



CONFERENCE REPORT 2009



Introduction

The Arterial Network was launched at a conference on Gorée Island, Senegal in March 2007. 48 delegates from 14 African countries attended the conference along with an additional 13 delegates from mainly European countries.

A Task Team was elected to take forward the recommendations emanating from the conference. This Task Team met in August 2007 to plan for the next three years. It was agreed at that meeting that the Arterial Network would meet every two years to assess progress made and to set an agenda for the next few years for this civil society network of artists, NGOs and institutions engaged in the African creative sector. It was further agreed that the next meeting would take place in September 2009, just before the World Summit on Arts and Culture to be hosted by the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) in Johannesburg.

This Report covers the Arterial Network Conference and the World Summit on Arts and Culture.

Aims

The four key aims of the Arterial Network Conference were to

1. bring together delegates from at least 25 African countries to discuss issues pertinent to them, to prepare for the World Summit and to consolidate the continental networking and global partnerships
2. project African thought, perspectives, artists and thinkers onto the global stage provided by the World Summit on Arts and Culture
3. set a clear agenda for the Arterial Network's activities for the next 3-5 years and
4. elect a Steering Committee to guide the organisation over the next while

Report on achievement of aims

Aim 1: to bring together delegates from at least 25 African countries to discuss issues pertinent to them, to prepare for the World Summit and to consolidate the continental networking and global partnerships

a. 137 delegates attended the three day event (19-21 September) at the Goethe Institute, representing 28 African countries as well as a number of European countries. Four delegates – from The Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast – were unable to obtain visas in time. These totals represented more than double

the delegates and double the number of countries that had been present at the founding conference two-and-a-half years before.

b. Delegates from countries present at the conference elected a representative (when there was more than one delegate) to serve as a link with the Arterial Network Secretariat so that there are now 28 country representatives to assist in developing the Arterial Network brand in more than half the countries on the African continent.

c. A broad constitutional framework was adopted including a vision, aims, statement of principles and organisational outline that will help greatly to develop the structure and presence of the Arterial Network across the continent.

Aim 2: to project African thought, perspectives, artists and thinkers onto the global stage provided by the World Summit on Arts and Culture

a. The head of the Arterial Network's Secretariat also served as the Programme Director of the World Summit on Arts and Culture and in this capacity, was able to ensure that of the 57 invited speakers, 24 (more than 40%) were African

b. For the first time, the World Summit on Arts and Culture had a significant African presence – not only among the speakers – but among the delegates, with more than 100 of the 450 delegates deriving from 30 African countries to the north of the Limpopo, with an additional number of South African delegates

c. The welcoming event at the Arterial Network conference took the form of a music concert at which various African artists performed, and this was organised by African Synergy, a Zimbabwean-based partner of the Arterial Network

d. The opening ceremony of the World Summit included African musicians and artists from beyond South Africa, with a Congolese musician composing the music

e. The Arterial Network conference was used to inform delegates about the key themes of the World Summit so that they participated in an informed manner in the Summit with at least five Africans attending each roundtable session at the Summit

f. Interestingly, in the keynote sessions, it was often African delegates who posed questions or made comments from the floor, affirming the empowerment of African delegates at the event

Aim 3: to set a clear agenda for the Arterial Network's activities for the next 3-5 years

Delegates at the Arterial Network Conference agreed that the Network should pursue the following activities for the next few years:

A. Advocacy and lobbying



1. To lobby every African country - in order to give effect to the Nairobi Plan of Action on Cultural Industries – to have the following legislative and institutional framework as a minimum to underpin the creative sector:

a. an arts and culture policy premised on numerous existing documents including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, various UNESCO conventions, the Nairobi Plan of Action on the Cultural Industries, etc; that these policies cover the range of artistic practice: art for developmental purposes, art for its own sake and market-driven creative industries, and that these policies are regularly updated to respond to the specific and changing conditions within that country

b. the establishment of at least one institution in each country that provides training to produce excellent artists in a range of disciplines, and builds capacity in arts management, leadership and cultural entrepreneurship, and that produces at least 50-100 graduates per year

c. the introduction and/or strengthening of arts educational programmes at primary and secondary school levels, as well as in non-formal and adult education programmes

d. the creation of a research entity that publishes a print and on-line directory with information on the arts, statistical data about the creative industries, and profiles of the country's artists

e. the development and maintenance of physical infrastructure in each discipline (music, theatre, craft, film, dance, visual arts, literature, etc) to support the creation and distribution of arts and creative products

f. the establishment and maintenance of a multidisciplinary national festival that showcases the best art practices of the country annually and builds local and international markets

g. the creation of a politically-independent, sustainable fund with public and/or private sector and/or international resources to support artistic production and distribution

h. the creation and sustaining of conditions to promote and protect the rights of artists in accordance with the Recommendation on the Status of the Artist

i. the establishment of formal channels for accessing each other's arts markets and to address related issues such as artists' mobility like visas and travel costs

j. the creation and sustaining of journals and other mechanisms that facilitate debate and critical discourse about the arts and the ongoing training of new cultural leaders and experts

k. the establishment and support of a sustainable national network to represent the interests of the creative civil society, to lobby for and monitor cultural policy and to serve as national and international partners

2. In support of the above, to lobby for the politicians and government officials responsible for arts and culture management and implementation to be educated about the arts, culture and relevant international and continental conventions and policies.

