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This report was commissioned by Arts Council England and prepared by Lola Young along with an advisory group of individual practitioners which included SuAndi, Marcia Hewitt, Tyrone Huggins, Kully Thiarai and Deborah Williams.

To continuously engage with Sustained Theatre process please visit the website: www.artscouncil.org.uk/sustainedtheatre

Executive summary

The Sustained Theatre consultation: background and methodology

There has been some significant progress made in supporting diversity in the arts in recent years. Within the mainstream theatre some of the changes have occurred as a result of the efforts of individuals and organisations committed to drawing in a more diverse range of voices; other initiatives have come from agencies and organisations, most notably from Arts Council England.

In the summer of 2005 Arts Council England took the decision to undertake a consultation about and commission a report on the infrastructure needs of theatre practitioners in The Sector for now and into the future. The consultation also aimed to identify effective strategies for further developing The Sector over the next decade or so.

Goals of the consultation and report

The goals of the consultation and report are to:

- help The Sector to work in partnership with the Arts Council to establish strategies to address infrastructural, resource and development needs
- identify substantial resources to support the further development of The Sector
- influence and change mainstream theatre
- assist the Arts Council to make more effective use of the capital funds to be directed towards The Sector

- establish baseline funding figures that reflect more accurately the financial resources currently awarded to The Sector
- increase the profile and status of the work of sector practitioners
- extend and enhance dialogue within The Sector and between The Sector and other stakeholders
- help the Arts Council to work in partnership with The Sector to identify and develop standards and good practice for its engagement with practitioners
- help the Arts Council to achieve its equality and diversity ambitions

Organisational structure for Sustained Theatre

A consultant, Lola Young was employed to advise and monitor the Sustained Theatre consultation and write a report based on its findings. She was assisted by an Advisory group comprising of practitioners from The sector and an Arts Council England Executive group was also established.

The consultant and the advisory group contributed to the shaping of the consultation process, although fundamental principles had been agreed within the Arts Council beforehand.

Methodology

The Arts Council established the following methodology for the consultation:

- open meetings in a selection of key regional centres
- individual meetings
- written submissions via website and by email and letter
- individual telephone conversations
- desk research

Open meetings for the consultation took place in November and December 2005 with regional meetings in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, London, Manchester and Nottingham. Additionally, notes from a series of one-to-one meetings, telephone conversations and written submissions gathered mainly from the website set up for the exercise were also taken into consideration.

The consultation welcomed submissions from all those with an interest in securing the future of The Sector, inviting practitioners to comment on and consider general infrastructure needs – building and non-building – nationally, not just in London. As well as working with practitioners in The Sector, the consultation process sought the engagement of some key strategic partners from the wider theatre environment external to the Arts Council – such as funders, umbrella bodies, regional theatre directors and so on.

A selection of artistic directors, performers, independent consultants and representatives from agencies and umbrella organisations from across England were interviewed on an individual basis.

The report makes recommendations to the Arts Council's governing body, the

Council, regarding strategies for ensuring that practitioners in The Sector have the physical and other forms of infrastructure needed to thrive.

Looking back: the shaping of The Sector

Thanks to the efforts of historians, writers, practitioners and researchers, at least a few people will be aware of the theatrical achievements of Ira Aldridge, the 19th century African American Shakespearean actor who performed extensively on the London stage. The names of other theatre creatives from that period and earlier have yet to become known to a wider public. Even the record of the more recent history of our presence in the arts and cultural life of Britain has not been secured.

There is now no excuse for being unaware that the history and the presence in Britain of people of African, Asian, Caribbean and East Asian descent stretches back over several centuries. Yet, in spite of that long and complex set of histories – many of which involve arts and cultural exchange and appropriation – today's cultural institutions still feel awkward about engaging fully with the descendants of those early settlers. Indeed, too many still seem to think that our forebears first arrived here during the period of post-war settlement associated with the large-scale migration of the late 1940s through to the 1970s.

Since 1948, Britain has attempted to come to terms with its changing demography in a variety of ways. The artistic landscape has changed due to the magnitude of human effort made by arts practitioners of African, Asian,

Caribbean and East Asian descent. But real embedded transformation has proved elusive.

Making the case for buildings

In concentrating on buildings infrastructure, Sustained Theatre makes a contribution to an ongoing series of debates about the most effective strategy for developing and embedding theatre practitioners and organisations from The Sector in the wider theatre ecology.

A number of venues focusing on the work of, and led by, Sector practitioners have come and gone over the last 60 years or so. These have been mainly small-scale in terms of audience capacity and stage size; they have often been based in community centres not specifically built for use as theatrical venues; and they have been under-resourced, operating on a hand-to-mouth basis.

Past capital projects

Several distinctive and iconic contemporary buildings have been arts- and culture-focused, and/or refurbished or built with lottery funding. Most of these have worked well, with a number exceeding target for visits, raising the profile of the area concerned and contributing to vital regeneration projects.

However, there have also been arts capital projects that have not fulfilled their promise, having overrun dramatically with regard to time and budget, suffered rapid turnover in key personnel and lacked the level of community engagement and support

that would make the project sustainable.

This is by no means an issue exclusive to The Sector: several high-profile mainstream arts projects with substantial capital and revenue investment have collapsed. However, when problems occur with buildings projects led by practitioners from the Sector it has a particularly damaging effect because of the burden of expectation that is placed on any such building and the intense scrutiny it endures. If the project does not work out, it is widely perceived that it is somehow due to the inability of those involved: the perceived failure blights the prospects of those wishing to undertake such projects in the future and damages the confidence of all concerned.

Capital funding for The Sector in the past 10 years

The table in Appendix 2 demonstrates the substantial amounts of capital funding over the past 10 years that have been made available to white mainstream organisations, but not to the extent it could and should have done for theatre practitioners in The Sector.

The Arts Council had to review radically its approach to distributing Capital Lottery funds when it emerged that less than 1 per cent of grants allocated across all artforms had been awarded to arts organisations led by groups categorised as 'culturally diverse'. Strategies were developed to address this situation and these began to bear fruit in the following round of bids – and the percentage rose to just over 32 per cent.

From 1996 to 2005, the funds allocated

by the Arts Council across all artforms to 'culturally diverse' organisations for capital expenditure was £41,739,923. The total funds allocated during the same period were £994,814,057.

Although it is fair to say that there has been some increase in the number of Sector-led arts organisations gaining Arts Council financial support, an examination of the figures for regularly funded organisations, which is at 4.4 per cent for years 2005/06, demonstrates the extent to which The Sector is still substantially under-resourced.

Arts Council initiatives relating to The Sector

Arts Council England has made significant progress in recognising the scale of the problems caused by the consistent under-funding of theatre practitioners in The Sector.

The situation had been deteriorating steadily since at least the mid-1980s; the loss of companies such as Temba and Double Edge, the closure of the Black Theatre Season after seven years of productions, and the demise of venues such as the Keskidee Centre (London) and the Nia Centre (Manchester) have taken their toll.

As there is not a sustainable infrastructure in The Sector for the development of its practitioners, and as opportunities for career advancement in the mainstream have not improved to a significant extent, so initiatives have developed from the Arts Council (at national and regional levels), the Independent Theatre Council, the

Theatrical Management Association, the BBC and other organisations and institutions. The Arts Council was able to form a national overview of the situation thanks to the Theatre Review in 2000. The Theatre Review unlocked £25 million in revenue funding to regional producing theatres across England. It also led to a small number of Sector-led companies receiving regular funding for the first time.

Black Regional Initiative in Theatre

As well as producing a flow of financial support to theatres and organisations around the country, the 2000 Theatre Review's consultation process helped to develop further the Black Regional Initiative in Theatre (BRIT) including Eclipse Theatre, the South Asian Theatre Consortium, Live and Direct, and the Eclipse Conference and Report.

Collectively, these initiatives were designed to improve the opportunities for theatre practitioners in The Sector.

Equality strategies

The Arts Council race equality scheme is the principle mechanism for achieving the race equality goals set out in the Arts Council's Corporate Plan 2003–06.

The future

The focus of the rest of this report is on the future and how to embed the rich variety of theatrical traditions and innovation of practitioners in The Sector in the national and international cultural arena. We acknowledge the past and the impact the problems caused by historic under-resourcing has on the way we experience the present.

The focus of the consultation was on creating a buildings infrastructure to enable the potential of The Sector to be realised. However, the consultation also sought participants' views, and experiences regarding ambitions over the next ten years, leadership, networking, international work, archiving and other subjects in order to identify effective strategies for further development of The Sector.

Summary of main findings of the consultation

The range of work undertaken by artists in The Sector undermines any attempt to confine it within fixed categories. There is ambition, energy and innovation within The Sector but much of it goes under-recognised and under-resourced.

A substantial majority of participants were in favour of developing a building or buildings focused on the work of The Sector, and led and managed by practitioners in The Sector. Many thought that there ought to be more than one building and that these spaces might have different functions depending on where they are based. Single buildings within the network proposed do not have to be dedicated to the work of one company or organisation.

Professional development in The Sector should be promoted as an essential process rather than remedial work with continually 'emerging' practitioners. Opportunities for leaders at all levels – emerging, mid-career and established – should be available in all aspects of theatre practice. Particular attention should be paid to artists' creative

professional development, and the evolution of the artform. The confidence to experiment, and test boundaries and conventions needs to be nurtured.

Networking is also a key concern in The Sector: the need for effective communication and sharing ideas and practice should be facilitated by the Arts Council in partnership with The Sector.

The question regarding buildings is: Does this structure allow the work of individual practitioners and organisations in The Sector to thrive?

Recommendations

The recommendations in this chapter indicate key areas for The Sector, the Arts Council and other stakeholders to address.

1. Buildings for the future

The majority of participants in the consultation wanted a building or buildings focused on, and led by, The Sector.

We believe it is possible to develop a network of buildings with flexible spaces that nurture talent, promote excellence, provide career progression opportunities, and foster more equitable relations with the mainstream theatre sector.

