Global Cultural Governance: the South African context

Presentation to the South African Cultural Observatory, Johannesburg
24th and 25th May, 2017

Avril Joffe
Head of Department
Cultural Policy and Management
Wits School of Arts
avril.joffe@wits.ac.za
Our study is collecting information from practitioners and academics from the following locations:

Ethiopia  
Taiwan  
China  
India  
Australia  
South Africa  
Brazil  
Serbia  
USA.

Project is conceived and coordinated by Prof Ian King and Prof Annick Schramme based on this presentation. Each country has a local host. Avril Joffe, CPM is the host for The South African study.
- ‘are we convinced that our present understandings of governance fully appreciates the particular needs of arts and cultural sectors in different global locations?

Aim of research into Global Cultural Governance:

To explore the assumptions, issues and expectations that drive South African contexts compared to traditions from the Global North

To assess the status of organisational governance in arts based organisations in relation to cultural governance / cultural policy in South Africa
“Cultural governance (...) is defined as government’s direct or indirect involvement in the promotion and administration of programs of cultural organizations (including museums) existing in specific geographic boundaries with unique financial and administrative arrangements”

“cultural governance’- in the profit sector and the non profit sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profit sector</th>
<th>Cultural not for profit sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Success of the company on the long term</td>
<td>Realisation of the artistic/cultural mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit driven, market oriented</td>
<td>Societal orientation – other values are more important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shareholders</td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewarded board members</td>
<td>Unrewarded volunteers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why cultural governance?

- Because many cultural organisation operate with external resources in addition to their own income
- And to reflect the developing needs of the life cycle of the cultural organisation
- Thus achieving confidence, welfare and sustainable growth for the cultural organisation
Life cycle of arts/culture organisation

- Less than 2 years
  - Friends, colleagues

- 2 – 5 years
  - Influential people/well known players, celebrities

- Over 5 years
  - Recognition of role of formal board
Working Definition:

Schramme (2013) suggests:

‘Cultural governance is the practice of good governance for cultural organisations. The board (or equivalent) of a cultural organisation focuses on the long-term mission of the organisation by determining its strategy. In doing so, the board safeguards the artistic/cultural mission, ethics and financial health of the organisation. In the process of cultural governance, the board takes the organisation’s stakeholders (both internal and external) into account.’
- Existing definitions/understandings developed for commercial sector

- Potentially restricted to specific locations/settings

- How valuable is cultural governance literature across different global settings?
Tensions between

i) recent understandings of the challenges facing arts and cultural sector (especially in terms of funding etc),

ii) the transition for them to operate within a commercial frame and

iii) the purpose of the arts/cultural organization itself
Following the work of Schramme (forthcoming) the GCG project asks whether the following five principles of governance are relevant for global contexts?

And if they are not relevant; then what questions or principles guide these?
Tentative findings - SA

Size
- Most organisations are small
  - majority of these are between 2-4 employees
  - few between 5-12
- Some organisations are medium (over 12 people)
- One or two are large (over 50 employees)

Age
- Majority (61%) formed after 2000
  - Some predate new democratic government (17%)
  - Rest between 1994-2000 (22%)

Funded
- Most by national government
  - Few by international NGOs
  - Few are self-funded in combination
  - Only one is totally self-funded
  - Very few access corporate sponsorships

Focus
- Most focus on social values
  - Few only on artistic value
  - Very few on economic value
Tentative findings - SA

Type of organisation
- Most organisations define themselves as a public body
  - A few say they are private bodies
  - Very few describe themselves as a trust

Board meetings
- Majority meet quarterly
  - Some meet monthly
  - Less meet 2 or 3 times per year
  - One meets weekly

Organisation’s activities
- Across arts disciplines (visual arts, dance, theatre, exhibitions, music, performance)
  - Many focus on Education and Training
  - Many focus on Youth and children
  - Some focus on whole Community
  - Few in development/funding
  - Few in rural areas
  - Few focus on research

External Reporting
- All prepare annual statements
  - Majority report to government
Five Principles of Cultural Governance

as developed by Ian King and Annick Schramme for Global Cultural Governance study
1. The mission and the role of the different governance bodies.

