

*An assessment of the impact of National Arts Council (NAC)
funding on resilience and financial sustainability on craft
enterprises – a review of nine organisations in four
provinces (Gauteng, Western Cape, Kwa Zulu Natal &
Northern Cape)*

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Aim:

To assess the impact of NAC funds on organisations in the craft sector. In particular, I will explore the extent to which such funding has had an effect if any, on craft enterprises becoming resilient and sustainable.

Brief personal background in a flash:

For over 20 years in the performing arts industry as a performer, project manager, director, fundraiser, mentor and dance activist - I have observed and been troubled by the continuous struggle of arts and culture organisations in the development sphere trying to thrive and survive without consistent financial support resulting in a dependence on funding bodies for their operations.

Rationale :

I am particularly drawn to what it means for arts organisations to be **sustainable** and **resilient** ;
and how they should be thinking about and implementing innovative ways of operating and look into a thriving arts and culture sector.

Case(s) in point.....:

9 Organisations /individually-run enterprises within the craft sector will be used a tool to investigate this and insights gained from this research could then be applied in other aspects of the arts & culture sector such as the performing arts, visual arts and drama.

Authors on *resilience*

Archer (2010) - “the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and still retain its basic function “.....resonates with me.

The disturbances in this instance include erratic funding patterns and it is for this reason that that I am interested to look into how arts organisations, particularly NAC-funded craft enterprises can achieve resilience in the face of inconsistencies and disturbance in funding and which measures they should put into place to be able to think beyond conventional donor support concepts.

Authors on *resilience....cont'd 1*

Mark Robinson suggests that

organisations and sectors need both **resources** and
adaptive skills to be resilient over time.

Authors on *resilience....cont'd 2*

Mark

Robinson.....resources....

Authors on *resilience....cont'd* 3

- Culture of shared purpose and values rooted in organisational memory
- Predictable financial resources derived from a robust business model
- Intellectual, human and physical assets

Authors on *resilience....cont'd* 4

Mark Robinson.....adaptive
skills....

Authors on *resilience....cont'd* 5

- Leadership, management and governance
- Adaptive capacity: Innovation and experimentation embedded in reflective practice
- Management of key vulnerabilities: planning and preparation for disruption

Field work ...my primary research tested....

- Whether the fact of funding promotes a deeper dependence as is the case with most arts and culture organisations
- If that funding has given them the space to think about some form of stability through which they can explore other business models should that funding not continue.
- How craft enterprises continue with their operations which prepares for a future in which dependence on funding is no longer possible nor necessary.

Some findings to date....

- Lack of consistent financial support for the craft sector from all spheres of government
- Access to markets both locally and internationally and the inability of some of the crafters to go to various exhibitions and trade fairs to showcase and sell their products.
- Business skills in marketing their products locally and internationally.
- Lack of a craft hub which will aid in assisting, guiding and supporting with product prototypes, new ideas and research.
- The absence of product development and design. Rural craft organisations are most affected and in most instances they produce the same or similar craft products with no variation. What was commonly mentioned was a need for a skills development programme where crafters will be given the opportunity of diversifying their products to have the competitive edge both locally and internationally.

Ke a leboga!

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