- These spaces should be managed and led by practitioners from The Sector and be open to all who wish to expand their horizons through engaging with theatre
- There should be a strategic approach to establishing these buildings to ensure they meet the regional, national and international needs of The Sector

- We recommend that the proposal for developing a network of buildings in regional centres with different specialisms be put before colleagues
- This buildings infrastructure project – along with the people and resources within the proposed buildings – should be set up to develop as an ongoing investment in The Sector over a minimum of 10 years
- The Arts Council should allocate a minimum of £4 million from its capital funding for buildings infrastructure for The Sector and find substantial additional resources to establish a minimum of four high-quality, well-equipped buildings in regional centres
- Working in partnership with The Sector, the Arts Council should identify further funds from other sources in both private and public sectors
- The Arts Council should allocate an appropriate level of revenue funding to ensure sustainability and success, establish appropriate opportunities for skills enhancement and individual and organisational development, and ensure the buildings are properly resourced
- The process of applying for capital funds may not produce an appropriate outcome for this infrastructure project. In order to maximise the opportunities offered by the proposed buildings, we recommend that a process be developed that is designed for the task in hand
- The report should be presented to Council for consideration
- As soon as possible afterwards, the executive summary of the report should be sent to The Sector and those who

- participated in the Sustained Theatre consultation
- The Arts Council should construct an action plan, taking advice from Sector professionals as appropriate
- The consultant and the advisory group, together with other Sector colleagues, should work with the Arts Council to devise a process that will ensure a swift, successful handover to The Sector
- A project team should be appointed to facilitate the effective delivery of detailed plans for the development of the buildings programme
- Working in partnership with the Arts Council and other stakeholders, Sector representatives should participate in the design of the process
- Representatives from The Sector must have a leading role in progressing the project to its conclusion
- The Arts Council and The Sector must ensure that practitioners in all regions are equally involved
- The Sector should work with the Arts Council national and regional offices to ensure that the consistent, high-quality support required for the successful implementation of the Sustained Theatre report's recommendations is achieved

2. Leadership – individual, organisational and sector development

- Professional development in The Sector should be promoted as an essential process rather than remedial work with continually 'emerging' practitioners
- Particular attention should be paid to artists' creative professional development, and the evolution of the artform
- Training and professional development

- programmes should reflect real career progression opportunities
- Issues relating to the recruitment, retention and professional development of boards of trustees in The Sector should be addressed by the Arts Council, Independent Theatre Council and the Theatrical Management Association in collaborations with the organisations concerned
- The Arts Council, in partnership with The Sector, should facilitate effective communication and the sharing of ideas and practice
- All the cultural leadership strategies, not just those devised under the heading of 'diversity', currently being developed by the Arts Council, the Creative and Cultural Sector Skills Council, etc should be closely tied in with the buildings infrastructure project
- Technical staff, set designers, lighting technicians, producers, directors, PR, marketing, creative thinkers, writers, critics and so on should be included in cultural leadership, professional training and development programmes
- Any form of development, training, mentoring, etc should draw on the successes of the past through identifying success factors such as certain kinds of partnerships and/or bursary and fellowship schemes
- The Arts Council should develop much more effective ways of ensuring that individual artists are aware that they may apply for funding for professional development
- The Sector, working in partnership with other key stakeholders, should explore ways of ensuring that high-calibre trustees are retained and developed
- The Arts Council should work with

- The Sector to identify and actively support current Sector networks for the promotion of work and dissemination of information as well as creating mechanisms for the development of new networking opportunities
- Work needs to be carried out with existing venues to improve the promotion of work being shown and to develop their understanding of the purpose of the buildings project
- The Arts Council should look closely at more effective ways of linking London to the other regional centres and across the publicly funded/commercial sector divide
- The Arts Council and other bodies with regionalised structures should pursue ways of improving communication and understanding of the specific issues each area faces
- The Arts Council should look urgently at how the differences in the quality of work on, and levels of understanding of, diversity issues at regional offices are addressed
- The Sector should ascertain the extent to which individual practitioners apply to and are accepted on to programmes, and identify any barriers to gaining and taking up places
- The Arts Council should work with The Sector to develop more appropriate forms of training. Professional development should be promoted as a positive opportunity rather than the identification of a lack of skills within The Sector

3. International connections

- There should be more international work coming to Britain in order to counter cultural insularity

- Appropriate resources should be made available so that exchanges that currently take place could be developed further
- As it develops its strategy for pursuing opportunities for international exchanges, etc the Arts Council should pay particular attention to the specific needs of The Sector, as identified by The Sector
- Resources should be made available for The Sector to play a leading role in the ongoing development of international cultural relations
- The Arts Council should work in partnership with The Sector, the British Council and other agencies and organisations in the UK and overseas charged with fostering international cultural cooperation and exchange

4. Critical dialogues and historical archives

- More critics in broadcast and print media with in-depth knowledge and understanding of The Sector should be nurtured by the media industry
- Historical material must be preserved so that more people can share information about the complex past of this country and our place in it
- Effective ways should be developed for making archival material available and easy to access
- Working with Sector practitioners, the Arts Council should take a leading role in helping to secure funding from other agencies and organisations
- The Arts Council should develop more effective ways of ensuring that lessons from the past are learned
- In addition to developing specialist archival resources, agencies such as

the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and regional and local museums and archives should be encouraged to work in partnership with The Sector and the Arts Council on developing locally accessible resources

- The whole area of archiving should be opened up and linked to education programmes, with professional development opportunities for teachers and lecturers to learn about The Sector and vice versa
- Building on current provision, more courses to encourage individuals and organisations to keep their own archives and learn the skills to do it effectively should be funded and developed
- There are many experienced practitioners with documents, images and memories that could make a contribution to an archive that is dynamic and engages across generations and cultures
- Working with practitioners and the Creative and Cultural Sector Skills Council, the Arts Council should examine ways of encouraging and supporting the development of critical work related to The Sector

5. Arts Council England

- More transparent ways of operating and more effective dissemination of information about Arts Council projects and initiatives that have taken place are needed
- Greater awareness of the opportunities available through funding streams, strategic initiatives, etc has to be developed in The Sector so that practitioners can take ownership of available resources

- The Arts Council should be less process-driven, with more focus on artistic quality and profile-raising. Where the creation of an initiative is being considered, the Arts Council should investigate imaginative methods of involving practitioners in helping to achieve strategic aims that result in more resources going directly to creative practitioners and organisations in The Sector
- Working with practitioners, thinkers and academics in The Sector, the Arts Council should work to develop further its understanding, language and thinking in relation to 'race', ethnicity and culture
- Various initiatives should work more effectively with each other, sharing information and strategic direction. Whenever possible, individuals and organisations from The Sector should be closely involved in shaping the future direction of relevant projects
- When working with partners, the Arts Council should demonstrate leadership in devising effective and efficient ways of involving representatives from The Sector at various stages and levels of discussion and negotiation
- Information about projects being piloted regionally and nationally should be disseminated more widely, including the evaluation of outcomes of such projects
- The Arts Council should apply good practice principles of consultation and communication processes across its regional offices
- To assess the impact of investment on target sectors, all projects and programmes should be evaluated, the results widely discussed, and the

progress and experiences of participants tracked

Concluding recommendations and remarks

- We request the Arts Council to respond formally to the recommendations in this report as soon as possible
- The process for taking forward these recommendations should be led by The Sector in partnership with the Arts Council, drawing on a cross-section of experience and talent
- We urge the Arts Council to draw up an action plan that takes on board the recommendation that it is The Sector that has to lead this project

The primary focus of the process must be on what the production of the art needs, rather than building/s for their own sake. The question regarding buildings is: Does this structure allow the work of our individual practitioners, organisations to thrive and enable the artform to flourish?

We feel it is important to examine the needs of the full range of practitioners – from 'the establishment', to those who see their role as more challenging and on the edge, and everyone in between – to determine what best will serve The Sector for the next 10 years or so.

Much progress has been made but there is still much more work to do. A significant shift in the way the mainstream perceives and works with practitioners in The Sector is still urgently needed. Some of these changes will occur organically but experience has shown that mechanisms of one kind or

another are necessary if a fundamental transformation is to take place.

With these recommendations, we are not proposing a one-off initiative or a short-lived scheme but are taking a long view. Practitioners in The Sector need properly resourced opportunities to develop their artform, hone their managerial and leadership skills, enhance their career prospects and embed themselves in the cultural life of this society.

The Sector is faced with a challenging and ambitious programme of work. We believe that with the appropriate resources and cooperation from funding agencies, the mainstream and other stakeholders this programme can be achieved. We also believe that all theatre will benefit from the implementation of these proposals.

A note on language

Before we begin our examination of some of the key issues in relation to the area of work covered by this report, we need to clarify our position regarding the language of 'race' and ethnicity. Historically and currently, the terminology continually causes problems for all concerned.

In this report, we do not use the language of 'BME', 'cultural diversity' and so on. We also place to one side all of the heritage-based ways of naming practitioners – that is African, Asian, Caribbean, and East Asian – with whom the report is concerned. If progress is to be made, it is vital that artists and art – and those who contribute to its making and distribution – must be considered on the basis of quality of work. Therefore, except when quoting or referring to others' observations or documents and when clarification is necessary, we use the terms 'The Sector' and 'practitioners in The Sector' to refer to our work in theatre.

Chapter 1

The Sustained Theatre consultation: background and methodology

There has been some significant progress made in supporting diversity in the arts in recent years.

Within the mainstream theatre some of the changes have occurred as a result of the efforts of individuals and organisations committed to drawing in a more diverse range of voices; other initiatives have come from agencies and organisations, most notably from Arts Council England.

In the summer of 2005 Arts Council England took the decision to undertake a consultation about and commission a report on the infrastructure needs of theatre practitioners in The Sector for now and into the future.

The consultation also aimed to identify effective strategies for further developing The Sector over the next decade or so.

This decision was in part precipitated by the Arts Council's withdrawal of funds originally allocated to Talawa Theatre Company's capital project – the building of a new theatre in Westminster, London.