- Professional arts/cultural organisations in Europe will normally possess both a general assembly (GA) and a governance board (GB), as well as a professional management team (MT).

- The Management Team is authorised for day-to-day affairs within the organisation. The Board for the strategic issues. The GA has to control the Board. Therefore, we refer to the classical triptych of governance (GA, GB and MT).

- The fundamental issue of governance concerns the realisation of this triptych, particularly with regard to the delimitation of powers between these bodies.
Position of the artistic leader and relationship with board (or equivalent)

Roles of the management team:

• **Different models**: dual model; one general directorate/intendant; a management team (the positions divided according to the business units)

• **Position of artistic leader** – vertical/hierarchical (evidence of charismatic leadership style) – compare with current style (for example, horizontal/shared leadership)

• **Relationship of artist leader with the board** – board appoints artistic leader – leads to questions regarding discretion with regards to artistic freedom/control
2. Checks and balances and accountability.

- optimise cooperation between bodies and avoid imbalance of power

- clear specification of the division of tasks/responsibilities between the bodies to enable effective decision-making

- accountability and control systems set-up through statutes and by-laws

- counter-weight mechanisms (i.e. individual responsibilities) and monitoring activities utilised on regular intervals
3. Transparency of information.

- Transparency of internal and external processes, together with access to accurate information and communication (both internal and external) normally needs to be provided through formal documentation (and be regularly monitored)
4. Composition of the board:
4. Composition of the board

- Composition of Governance body (GB) reflects the needs of the cultural organisation and of the local community?

- What are the required competences/profiles to fulfill its role in a proper way? Does it reflect also gender, ethnic and generational distribution?

- Size of the GB should be limited to guarantee the efficiency and flexibility of its operations.

- Periodic review of board (profile) membership
4. Composition of the board

- Composition of Governance body to reflect needs of specific institution and its position in its own life cycle. Thus profiles of board to reflect required competences/composition/profile of board to fulfill tasks

- Profiles of board to reflect required competences/composition/profile of board to fulfill task – balanced with membership to reflect gender, ethnic and generational distribution

- Size of the GB should be limited to guarantee the efficiency and flexibility of its operations: for a small associations = 4-6 members and large associations = 8-12 members

- Periodic review of board profile membership in accordance with review of institutions’ present and future needs
5. The value and contribution of stakeholders (internal and external).

- The most important stakeholders of a cultural organisation are the governance bodies, paid and unpaid staff members and the public.

- In addition, there are stakeholders at the level of society: external stakeholders, including the government, other actors from within civil society and separate associations of friends and volunteers.

- Importance of effective and accurate communication - to appreciate the ‘political’ sensitivity of the cultural organisation and potential ‘close scrutiny’ by direct and indirect stakeholders.
• How to involve the stakeholders in the realisation of the artistic mission?

• What is the role of ‘the Group of Friends’?

• And how to involve the volunteers?

→ Social media are changing the traditional relationships between organisations and their stakeholders!
Government as most important stakeholder

Are politicians represented in the board?

What is their involvement?

How do you value this?

If not, how do you communicate with the policy makers?

-------> tension between democratic representation vs good governance?
Summary:

1. The mission and the role of the different governance bodies.

2. Checks and balances and accountability.

3. Transparency and information.

4. Composition of the board

5. The value and contribution of stakeholders (internal and external).
Initial results from global study:

The diverse interpretations of what is arts and culture

Different interpretations of Cultural Governance

Focus of CG at the organisational level or the system as a whole

Historical influences

Importance of Formal and informal influences
GCG project reports the following insight after most of the workshops held

   Five principles of governance
   + formal and informal local interpretations
   + temporal development
   = local cultural governance.
Concluding Comments about Cultural Governance

This is work in progress

We are asking the following questions....

- *What can South African cultural organisations gain from good governance?*

- How can we combine the application of these universal principles with a contextual approach?

- How do we deal with the socio-cultural and economic differences?

- *How does the experiences of independent arts organisations compare to governance matters in state-owned cultural institutions?*

- What sorts of support programmes should we be developing for good governance in our arts and culture sector?
With Thanks

If you are an arts based NPO and would like to be included in this study please contact me

Avril Joffe
avril.joffe@wits.ac.za