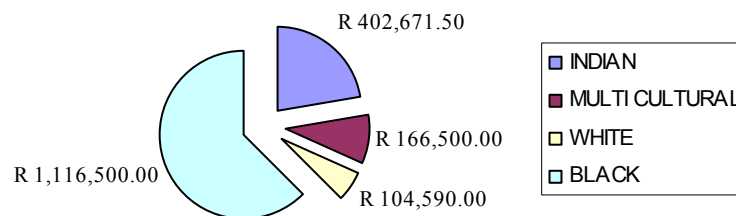


Figure 4 – Distribution of Cultural grants (2003-2004)



Performing Arts Policy in the Province

A new policy transforming previous performing arts councils' infrastructure into playhouses has been implemented. This is within the context of the following vision statement:

To create a sustainable performing arts industry based on access, excellence, diversity and redress, which encourages the development and celebrates the full range of South Africa's performing arts heritage. (2001:7)

It is part of the policy of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology to transform the regional performing arts councils to ensure that they become representative of the full diversity of South African culture.

The National Department of Arts and Culture provides ongoing transitional subsidy for operational costs for the Playhouse Theatre in Kwa-Zulu Natal like it does with the five other major theaters in the country as well as the multi-functional arts centres which was established for the benefit of grass roots communities viz. Stable Theatre, Indonza Art Centre and Intuzuma Arts Centre.

The Provincial Department provides funding for the maintenance of the buildings, land, equipment, security and other infrastructural costs. It is expected that the Local Government provides the theatres and arts centres with electricity, water and similar services without cost plus additional funding for the marketing of the venues within the city.

National and Provincial funding through the National Arts Council (NAC) and the Kwa-Zulu Natal Arts and Culture Council are made available to a number of approved production/performing companies and creative individuals to develop the performing arts sector at these designated venues.

Funding Policy and Sources

It is impossible for Provincial Government by itself to achieve its vision and goals. While the Department accepts that it has a major role to play, it needs to form co-operative alliances with other partners, to provide an effective service to the arts and culture community.

Public Sector

The Department has explored creative inter-departmental co-operation in seeking to unlock potential public resources and expertise for the arts. Concerted efforts have been made with the National and Provincial Departments of Trade and Industry, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Health and Welfare, Transport, Education, Correctional Services and other departments to assist in the furthering of the Cultural Industries Growth Strategy. Positive linkages have also been made with Local Municipalities and Tribal Authorities to satisfy the cultural needs of the urban and rural communities. Provincial and local governments provide funds on an ongoing basis to ensure sustainability of essential projects. Joint programmes and undertakings prevent duplication and enhance the quality of programmes. A noteworthy example of a successful interdepartmental venture is the Spatial Development Initiative. This concept of targeting development in particular areas of the country was developed by the departments of Trade and Industry and Transport. The key objectives of the Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs) are:

- job creation
- human resource development
- creating a sense of ownership among various communities for the sustainability of SDI projects
- Maximizing investment potential in the particular area.

Private Sector

Given the massive historical legacies which government was obliged to deal with in all spheres of our society, it is impossible for the Provincial Department of Cultural services, with its limited resources, to meet all the expectations of the arts community, and to serve all the needs of the arts-loving public.

There are numerous examples of high profile private sector involvement in the arts. The Department in all its major Provincial and Regional activities recognises the importance of private sector partnerships in providing a more effective service to the arts and culture community. These partnership programmes are mutually beneficial to all role-players.

Business Arts South Africa (BASA) was launched on 3 February 1997 by President, Thabo Mbeki, who serves as patron of this national association of business interested in supporting the arts and culture. It is the principal private-sector partner of the Government in the field of arts and culture, and the Government therefore provides a grant fund each year to match the grants of business sponsors.

The body does not create a central fund to which artists may apply for sponsorship. Rather, modeled on successful organizations internationally, it partners business and arts organizations with the aim of enhancing a company's image-building and marketing strategy. By March 1999, Basa had a membership of 69 companies.

Similarly there are other private sector funding agencies that contribute to the development of the arts and culture sector in the Province.

Conclusion

To overcome the material, emotional, aesthetic and psychological destructiveness of apartheid, and to encourage the holistic development of individuals and communities, it is imperative that the cultural dimension should be integrated into the overall processes of social development. Projects and activities to find common ground, in terms of cultural practices, can help to provide answers to the many problems that confront a country, which is in the process of transforming out of segregation into a unified whole.

As we prepare to celebrate ten years of democracy the South African society faces, enormous social, cultural and economic challenges in its attempts to confront the legacies from previous generations. Any attempts of cross-cultural activities can help with healing the wounds of the past. We have all seen the value of arts and culture in contributing to nation building. Since the inauguration of the President of South Africa in 1994, and the theme of 'many cultures, one nation', there have been numerous multi-cultural celebrations expressing our unity through culturally diverse art forms. Art forms such as dance and music in particular, are exploring and developing new forms, which combine elements of our various cultures with great success. Similarly studies of the rituals and performances of the different communities can contribute towards a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of the different groups, which will result in forging better relationships, and promise a brighter and more integrated and peaceful future for all South Africans.

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