However, the demise of Talawa's building project, although a significant and very difficult event in the evolution of black theatre in England, was not the sole impetus for commissioning the consultation and report.

Discussions had already taken place

within the Arts Council regarding the timeliness of initiating a consultation with theatre practitioners in The Sector, as it has been some years since the last opportunity had arisen to gauge practitioners' views.

Goals of the consultation and report

The goals of the consultation and report are to:

- help The Sector to work in partnership with the Arts Council to establish strategies to address infrastructural, resource and development needs
- identify substantial resources to support the further development of The Sector
- influence and change mainstream theatre
- assist the Arts Council to make more effective use of the capital funds to be directed towards The Sector
- establish baseline funding figures that reflect more accurately the financial resources currently awarded to The Sector
- increase the profile and status of the work of sector practitioners
- extend and enhance dialogue within The Sector and between The Sector and other stakeholders
- help the Arts Council to work in partnership with The Sector to identify and develop standards and good practice for its engagement with practitioners
- help the Arts Council to achieve its equality and diversity ambitions

Organisational structure for Sustained Theatre

A Consultant was employed to advise and monitor the Sustained Theatre consultation and write a report based on its findings. She was assisted by an Advisory group comprising of practitioners from The Sector and an Arts Council England Executive group was also established. See Appendix 1 for names of the consultant and members of the two groups, the project manager and support staff.

The consultant and the advisory group contributed to the shaping of the consultation process, although fundamental principles had been agreed within the Arts Council beforehand. The advisory group and the consultant helped to formulate the questions and plan the structure of the sessions and an online questionnaire, and also helped to brief facilitators, chairs and note-takers for the consultation sessions. Some members of the advisory group acted as chairs or facilitators at the open sessions and/or otherwise participated in the sessions. See Appendix 3 for names of facilitators, chairs and note-takers.

Methodology

The Arts Council established the following methodology for the consultation:

- open meetings in a selection of key regional centres
- individual meetings
- written submissions via website and by email and letter
- individual telephone conversations
- desk research

Open meetings for the consultation took place in November and December 2005

with regional meetings in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, London, Manchester and Nottingham. Additionally, notes from a series of one-to-one meetings, telephone conversations and written submissions gathered mainly from the website set up for the exercise were also taken into consideration. See Appendix 3 for details of venues and number of participants.

The consultation welcomed submissions from all those with an interest in securing the future of The Sector, inviting practitioners to comment on and consider general infrastructure needs – building and non-building – nationally, not just in London. As well as working with practitioners in The Sector, the consultation process sought the engagement of some key strategic partners from the wider theatre environment external to the Arts Council such as funders, umbrella bodies, regional theatre directors and so on.

A mix of individuals and organisations from The Sector were involved in the open sessions, and representatives from some of the mainstream theatres attended. Notably, a significant number of younger participants attended the open sessions.

A selection of artistic directors, performers, independent consultants and representatives from agencies and umbrella organisations from across England were interviewed on an individual basis.

Findings from the consultation informs the report's content, conclusions and recommendations. The report

was written by the consultant with substantial input from members of the advisory group.

All meetings, written submissions and telephone conversations were structured around several key areas of enquiry. However, some issues were re-oriented for specific forms of participation. For example, open sessions with predominantly theatre practitioners from The Sector had slightly differently constructed questions to those involving strategic organisations and agencies in the wider theatre sector.¹

The consultation was carried out as informally as possible and took the form of discussion prompted by questions clustered under specific themes and issues. The questions which formed the basis of the sessions were, in some cases, quite opaque and were reformulated in different discussions to make them clearer. Appendix 4 contains the written submission questionnaire. A summary of the evaluations of the open meetings is in Appendix 5. Open sessions were taped and notes were made.

The Sustained Theatre consultation and report are forward-looking and aim to ensure the vibrancy and sustainability of The Sector. The report acknowledges the apparent ease of identifying the 'mainstream' because there is recognition – externally and within the mainstream itself – of a seeming unity, outside of which all other groupings of practitioners fall. The Sustained Theatre consultation brought together many of the voices of those who find themselves reluctantly characterised as outside of

the mainstream. We realise that there is a debate to be had about whether being positioned inside or outside is imposed and/or intentional, but we will not be engaging with that in the context of this report.

The report makes recommendations to the Arts Council's governing body, the Council, regarding strategies for ensuring that practitioners in The Sector have the physical and other forms of infrastructure needed to thrive. Chapter 2 provides a broad overview of some key issues relating to the development of The Sector, and describes arts and capital projects which have shaped experiences and perceptions over the past two or three decades. Chapter 3 summarises the ideas, observations and proposals which emerged from the consultation process. Chapter 4 draws out key issues from the responses to the consultation, while Chapter 5 formulates the findings into a list of recommended actions for the immediate future.

Chapter 2

Past and present

Looking back: the shaping of The Sector
Thanks to the efforts of historians, writers, practitioners and researchers, at least a few people will be aware of the theatrical achievements of Ira Aldridge, the 19th century African American Shakespearean actor who performed extensively on the London stage.

The names of other theatre creatives from that period and earlier have yet to become known to a wider public. Even the record of the more recent history of our presence in the arts and cultural life of Britain has not been secured, although SALIDAA and Positive Steps – both of which are led by Sector practitioners – and Future Histories and the Theatre Museum have been developing significant archival resources relating to The Sector.²

There is now no excuse for being unaware that the history and the presence in Britain of people of African, Asian, Caribbean and East Asian descent stretches back over several centuries. Yet, in spite of that long and complex set of histories – many of which involve arts and cultural exchange and appropriation – today's cultural institutions still feel awkward about engaging fully with the descendants of those early settlers.

Indeed, too many still seem to think that our forebears first arrived here during the period of post-war settlement associated with the large-scale migration of the late 1940s through to the 1970s.

Since 1948, Britain has attempted to come to terms with its changing demography in a variety of ways. In the 30 years since Naseem Khan's report *The Arts Britain Ignores*³ was published, changes in the artistic landscape have been largely due to the magnitude of human effort made by arts practitioners of African, Asian, Caribbean and East Asian descent. But real embedded transformation has proved elusive.

It is not possible in this report to give a comprehensive account of the evolution of The Sector. We anticipate that many readers of this report will have been active participants in the more recent history outlined briefly here: we cannot do them justice but hope that their experiences will be recorded and receive the attention they deserve.

We have mentioned by name a small number of the reports that have been produced on the subject of diversity and the arts in order to provide some background for those who may not be familiar with past research in this field.

Making the case for buildings

In concentrating on buildings infrastructure, Sustained Theatre makes a contribution to an ongoing series of debates about the most effective strategy for developing and embedding theatre practitioners and organisations from The Sector in the wider theatre ecology.

A number of venues focusing on the work of, and led by, Sector practitioners have come and gone over the last 60 years or so. These have been mainly small-scale in terms of audience capacity and stage size; they have often been based in community centres not specifically built for use as theatrical venues; and they have been under-resourced, operating on a hand-to-mouth basis.

Sector practitioner efforts over the years

Two examples of Sector practitioners taking action to try and secure the infrastructure necessary for sustainable development are cited below as illustrations of the continuity of effort over the years.

In the early 1980s Anton Phillips and colleagues established a programme of black plays that ran in London and involved theatre practitioners of African, Caribbean, and South Asian descent.

Running from 1983 to 1990, the Black Theatre Season Company developed a five-year plan, which articulated an artistic vision, plans for expansion and the need for a permanent home for the company producing the work.

The Black Theatre Season Limited: a Report⁴ notes enthusiasm and support for the project from the London Borough of Lambeth, and a building was identified in Brixton for conversion into a black arts centre with a focus on the performing arts but including visual arts.

However, the establishment of a permanent home for the Black Theatre Season was not realised.

Naseem Khan's British Asian Theatre Report was based on research carried out in the spring of 1994 and also addressed the question of a dedicated theatre/performance building and/or spaces.⁵

The research and report were concerned with the East Midlands and focused on Leicester.

The British Asian Theatre Report influenced the development of the Asian Theatre Initiative, later NATAK, at Haymarket Theatre, Leicester. In 2004 Leicester City Council was awarded £12,220,000 towards the building of the new performing arts centre to open in 2008 – a vision-led organisation that places diversity at the heart and provides opportunity and equality for a number of communities.

Many of the arguments advanced in favour of and against such an option are echoed by the points made during the course of the Sustained Theatre consultation. The potential of the different kinds of performance space proposed during this most recent consultation are also notably similar.

In the mid-1980s, the Greater London Council allocated substantial funding to set up the Roundhouse in northwest London as a 'centre for black arts' – but by the time the report on the Black Theatre Season had been produced, the Roundhouse project had opened and closed. After several years and several million pounds, the Roundhouse project collapsed before it could be established as a premier venue for the work of The Sector.

The Black Theatre Season report and the British Asian Theatre Report are just two examples of several reports that examined the case and made proposals for a building or space dedicated to promoting the work of practitioners in The Sector. Both were written just before National Lottery funds literally changed the cultural landscape.

Past capital projects

Several distinctive and iconic contemporary buildings have been arts- and culture-focused, and/or refurbished or built with lottery funding. Most of these have worked well, with a number exceeding target for visits, raising the profile of the area concerned and contributing to vital regeneration projects.

However, there have also been arts capital projects that have not fulfilled their promise, having overrun dramatically with regard to time and budget, suffered rapid turnover in key personnel and lacked the level of community engagement and support that would make the project sustainable.

This is by no means an issue exclusive to The Sector: several high-profile mainstream arts projects with substantial capital and revenue investment have collapsed. However, when problems occur with buildings projects led by practitioners from the Sector it has a particularly damaging effect because of the burden of expectation that is placed on any such building and the intense scrutiny it endures. If the project does not work out, it is widely perceived that it is somehow due to the inability

of those involved: the perceived failure blights the prospects of those wishing to undertake such projects in the future and damages the confidence of all concerned.