3. Lobby governments that provide aid as well as international aid organisations to stipulate that 1%-5% of aid provided to African countries is allocated to the cultural dimension of development and/or the implementation of the Nairobi Plan of Action on Cultural Industries

4. List the international and African conventions relevant to the creative sector and list the African signatories to these conventions.

5. Establish a “Cultural Development Index”, using the above – as well as other relevant documents such as the Nairobi Plan of Action, the UNESCO cultural diversity convention, the Recommendation on the Status of the Artist, etc – to annually evaluate the progress achieved by, and to rate, each African country.

6. Work alongside the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) and apply its campaign to build public support for the arts in Africa i.e. so that the public – and not only the arts community – may demand more support for the arts.

7. Host annual/biannual national, regional and continental conferences to evaluate progress and/or to develop local discourses about international and regional instruments.

8. Have a presence at continental gatherings of African politicians, ministers of culture, ministers of finance, etc to lobby on behalf of the creative sector.

B. Building advocacy and lobbying networks

1. Facilitate the establishment of national networks of artists and other civil society players in the creative sector to

a. educate members about the Nairobi Plan of Action on the Cultural Industries, the Recommendation on the Status of the Artist and other relevant documents



b. prioritise items within these documents, relevant to the conditions within the respective county

c. plan and implement lobbying and advocacy strategies to pursue these priorities

Each country with representation at the Conference is to identify one person who will be the Arterial Network representative/contact person in that country, until a more formal national network is established and such a representative is elected.

2. National creative civil society networks are to form regional networks on the continent consistent with the AU's regional economic clusters, and so promote integration of regional creative industry economies, artists' mobility and regional lobbying within continental forums.

3. Regional secretariats are to be established to support and coordinate the activities of each region, to disseminate information in the languages of that region and to liaise with other secretariats.

4. The incoming Steering Committee is to identify and implement campaigns that can be conducted on a continental and/or international level, over and above, or in support of the activities prioritised by national networks.

5. Devise and implement a monthly seminar programme to be followed throughout the continent by all Arterial Network affiliates, in which members are educated about, debate and devise responses to international and African cultural conventions and policy documents.

6. Establish an Arterial Network Policy Expert Group/Task Force to research international and African cultural conventions and policies, to summarise these in order to make them accessible, to translate these into the main African languages, to devise responses to these on behalf of the Arterial Network (for adoption by the Steering Committee) and to represent the Arterial Network in forums dealing with the relevant themes.

7. Identify and work alongside existing networks to strengthen them as Arterial Network partners and/or members and establish new networks as necessary e.g. a community arts centre network, a network of private sector arts sponsors, discipline-based networks (music, dance, craft, etc), a network of major African festivals and cultural events, etc to pursue the established continental priorities.

8. Identify and implement strategies to ensure independent funding for national, regional and continental networks so as not to compromise their lobbying and advocacy roles.



9. Establish formal partnerships with other continental civil society cultural lobbies e.g. Culture Action Europe to combine forces internationally when appropriate, to share information and expertise and to support each other.

10. Distribute a list of delegates to the Arterial Conference 09, their contact details, organisational affiliation and areas of expertise to catalyse connections and networks.

11. Provide a facility for the minutes/decisions of various African arts networks to be made accessible to others working in the area.

C. Other key areas of work

1. To build capacity and develop the human resources necessary to grow and sustain various facets of the African creative sector.

2. To develop a strategy with regard to the 2010 FIFA World Cup so that the broader African arts sector can benefit from it.

3. Establish a network and circuit of Festivals and events, and build markets for these.

4. To take up issues emanating from the World Summit on Arts and Culture relevant to the African creative sector, to prioritise and drive the pursuit of these.

Aim 4: to elect a Steering Committee to guide the organisation

Each country present elected a delegate to be the country's Arterial Network representative and to part of an electoral college to ensure that those countries with a number of delegates did not dominate the proceedings.

Delegates from each country then broke into their regional groups (North, East, West, Central and Southern Africa) and each region elected two representatives to serve on the Steering Committee.

The three Task Team members present at the Conference were retained for continuity purposes and an additional 7 were elected. There is now an excellent balance of women and men (five each) and a good balance of youth and experience as well as good representation of the main language groups in Arabic, Portuguese, English and French.

The members of the Steering Committee are

North Africa: Salma Said (Egypt) and Khadija el Bennaoui (Morocco)

East Africa: Joy Mboya (Kenya) and Sarah Nsigaye (Uganda)



West Africa: Tade Adekunle (Nigeria) and Diarra Lassana (Igo) (Mali)

Central Africa: Patrick Mudekereza (DRC) and Telesphore Mba Bizo (Cameroon)

Southern Africa: Mulenga Kapwepwe (Zambia) and Filimone Meigos (Mozambique)

Conclusion

The Arterial Network achieved – and in many cases, exceeded - its primary aims for both its biannual conference and for the World Summit on Arts and Culture. We would like to thank our funding partners: Doen Foundation, Stromme Foundation, Pro Helvetia, Art Moves Africa, Artema Institute for Arts Management and the African Arts Institute for helping us to do so and in ensuring a highly successful week for the African creative sector.