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The table in Appendix 2 demonstrates the substantial amounts of capital funding over the past 10 years that have been made available to white mainstream organisations but not to the extent it could and should have done for theatre practitioners in The Sector.

The Arts Council had to review radically its approach to distributing Capital Lottery funds when it emerged that less than 1 per cent of grants allocated across all artforms had been awarded to arts organisations led by groups categorised as 'culturally diverse'. Strategies were developed to address this situation and these began to bear fruit in the following round of bids elicited – and the percentage rose to just over 32 per cent.

From 1996 to 2005, the funds allocated by the Arts Council across all artforms to 'culturally diverse' organisations for capital expenditure was £41,739,923. The total funds allocated during the same period were £994,814,057.

Although it is fair to say that there has been some increase in the number of Sector-led arts organisations gaining Arts Council financial support, an examination of the figures for regularly funded organisations, which is at 4.4 per cent for years 2005/06, demonstrates the extent to which The Sector is still substantially under-resourced.

Arts Council initiatives relating to The Sector

Arts Council England has made significant progress in recognising the scale of the problems caused by the consistent under-funding of theatre practitioners in The Sector. The situation had been deteriorating steadily since at least the mid-1980s; the loss of companies such as Temba and Double Edge, the closure of the Black Theatre Season after seven years of productions, and the demise of venues such as the Keskidee Centre (London) and the Nia Centre (Manchester) have taken their toll.

As there is not a sustainable infrastructure in The Sector for the development of its practitioners, and as opportunities for career advancement in the mainstream have not improved to a significant extent, so initiatives have developed from the Arts Council (at national and regional levels), the Independent Theatre Council, the Theatrical Management Association, the BBC and other organisations and institutions.

The Arts Council was able to form a national overview of the situation thanks to the Theatre Review in 2000. The Theatre Review unlocked £25 million in revenue funding to regional producing theatres across England. It also led to a small number of Sector-led companies receiving regular funding for the first time – beneficiaries included Yellow Earth, Tiata Fahodzi and Kali Theatre. Increased funding was made available to some existing Sector-led companies including Talawa, Nitro, Tara, and Tamasha. Since 2002, other Sector-led theatre organisations such as Rasa,

Peshkar, Benji Reid, and Vayu Naidu Company have received organisational development support, which has led to them becoming regularly funded organisations.

Black Regional Initiative in Theatre

As well as producing a flow of financial support to theatres and organisations around the country, the 2000 Theatre Review's consultation process helped to develop further the Black Regional Initiative in Theatre (BRIT) including Eclipse Theatre, the South Asian Theatre Consortium, Live and Direct, and the Eclipse Conference and Report. Collectively, these initiatives were designed to improve the opportunities for theatre practitioners in The Sector.

The Black Regional Initiative in Theatre (BRIT) developed out of the Regional Black Theatre Initiative established by the Arts Council in the early 1990s. The initiative aims to instigate sustainable, extensive changes in the development of theatre in England. It has helped to establish a network of venues to assist new and aspiring theatre artists and companies in developing touring product.

BRIT has taken strategic action to:

- provide more opportunities for theatre artists in The Sector in the mainstream of English theatre
- tackle institutional racism in the mainstream through improving governance and management policies and practices
- facilitate the development of audiences for The Sector's productions and to encourage greater diversity among audiences

The Theatre Review identified a need for the development of middle-scale touring theatre in The Sector: from this Eclipse emerged. Eclipse Theatre focuses on African Caribbean work and provides opportunities for training and employment for individuals and writers from The Sector who wish to create work for larger stages, as well as developing and sharing audience development strategies.

Led by Nottingham Playhouse together with Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich and Birmingham Repertory Theatre, a consortium was formed to produce one piece of work to tour on the middle scale on an annual basis. The producing theatres are joined by a network of presenting theatres, each one committed to programming a greater diversity of performing arts. As part of a medium-term strategy, venues were supported for three years by the Arts Council Touring Department's Promoter Development Fund, providing opportunities to share good practice, particularly in the areas of marketing and audience development.

Working with Arts Council London, a consortium of venues – the South Asian Theatre Consortium – has been established to programme and promote South Asian theatre. Audience development for the venues and touring companies is a key focus of the initiative. The consortium will also increase opportunities for raising the profile of touring companies in the London area. The consortium is supported with two bursaries for a South Asian audience development worker and a South Asian producer.

The Live and Direct initiative runs expert classes for emerging theatre directors in The Sector to explore directing and producing. The intensive course runs for two weeks and provides the opportunity to work with some of the country's most experienced directors, designers, composers and producers. Participants direct short pieces, which are open to the public in the form of a showcase. Subsequent to the course, individual bursaries are available to participants enabling them to be attached to a theatre company of their choice to gain further experience.

Work is being undertaken to develop touring productions to rural touring circuits, and also to enhance the professional development of promoters in companies led by theatre practitioners from The Sector.

Other Arts Council initiatives

Stages of Sound 2004 saw a major pilot partnership between BRIT, ROOTS, BBC Radio Drama, local radio and regional theatres in Birmingham, Leicester and Hampstead, London. This has developed new voices and writers from community groups for local and national radio, and seen three commissions for Radio 4 broadcast in May 2005. Each theatre has established relationships with new writers that may lead to future commissions, as well as opportunities for audience development.

The decibel legacy development programme plans to establish effective mechanisms for supporting Sector-led artistic excellence and to identify a number of key organisations and

individuals with the potential to play a strategic role in strengthening The Sector. A scoping exercise looking into developing best practice to identify what has been effective and what has not has been undertaken. Decibel is working with a range of organisations, the Arts Council's race equality scheme and the capital projects department.

Equality strategies

Following the Eclipse Conference on developing strategies to combat institutional racism in theatre in June 2001, the Arts Council published the Eclipse Report in April 2002, in partnership with Nottingham Playhouse, Arts Council East Midlands and the Theatrical Management Association. The report contains 21 recommendations, focusing on:

- governance
- audience development
- employment and training
- equality of opportunity
- positive action
- programming of work by Sector practitioners

Since publication of the Eclipse Report, seminars on equality of opportunity and positive action have taken place in every region for senior managers and board members of regional subsidised theatres, touring companies and a number of presenting theatres. These seminars were followed in autumn 2004 with regional events for chairs of boards, held in collaboration with Theatrical Management Association, and with advice sessions for all regularly funded theatre organisations on planning and writing race equality action plans.

This work has been evaluated and fed into the Arts Council race equality scheme.

The Arts Council race equality scheme is the principle mechanism for achieving the race equality goals set out in the Arts Council's Corporate Plan 2003–06. Under the scheme, the Arts Council has pledged to:

- promote good practice and cooperation in race equality across the organisation
- make sure that local, regional and national organisations are consulted when identifying good practice
- consult regularly on new policy developments with target groups
- consult with other staff groups to encourage wider ownership of the race equality agenda
- conduct annual staff attitude surveys that highlight where the Arts Council stands in relation to its aims
- ensure that all Arts Council policies take race equality into consideration
- support artists and organisations from across The Sector to enable them to create and develop projects that encourage greater confidence and self-sufficiency in developing arts for their own communities and for society as a whole

The future

The focus of the rest of this report is on the future and how to embed the rich variety of theatrical traditions and innovation of practitioners in The Sector in the national and international cultural arena. We acknowledge the past and the impact the problems caused by historic under-resourcing has on the way we experience the present.

Chapter 3

Main findings

This chapter presents the main findings, recurring themes and observations from the consultation process. Observations and quotations are drawn from the notes taken at the open meetings and at the one-to-one sessions, as well as from the written submissions and open meeting evaluation forms.

General points

A general consensus regarding what constituted 'black theatre' did not emerge during the consultation exercise. Some people expressed a lack of attachment to the descriptor 'black' for their work. For example, a participant in one session noted: 'The work I do is not called "black" or attached to "black money".' However, 'black theatre' was referred to frequently.

A number of participants called for a 'black theatre sector that is wider, deeper and broader' than that which currently exists. This comment links to the desire expressed for there to be more theatre companies led by practitioners in The Sector which would help to provide more competition and cross-fertilisation: it also refers to the observation that there is great diversity of practice within The Sector and no single category in which the work should be confined.

Participants noted the potential tension between the desire to have the artistic freedom to engage in any theatrical form and not be confined to so-called

community theatre, and the wish to continue with work for culturally specific audiences, which could impact on a building project. While there was widespread support for continuing to develop the breadth and diversity of black theatre, some participants felt that fusion, or cross-cultural artistic practice, was secondary to promoting culturally specific work. Some participants noted a trend in London of the African and Caribbean arts scene increasingly shifting towards embracing African cultures, which captured theatre with origins and traditions outside of Western cultures.

The question of how The Sector acknowledges current strengths and the achievements of its practitioners was raised. The lack of public recognition and rewards for those who have made a significant contribution over many years is one reason for the difficulty encountered in identifying leadership role models, an issue explored further in the latter part of the sessions. Opportunities to 'shout about achievements' of The Sector are few and far between.

Occasionally, differences emerged between the nature of comments made at the London sessions and those made in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, and Nottingham. Generally, however, participants' observations about experiences and aspirations had much in common.

There were different levels of awareness of and knowledge about the Arts Council, relevant initiatives established by other agencies, and facilities and resources that are available. This may be because many of the organisations initiating projects are based in or have their head offices in London. Additionally several programmes have been piloted in the capital.

Question 1. What are your ambitions, as an individual artist or an arts organisation, for 2015?

The first part of each session was devoted to addressing this intentionally speculative question. Participants were put into smaller groups where the numbers attending made this appropriate. This helped people to get to know each other and to orient themselves to thinking about the future in line with the underlying objectives of the consultation.

On occasion, this question initially elicited responses which suggested that past experience together with the demands of surviving in the present made it difficult to speculate in a positive, aspirational way about the future. For example, participants experienced widespread rejection of their work and a lack of understanding on the part of venues and funders of the material being produced. However, once participants had aired some of their pressing, current concerns, they warmed to the theme of future ambitions.

Broadening the scope of Sector work

Internationalism was a strong, recurring theme and was raised under several

headings during the open sessions. In terms of aspirations for the future, participants felt that it was necessary to work more with internationally trained producers and directors. Several mentioned a desire to pursue more international work – eg commissions and exchanges. Some participants looked forward to exploiting the internationalism that exists at home (with the presence in Britain of people from many other countries) through more cross-artform collaborations, the development of new networks and more encouragement for black women in theatre.

There was a strong sense that if given the opportunities, The Sector could, and should, be in the position of playing a leading role in international culture by 2015.

Participants expressed a desire to be able to work on a larger scale. Several emphasised the need to move to a position where artistic work did not come with the label 'black' attached, and expressed the desire to see less emphasis on black theatre as something separate from the mainstream. Focusing on separate needs was seen by some – particularly, but not exclusively, younger people – as being counterproductive and leading to ghettoisation. The Sector was perceived to be getting broader, and this was a development to be encouraged.

Infrastructure ambitions

With regard to infrastructural needs, participants voiced the ambition of seeing a venue or several venues, as well as the provision of administrative support and advice. More detailed points

on the subject of buildings follow under Question 5 Buildings for the future. They also called for more sustainable and appropriate training and development for UK-based producers in The Sector. Participants also hoped it would be possible to create academies and centres of excellence. Such spaces should enable artists to experience the whole creative process, including research and experimentation, 'failure' and learning, and should be connected to relevant courses in further and higher education.

Entrepreneurial spirit

Many participants recognised the fact that The Sector needs to be more effective in identifying and tapping into a range of sources of funding. The need to operate in a more business-like way is not a new concept in the arts, but experience has shown that at crisis points funds may be withdrawn, as happened in the 1980s.

Clearly, it is crucial to be aware of target audiences and how to market work to them. Several participants thought that producing more populist work was the way to go. Several participants noted the lack of work for children and young people.

Developing younger artists

Another recurring theme was that of developing younger artists and practitioners. Participants concluded that for the healthy development of The Sector, it was essential to:

- involve more young people in policy-making
- opening up artistic spaces to question British identities

- create mentoring schemes for emerging artists
- make the theatre-going experience more of an event to capture younger and more diverse audiences

The issue of interventions

While some looked forward to the demise of initiatives like ECLIPSE as The Sector became more integrated, others felt that political interventions should continue for the foreseeable future. A few felt that the proportions of people of African, Asian, Caribbean and East Asian descent in the general population should be replicated in the theatre, if necessary enforcing this through government legislation.

Question 2. What support is needed or has been helpful for your professional development?

Most participants agreed that more effective work in the area of training and skills development was needed. Some noted a lack of opportunities for developing skills in areas not directly related to theatre practice, for example PR, marketing and sponsorship.

Areas of professional development where participants had benefited from individual and organisational support included:

- acting
- directing
- writing
- strategic thinking
- management

Participants referred to such formative experiences as travel and being involved in experimentation that runs the risk of

'failure'. Also, mentors were noted as a valuable resource. Those who attended the open sessions and submitted written responses consistently named the following organisations and initiatives as having provided some type of support:

- Abasindi Cooperative, Black Arts Alliance, Contact Theatre, Green Room, Manchester
- SAMPAD, Birmingham Rep, Birmingham
- Speakeasy, Bristol
- PUSH, Nitro, Yellow Earth, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Talawa, Oval House, London
- Hudawi Centre, Huddersfield Afro-Caribbean Centre
- Fastrack, ITC
- the Arts Council BRIT Bursary, decibel Street Arts Showcase

Working in partnership with the above organisations and initiatives has proved fruitful for many.

Arts Council England was mentioned several times as being helpful in terms of the above initiatives and also in terms of providing development funds and financial assistance for touring.

Some participants expressed the view that the Arts Council gave only a small amount of support while others had received substantial financial support – including revenue funding. Other funders mentioned included Westminster City Council in London, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Bloomberg.

Several practitioners referred to instances where either they were invited to participate in schemes that treated them in a condescending manner or they

encountered crass stereotyping on the part of gatekeepers at some venues (eg Asian work was expected to be exotic and African Caribbean work had to be about hip hop). Such experiences stunted professional development and ambitions.

Positive experiences cited included an associate director post in a mentored environment for several months, which helped the participant to develop an understanding of the business. Following on from this, it was felt that artist-in-residence schemes could help make a positive difference.

Question 3. Are there effective networks and what is the level of awareness of Arts Council initiatives?

Being well networked and aware of opportunities is particularly important for practitioners in The Sector.

Networks

The need for further and more extensive opportunities for networking came up many times. Participants generally felt that networks did not necessarily have to be elaborate structures: their purpose would be simply to facilitate debate, formulate the needs of The Sector, and support, develop and circulate the knowledge and skills of individual and organisational leaders.

Informal networks such as having email addresses and telephone numbers at hand and meeting people at conferences and other functions have an important role to play. Other networking mechanisms cited were mailing lists and web-based professional sites.

Other existing networks described

as effective on several occasions included those supported by Moti Roti (multimedia arts organisation), Soho Theatre, and the Young Vic in London and the Black Arts Alliance and Green Room in Manchester. The South Asian Theatre Consortium was also seen as helpful in bringing artists and companies together.

A point which came up in the course of one of the discussions on leadership in The Sector was that the networks established are not generally 'owned' by the practitioners concerned.

While the Arts Council was often seen as helpful in promoting and supporting The Sector, the regulatory processes and the bureaucracy it worked with were seen as restrictive on occasion.

The view was expressed that it would be easier to create and sustain networks if there was a central building. However, although there was widespread support for network structures, a few people felt that sector networks are often resistant to new ideas and different perspectives. A lack of clarity about aims and objectives was also cited as a negative aspect of some networks. Adequate financial resources were seen as essential to enable networks – and other infrastructural developments – in The Sector to be effective.

Less formal structures were also seen as valuable, especially where they were owned by participants, experienced no external pressures and did not have to stick to a specific agenda. Examples cited included a consortium of culturally

mixed directors and a hip hop theatre group. More virtual networks using web/internet technology could be developed, although it was felt that support in the form of human and financial resources would be needed to ensure sustainability.

However good the networks are, however, it was emphasised that they were not to be seen as a replacement for funding. As one of the written submissions put it:

The key thing quite simply is that BME theatre needs to be adequately RESOURCED – everything follows from that, including the development of excellence.

Awareness of Arts Council initiatives

Participants generally had quite high awareness of Arts Council theatre initiatives for The Sector. ECLIPSE and BRIT were frequently mentioned as positive, with one participant commenting:

It [BRIT] has been a real catalyst for networking development and ongoing change within the theatre sector.

There were some criticisms though. For example, the quality of the work was said to be questionable on occasion, there needed to be more opportunities for small-scale work, and there were not enough of these kinds of networks to form a critical mass. One participating venue noted that:

Eclipse – did not work; the involved organisations had too diverse objectives...as a receiving house, XXX was expecting to be able to stage relevant productions...we were expecting new, culturally diverse work.

And a number of individuals and organisations did not seem clear about what these initiatives were set up to achieve. The issue of regional variations in knowledge and awareness of Arts Council initiatives also emerged as is summed up below:

As far as I can tell, there is stuff going on in London – and then there is everyone else!

The BME capital projects group was cited as a useful networking aid. Participants also mentioned the usefulness of decibel projects such as apprenticeship schemes and performing arts showcases. Additionally, initiatives such as the Arts Council On Route carnival conference had been helpful in creating a festival community. However, there is a higher level of recognition of such initiatives in London and this disparity needs to be addressed.

While there was support for these Arts Council initiatives, there was some feeling that marginalisation could be reinforced by the separation from the mainstream, and that the same people and organisations were often involved. These perceptions can lead to low expectations and a feeling that there is a lack of confidence in existing networks led by Sector practitioners.

Many artists in The Sector are unaware that it is possible to receive financial support as an individual and so do not take advantage of opportunities to focus on their artistic development. It is noteworthy that the Arts Council's Grants for the arts programme was not mentioned in the sessions.

Question 4. What risks and sector-specific issues do Sector practitioners face?

Risks

All artistic enterprise is risky to a greater or lesser extent. Perhaps theatre is more so than some other artforms because it can be labour and capital intensive and there are so many variable factors contributing to failure or success. For theatre practitioners in The Sector there is always a risk of not reaching the intended audiences, and of mainstream organisations having a limited understanding of the product. This latter point is reflected in the experience of a number of participants who had been told or been given the impression that there was more risk involved in putting on work from The Sector than from other practitioners.

Several managers of mainstream venues in London and some working in, or with knowledge of, regional centres held a different view from many of their mainstream colleagues. One artistic director who participated in the consultation identified a new, younger, more diverse audience – and in that context, programming the work of The Sector was no more risky than any other. This point was also made by representatives of theatre's main umbrella bodies and by an influential, representative arts organisation.

Other risks cited included being honest and speaking out against prevailing orthodoxies: such actions were seen as potentially marring any chance of success in the mainstream. On the other hand, making work that may not appeal

to what are thought of as traditional black audiences tastes carries with it the potential for being thought of as disrespectful or of having sold out.

Sector-specific issues

Participants identified a range of issues that were considered to be specific to The Sector. It was noted that those who hold the power in the wider theatre sector prefer European/Western approaches and processes; this point was also noted with reference to Arts Council initiatives where the definition of quality was felt to be very Eurocentric. The literary and linguistic approach to theatre varies from culture to culture and this needs to be fully recognised.

The search for the artistic expression of any cultural identity involves risks, as the work produced may become distorted through attempting to satisfy the norms and conventions set by larger, more powerful organisations.

There is a tendency for the mainstream to be over-cautious when it comes to promoting work from The Sector – there is ignorance about audiences and an assumption that all communities can be lumped together.

Ineptitude and/or reluctance in theatre marketing departments can have a negative impact on audience development for the work of practitioners in The Sector. Linked to this point was the feeling that inadequate, inappropriate working systems are in place and that the gatekeepers are part of the problem. This can happen both inside and outside the mainstream.

Problems with space and financial support are common to all kinds of artists and arts organisations. But artists from The Sector have additional challenges due to systemic and institutionalised racism and discrimination. Participants noted that work produced with the intention of targeting audiences from specific cultural backgrounds was seen as being narrowly focused and therefore not viable for mainstream theatres and venues.

Participants had experienced reluctance on the part of some venues to accept work targeted at bringing in large black audiences, and were especially nervous about attracting too many young black people. Funding to support work in non-traditional theatre venues, such as nightclubs, could help in this respect, although artists from The Sector would rightly resist being categorised exclusively as practitioners operating in non-mainstream theatre venues.

Many participants keenly felt the additional burden of being seen as representing a specific community and/or carrying the weight of expectation of The Sector. For example, Yellow Earth is the only East Asian theatre company in the UK, and this creates a huge amount of pressure on them to tour. The desire to take creative risks is tempered by the lack of resources, which places limits on experimentation prior to facing exposure. There are very high expectations associated with playing/performing at prestigious venues where a company is subject to intense scrutiny from all quarters. These pressures are keenly felt because if one organisation is identified

as failing, all come under scrutiny: failure also has a negative impact on those following on in the future.

On the subject of training and professional development, one participant felt that there should be no more seminars or courses for organisations or individuals in The Sector. A number of participants noted that theatre practitioners in The Sector were always considered to be emerging, and thus in need of training. But highlighting these concerns should not be seen as constructing an argument against professional development – most artists seek to evolve their practice continually – but rather as an expression of the frustration felt by those experienced practitioners who are viewed as needing to do some workshops or training before being ‘allowed’ to progress further.

Question 5. Should there be a building or buildings dedicated to Sector theatre?

Participants expressed a wide range of views on the question of a building or buildings dedicated to showing work created by Sector practitioners. Several looked forward to the establishment of a flagship venue for The Sector in England, and for many others the significance of such a prestigious building was considered vital. Participants argued that such a venue could provide inspiration – establishing and legitimising the work of all Sector practitioners. Such a building should be fully equipped to a high technical specification with multimedia facilities of a similar standard to the best educational establishments. Such a building was seen as being beneficial for the status of The Sector. It would provide

a cultural focal point and function as a symbol of the permanent presence of our communities.

Another position adopted was support for a flagship venue if a number of other buildings with a similar focus were established as well. Cities with substantial communities of African, Caribbean and Asian descent, such as Birmingham, Bristol, Leicester, London and Manchester, were seen as obvious choices for major performance venues of this kind. In larger urban centres, there are more opportunities for partnerships and sharing of knowledge, which are important for creating energy, and nurturing talent and discussion: there are also more opportunities to influence what happens in more of the mainstream venues.

One view expressed was that a shared building with umbrella funding could have different units for practitioners from the different communities which comprise The Sector. Others were keen to develop more cross-cultural dialogues. The need to prioritise aesthetics and quality over racialised labels was an issue raised in open and individual sessions and in written submissions.

Reservations

Importantly, most participants did not see that a Sector-led building dedicated to the work of The Sector would be the sole solution to the issues The Sector faces. Other mainstream, flagship theatre venues should also provide space for this work. It was felt by some that existing venues might feel let off the hook and leave the programming of Sector

practitioners’ work to the new project. This was linked to the observation from several participants that a dedicated building would not be needed if current venues operated on a more inclusive basis: there was a strong feeling that the Arts Council should continue to push major national venues to involve more practitioners from The Sector in their programming.

There was a relatively small but significant number of dissenting voices regarding the establishment of a building.

One particularly strong response stated:

We must NOT sleepwalk to a system of apartheid. Such a move would represent a fundamental mistake...It would encourage middle-class venues to assume they don’t have to take ethnic work because...they have Place X to perform at.

Some of those who disagreed with the concept of a building seemed mainly to focus on the idea of one, flagship theatre with all the attendant problems about who was involved and where it would be. The question of who is included and who is not, and the intolerable burden of expectation – especially if there was only one building and it was in London – also gave participants cause for concern. A view expressed on several occasions was that if there is only one building, the pressure of being constantly under the spotlight would be too much.

There were some other words of caution regarding the potential of a Sector-led theatre space: participants pointed out that running and funding buildings soaked up human and financial resources.

In the context of creating a dedicated building or buildings, training was felt to be important. Specific professional development support to take on the responsibilities of managing whole buildings was needed in order to avoid past mistakes. However, participants were acutely aware that because of past attempts to develop black arts centres, there was a perception that artists from The Sector could not be trusted with the responsibility for establishing, running and leading a visionary building project: this perception should be countered.

There was also a fear that a building would ghettoise The Sector. Set against this is the view expressed by one participant via a written submission: There is a compelling argument for a BME theatre. I completely reject the argument that such a building would ‘ghettoise’ BME theatre – we’ve been in a ghetto for the past 30 years, so what’s to lose?

One participant felt strongly that further consultation with existing networks was needed in order to answer this question. It was felt that a national theatre dedicated to practitioners needed to emerge from The Sector itself for a genuine sense of ownership to occur.

Alternatives to a dedicated building

It was argued by some participants that developing showcase rehearsal spaces for The Sector with good administrative resources would mean that it was not necessary to establish a new specific performance venue. Another model proposed was to create national satellites with different existing interested

companies curating and programming productions so that different voices/visions could be showcased within the building. The point was made that the issue is not just about having a specific performance space: the necessity of being able to locate archived material for heritage/legacy purposes, to network, discuss, challenge and share are all vital for a thriving sector.

Catering for different artforms and different audiences

Ideas about the desired type of building were explored in the sessions. For example, it was suggested that the design of a building could incorporate space suitable for theatre traditions other than English text-based forms.

Whatever the buildings infrastructure required, most people seemed to agree that a wide range of communities are not being catered for as audiences.

The hope is that a dedicated building could demonstrate that it was possible to attract consistently an audience from a range of diaspora communities, and this would have a positive impact on the wider sector. Eventually, it was argued, mainstream venues will see that they are missing out on a large and loyal audience.

It was pointed out that it is now generally recognised that much of the 'black' and 'brown' pound is spent on leisure goods and services. If these communities were better catered for artistically, then their disposable income would also reach the mainstream theatres.

Question 6. Does The Sector have a role to play in the international arts scene?

Participants made the observation that mainstream organisations constantly broaden their programmes with international cultural activity.

However, in spite of the fact that being part of a diaspora usually means that Sector practitioners are keen to develop international ties, there are a number of barriers that prevent artists from fully realising these ambitions and benefiting from international exchanges.

Creativity thrives on exchange and dialogue with practitioners from a range of backgrounds and perspectives. Sector practitioners want to have more opportunities to learn from artists outside of Britain and share their skills and knowledge.

Sector practitioners are keen that it is the art that should drive the international strategies being developed and the decisions made. Although there are obvious and immediate connections to be made to the countries most closely linked to The Sector – for example, India, China, the Caribbean – exchanges with other countries that already take place could be developed further with appropriate resources made available.

Participants asked whether it was even possible to develop strong, reciprocal links internationally without a permanent home in the shape of a building led by Sector practitioners. The lack of financial and human resources required and the demands of keeping a company going without regular funding often prevent

the development of viable links with overseas individuals and organisations. International visiting and hosting can be complex and difficult to arrange. For example, it would be difficult for a small, under-resourced company to negotiate the bureaucracy that results from the restrictions for artists from abroad trying to work in the UK.

There is also the risk that British-based artists in The Sector will be overlooked in the UK in the quest for the 'exotic other' from overseas.

Some participants felt that there is potentially a problem in working to what was characterised as the political agenda of the British Council; participants perceived that only a certain type of the work would engender support and sponsorship.

Question 7. What kind of cultural leadership in The Sector needs to be supported or developed?

The issue of leadership was considered an important one, despite the wide variations in how the term is defined.

The view was expressed that there should be new programmes to develop leaders and creative producers, as well as training for those already in leadership positions and who may have taken on the mantle by default.

Virtually all participants felt there were not enough practitioners from The Sector in leading positions in the theatre or in the arts sector as a whole, and pointed out the existence of a glass ceiling in the Arts Council itself.

A lack of career development opportunities for managers and leaders in The Sector was seen as being caused, at least in part, by the lack of a base from which cohorts of leaders could emerge. With so few opportunities available in the mainstream, and with limited infrastructure in The Sector, it is difficult to see how to improve the chances of being asked to take on a leadership role.

A small number of participants noted that some who had enjoyed success disconnected themselves from their community base, and did not do enough to change the system. However, some felt that there was a long history of 'shooting people down when they become leaders' which was discouraging, and placed an extra burden on those in such positions.

In the mainstream, long-established networks give formal and informal support to established and emerging leaders, but when asked to identify leaders within The Sector, consultation participants often found it difficult to name any. Pushing this issue further elicited the response that hardly anyone was prepared to think of themselves as a leader, even though a significant number of accomplished practitioners were in attendance at sessions.

Additionally, there appear to be far more training opportunities for Sector practitioners than actual positions open to them.

In spite of the barriers to success, several names cropped up of practitioners from The Sector who exhibited leadership qualities.

Question 8. How should The Sector develop critical dialogues and reclaim its past?

Critical dialogue

Participants acknowledged that there is a lack of a critical space in which to discuss what The Sector wants to achieve. They also thought it was important that practitioners could review each other's work without fear of being criticised for doing so. The Sector should be able to enter into critical dialogues with a wide range of interested parties in order to improve work where necessary.

Participants would also like to see an increased level of curiosity about The Sector's work among mainstream writers and critics. Some observed that there were very few critics from The Sector working on national daily newspapers. However, several participants countered that other forms of critique were just as important, if not more so. For example, tapping into what audiences think of a piece and entering into a dialogue with them was seen as important, as was the opinion of Sector peers.

Archiving

There is a need for improved archiving of plays and other documents, according to many participants. One written comment was that:

We do not just need to record our past but revisit it, to show its relevance to our current situation.

A very small number of participants felt that an archiving function was not a priority in a new building, though this seemed to be based on the assumption that such facilities already existed and

were accessible. The Arts Council no doubt holds a repository of written, visual and audio documentation, as it represents a major strand in the story of how The Sector has evolved over the years. Clearly though, centralised archiving is currently almost non-existent and this impedes access to the history of companies and productions, especially as such resources as exist are based mainly in London. Experienced practitioners and younger artists could benefit from improved access to information about the staging, scripts and so on from previous productions.

A few participants mentioned that the job of archiving was not the responsibility of artists but of academics and critics. Organisations with custody of archives – such as the Theatre Museum, The National Archives and Middlesex University – should work to ensure that the material is more widely accessible. A further benefit of this would be that the artistic contributions of practitioners from The Sector could more easily be brought into schools and further education institutions. Wherever the archives are located and whoever is responsible for development in this area it is vital to:

...document creatively – to create legacy, but use it wisely not to gather dust, but as a springboard to future growth.⁶

Question 9. Audiences

Much more effective work should be carried out to ensure that audiences from different generations are able to see a variety of work. There are a range of ways to attract new audiences, some

of which may appear unorthodox to the mainstream – eg community outreach, different locations for selling tickets. A recurring theme throughout the sessions was that of improving work for, by and about young people. A broader age base needs to be engaged in the entire process of making and showing a piece of creative work.

In general, marketing departments in mainstream organisations came in for heavy criticism with regard to the promotion of work from Sector practitioners. Participants felt that marketing teams needed to learn how to anticipate audience trends and demographic shifts more effectively. There could also be more creative use of performance spaces by adapting them to specific audiences, for example, by holding play readings in school foyers. Blue Mountain Productions was mentioned on several occasions. This company has, with considerable success, established a populist form of theatre-making, which has its roots in Jamaican culture and ignores the conventions of polite forms of theatre presentation. Mainstream venues could learn from Blue Mountain's marketing strategies.

Conclusion

Levels of cynicism are high – and this was sometimes reflected in the comments of participants in the consultation. It was pointed out that the Arts Council has commissioned numerous reports, guides, evaluations, manuals, research papers, and so on with recommendations running into the hundreds, on black arts, minority ethnic arts and cultural diversity, on visual arts, performing arts,

archiving and audiences. But every time a new piece of work is commissioned and fresh – or repeated – recommendations are made without previous ones being addressed, the confidence, patience and good will of the sector are eroded.

During the consultation, a number of participants commented that the integrity of the artistic enterprise can get lost in discussions focused on process, strategies and initiatives, whereas it is the quality of the work which should be at the forefront of debates. These debates should be seen to be led by Sector practitioners rather than by funders and other agencies. But in spite of past and current problems, The Sector is keen to engage with and take the lead in rising to the challenges ahead.

Chapter 4

Moving forward

This chapter draws together the main points raised through the consultation process, indicating key areas for The Sector, the Arts Council and other stakeholders to address. It serves as a preamble to the recommendations that appear in Chapter 5.

Looking forward to change

The range of work undertaken by artists in The Sector undermines any attempt to confine it within fixed categories. There is ambition, energy and innovation within The Sector but much of it goes under-recognised and under-resourced. This is partly because the maturity of The Sector is not recognised by those who have power and control. There is a denial of the historical basis to the work of contemporary theatre practitioners in The Sector.

For better or worse, the often difficult and sometimes turbulent history of The Sector has left its mark on practitioners and many lessons from the past have been learned by them. This often results in scepticism about the possibilities for making real progress, particularly, but not exclusively, articulated by those who have spent many years battling against the system. We must make sure that the next generation of practitioners does not have to endure similar experiences.

It is vital that the next stage of this process – the gathering of responses from The Sector, the Arts Council and

other key stakeholders – happens swiftly and in a transparent manner. Cynicism bred by experience will have an impact on responses from The Sector but the effects of this can be mitigated if the funders and agencies concerned take appropriate steps to reassure practitioners that resources will be made available to finance the recommendations outlined in this report.

Regional development agencies, local authorities, the Heritage Lottery Fund, trusts and foundations, as well as potential corporate sponsors and educational establishments, should work in partnership with The Sector to effect real and lasting change.

The Sector, the wider theatre ecology and the Arts Council Shifting attitudes

The Arts Council and other organisations and agencies have made significant progress in supporting diversity in the theatre but not everyone is convinced that there is real commitment to make the changes required to effect a transformation.

The frustration felt by many was clearly articulated by one participant in the consultation:

...it seems that the Arts Council on the one hand wants culturally diverse work to thrive, but on the other, is not prepared to give high-quality, cutting edge theatre companies the regular funding they need to thrive...

Another participant wrote of encountering:

...Prejudice and ignorance on every level. I cannot begin to explain here what a negative effect that has on me and my work.

The fact is that there still exists a view – within the mainstream and among the various gatekeepers – that ‘black and minority ethnic arts’ is always in the state of ‘emerging’: this is very damaging.

We do not deny that we need to find ways of encouraging and developing the skills of new artists, and even young people who may not yet identify themselves as artists, to participate in theatre. But for those practitioners who ‘emerged’ years ago, what is on offer for them? Opportunities to work at a senior level in the mainstream and/or wider theatre are strictly limited for Sector practitioners.

Work that is considered by the mainstream as unorthodox or experimental will often be seen as more of a risk if a theatre group from The Sector is involved. In addition, venues can be nervous about young audiences as they lack understanding and first-hand experience of the communities concerned.

These attitudes result in a lack of genuine engagement with Sector practitioners and their work. One participant put it like this: ...sometimes the partners are not fully committed to seeing the process through to the extent that real sustainable change could take place – benefiting their venue or organisation in the long run.

It is because of the attitudes and practices outlined above that, as articulated elsewhere in this report, the majority of participants in the consultation wanted a building or buildings focused on, and led by, The Sector. Few would argue that this means the mainstream should then disengage from Sector practitioners. The view may be summed up as follows:

There should be new venues yes, but there should also be more daring programming in existing venues – new audiences are developing, but what about those that are already there wanting new experiences?

The challenges to be faced also stem from demographic and technological developments. As more young people become involved in The Sector, so ideas about ‘black theatre’, ‘race’, ‘cultural diversity’ and identity will change. Changes in the patterns of migration with more people settling in Britain with origins in countries outside the former colonies may also have an impact on how The Sector sees its position in this society. The manner in which new technologies evolve will also influence notions of what ‘theatre’, ‘performance’ and ‘art’ mean.

The relationship between The Sector and the Arts Council

Although it is an overused word, empowerment is crucial to enable The Sector to move forward. There should be a way of operating that enables The Sector to make the most of the opportunities that the Arts Council can offer, at the same time as avoiding a sense of dependency on the agency. Until a more equitable distribution of

resources and power becomes reality, it is hard to see how the system can be made to work better for Sector theatre practitioners.

This is a time for the Arts Council to think more boldly about its relationship to The Sector and how it can act in a way that results in the long-awaited transformation. One participant summarised the potential thus:

The world is still unaware of the Black British experience – be it African, Caribbean, Indian or Chinese. When the British arts establishment wakes up to the fact that it is actively suppressing talent that can invigorate the UK art scene’s global image, the sky will be the limit.

Although we do not want to dwell too much on past errors, it is nonetheless disconcerting to read in the decibel evaluation report:

The evaluation methodology was designed on the basis that decibel had full and robust databases of contacts – including culturally diverse artists and organisations – and that Arts Council England had a range of historical data relating to levels of funding for Black and minority artists, Black-led organisations and culturally diverse work. Both the database and the historical data were incomplete and this affected the information the evaluation team was able to collect.

[My emphasis]⁷

The point we are making is not about the impact of the decibel project – in fact, the performing arts showcase was assessed as being effective both in the

evaluation and during the consultation – but that the Arts Council does not have what would seem to be basic data available. If this is not available through a central, accessible and up-to-date database, it is unsurprising that regional offices are not always able to keep their constituencies fully informed about existing and forthcoming programmes and initiatives.

Linked to this point is the issue of transparency – especially in relation to the evaluation of effectiveness of initiatives targeted at The Sector. We have to learn about what works and what does not work. It would be really helpful to have a clear analysis of the successes and problems encountered by, for example, the Black Regional Initiative in Theatre (BRIT) including Eclipse Theatre, the South Asian Theatre Consortium, Live and Direct, Eclipse Conference and Report. It would also be helpful if The Sector was involved in the assessment and identification of ways forward. The evaluation of the follow-up sessions to the Eclipse conference (seminars, advice sessions, etc) has been incorporated into the Arts Council race equality scheme but should not the results, even if only in summary, have been made available to The Sector for consideration and debate?

It is also important to track the subsequent careers and experiences of practitioners who have taken part in fellowship, bursary and other internship-like programmes. This would be a vital tool in assessing what works and what does not. Again, it is a question of having a clearer sense of the impact of

these initiatives. It is also the case that the input of Sector-led organisations in promoting professional development is not always acknowledged. Experience gained and courses taken in those contexts should also be noted.

It was evident from the consultation that Sector practitioners were not aware that individual artists can apply for funds. The Arts Council should consider how best to market this opportunity.

Regional differences

There are few who would dispute that London makes a substantial contribution to Britain’s cultural life. The wealth of arts organisations, museums and so on is a major part of the attraction that the capital holds for both overseas and domestic visitors. Theatres feature prominently in London’s cultural landscape, but how effectively do venues work with each other to promote more diverse work? What levels of awareness and kinds of relationships have been developed with colleagues in other regional centres? Could London theatres do more to reach across the divide between commercially-run and publicly subsidised companies in ways that would better support the work of theatre practitioners in The Sector?

London vs the regions

Theatre – and other arts – practitioners of all cultural backgrounds may decide, for career development reasons, to leave their homes and work in London but this movement of people poses more challenges for communities of African, Asian, Caribbean, and East Asian descent. The size of those communities in

London is significantly larger than those in most regional centres outside of the capital. If substantial numbers of Sector practitioners leave the regions to work in London, opportunities for those left behind are potentially reduced due to the lack of viable numbers of artists and organisations.

Regional centres need support in retaining individuals and organisations and the Arts Council national office has a role to play in helping to ensure that practitioners have incentives to retain a base in the regional centres. Therefore, the locations of the buildings we are proposing should be carefully considered.

Additionally, the fact that work is created and shown outside of London should not diminish its significance or its quality: there is a perception in some quarters that work produced in other regional centres is inherently of less value.

It is also important to emphasise that London’s concerns are not necessarily those of other regional centres. Similarly, challenges faced in other cities are not always fully understood in London.

There were significant variations in responses to the consultation process on the part of the regional offices involved. This unevenness of engagement has implications for the implementation of recommendations in this report in the context of the delegation of capital funds from the Arts Council national office to regional offices.

Although it is clear that most sector practitioners live and/or work in cities

and larger towns, there is potential for growing work opportunities in rural areas. This is another area where initiatives generated by the Arts Council (and others) on rural issues, eg disaffected young people, could be linked to diversity and sustainable community strategies.

The question of buildings

One of the key aims of this consultation was to gain a sense of what kind of buildings infrastructure is needed by The Sector to promote and sustain its work in theatre in the 21st century.

A substantial majority of participants were in favour of developing a building or buildings to house the work of practitioners in The Sector. Many thought that there should be more than one building and that these spaces might have different functions depending on where they were based.⁸

Single buildings would not have to be dedicated to the work of one company or organisation. Furthermore, there is a risk that fixating on a certain type of building for a certain type of audience would lead to the production of work that would not express the variety and vibrancy of The Sector as it is now and as it might develop.

Negative perceptions about the likely success of a building project stalk The Sector, undermining practitioners' confidence and demoting the quality of the artistic work to secondary importance: such perceptions should be dispelled. Lessons learned from past and current capital projects across all artforms

and sectors must be taken into account by all those involved in this ambitious new project. Success will include the following factors:

- realistic funding targets being set, approved and agreed
- appropriately experienced managers, senior executive staff and board members appointed with extra support being given where necessary
- fit-for-purpose premises in accessible locations
- sophisticated marketing, education and audience development strategies based on examples of innovative, effective practices
- partnership and support from the full range of actual and potential stakeholders

Participants offered a range of important attributes and functions for a building project. The most frequently cited were, in no particular order, as follows:

- a place where practitioners could meet, exchange ideas and network
- a performance space for experimentation and risk-taking
- rehearsal rooms – including facilities for dance
- a flagship, well-resourced performance space for large-scale work
- a space/s for the development of cross-artform practice
- a large stage with a relatively small auditorium to enable artists to explore a variety of work
- a place where those practitioners with a commitment to The Sector can develop their careers to the highest levels
- a place for training and professional development in all aspects of theatre arts

- a space in which to explore the nature of theatre form and the cultural mix – so that the aesthetic sits on top
- multimedia resources
- a space with an archiving function and a library open to the public
- a space that enables practitioners within The Sector to explore working together on the development of cross-cultural forms
- a place for expert classes to be run with international participants
- a space accessible – in all senses – to local and regional communities
- a new model for a building/s serving as a magnet for talent
- bar and café facilities

Three alternatives

From the desired qualities and functions suggested by participants, we put forward three options.

Option	1
Building	Flagship, national, new build or major refurbishment
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance main stage • Studio space • Rehearsal space • International master classes • Space for archival centre
Location	Potentially based in London (Olympics 2012) or Liverpool (European City of Culture 2008) or other major city with strong international dimension
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial investment in one building • Only one region gains as all facilities focused in one city • In order to ensure that mainstream venues are not to let off the hook, and to spread benefits, a range of regional partnerships to be formally established

Option	2
Building	One flagship, 'Gold Standard' performance space plus satellite buildings
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly smaller flagship than Option 1 with focus on performance facilities • Functions as in Option 1, plus replication of services in two or three more locations or • Satellites specialise in one area of work
Location	Potentially three or four locations across the country but with focus on one city
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More of a sense of structure. • Networking opportunities • More centres possible • More opportunities for practitioners • Tendency to marginalise those regions without the flagship space, and to see as second class facilities

Option	3 Recommended
Building	A distributed, linked network of buildings, each of which is 'Gold Standard'
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each building in each region to have its own character and specialism • Some of the functions may be replicated in all buildings • Facilities for archiving, rehearsing, master classes etc • Each building is part of a network that works together and has its own character
Location	Again four locations possible but with focus across the country
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional specialist centres for theatre with focus on eg. a particular cultural form or mode of working • Each building is a flagship centre for its area of specialism – regional centres have equal status • Centres of excellence with each bringing high status and prestige to The Sector and the region • The whole network of buildings will be equal to more than the sum of the parts.

Option 3 A network of top-class buildings led by The Sector

Our recommendation would be for Option 3. In addition to the comments in the table, we believe that several buildings will enable more practitioners from a wider geographical and demographic spread to participate fully in this ambitious venture and will create more opportunities for expression by the multi-layered complexity of The Sector's practice and practitioners.

Such an arrangement would also help to build a stronger Sector made up of individuals and organisations that can challenge the mainstream more effectively. Inevitably, the scale of such a project means it would take longer to achieve but we feel it is worth it to ensure that the end result has a real, lasting impact. A coherent, strategic and substantial investment over a period of 10 years has the potential to transform The Sector and the wider theatre ecology in a way that will benefit all concerned.

Organisational and individual leadership and governance

The responses relating to leadership suggested a sector that has had its confidence bruised. Few people were prepared to say 'I am a leader in the field' or that their organisation had a leadership role to play in The Sector.

Some identified a lack of confidence as a problem, others a general reluctance to push themselves forward. This is an area where the Arts Council could make an impact through its involvement in the Cultural Leadership programme set to run over 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Although it did not emerge as a specific theme during the consultation process, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that there are issues relating to the recruitment and retention of members of boards of trustees. This is an area that could be examined further. The GAIN project, piloted in London to diversify the boards of arts organisations was directed towards mainstream arts institutions. This is a welcome move but thought needs to be given to the question of the role of trustees in Sector theatre organisations in matters of leadership and good governance. Boards of trustees are a key component of an organisation's reputation and professionalism.

Diversity

There is confusion around the terminology of 'race', ethnicity and culture in general, and some of that is in evidence at the Arts Council. This may be interpreted as indicating a lack of clarity within the Arts Council about its aims and objectives in this area. It certainly caused a great deal of confusion for the advisory group, chairs and facilitators when trying to formulate a structure for the consultation process. The terms diversity, cultural diversity, black – and Black – black and minority ethnic and BME all figured in the background literature we were given.

Most people are not entirely happy with being defined exclusively by their national, racial or ethnic heritage. Some of the terms used simply do not work – how can an individual be referred to as being 'culturally diverse'? And why should it be that only organisations led by theatre practitioners in The Sector are

referred to as culturally diverse? Another source of concern is the way in which the Arts Council defines or encourages a company to define itself as 'BME led' or 'BME focused'. The suggestion that 51 per cent of the board having a 'BME' background constitutes a 'BME-led' organisation can lead to anomalies. The method of identifying such organisations is flawed and in need of revision, as it gives a false picture of the flow of funds into The Sector.

Looking to the future

Practitioners in The Sector want their work to be considered on its merits as art rather than constantly being seen as 'worthy' or fulfilling social inclusion policies.

Many Sector participants refer to and have gained something from the mainstream: practitioners should have the choice to be a part of it, and not automatically be shunted off into the margins. In shunning the array of Sector talent already in evidence and that which is yet to come, the mainstream is missing out on a substantial opportunity. While wishing to open up the mainstream, it is also important to challenge it: this is essential for the health of the artform and the wider theatre ecology.

The local and its myriad of connections to the global will continue to contribute to the changing landscape of the arts, more so with the growth of new economies outside of the traditional axes of power in Europe and the USA. The mainstream is not moving fast enough to embrace a 21st century internationalism based interests wider than that of the

traditional Euro-American ones. London is hosting the Olympics in just six years time – how can we have confidence that an arts mainstream which is reluctant to engage with its domestic internationalism will be able to promote arts and culture on an international stage?

The time has come to reject notions of diversity in terms of lack and deficiency or in terms of developing new audiences – that emphasis is wrong. The focus should be on revitalising the very notion of theatre and injecting fresh ideas, traditions, innovation and practices into the bloodstream of the performing arts.

Chapter 5

Recommendations

Introduction

Few theatre spaces in the country have managed to develop equitable and open professional relationships with practitioners in The Sector. The level of frustration with the current situation is high, especially as a number of initiatives are seen as having had limited success in changing the face of theatre.

The recommendations in this chapter indicate key areas for The Sector, the Arts Council and other stakeholders to address. The recommendations listed below draw mainly on the contributions made by over 200 participants in the Sustained Theatre consultation process. Reports, policy documents and personal experiences have also informed the list.

1. Buildings for the future

The majority of participants in the consultation wanted a building or buildings focused on, and led by, The Sector. We believe it is possible to develop a network of buildings with flexible spaces that nurture talent, promote excellence, provide career progression opportunities, and foster more equitable relations with the mainstream theatre sector.

- These spaces should be managed and led by practitioners from The Sector and be open to all who wish to expand their horizons through engaging with theatre
- There should be a strategic approach to establishing these buildings to

ensure they meet the regional, national and international needs of The Sector

- We recommend that the proposal for developing a network of buildings in regional centres with different specialisms be put before colleagues
- This buildings infrastructure project – along with the people and resources within the proposed buildings – should be set up to develop as an ongoing investment in The Sector over a minimum of 10 years
- The Arts Council should allocate £4 million from its capital funding for buildings infrastructure for The Sector and find substantial additional resources to establish a minimum of four high-quality, well-equipped buildings in regional centres
- Working in partnership with The Sector, the Arts Council should identify further funds from other sources in both private and public sectors
- The Arts Council should allocate an appropriate level of revenue funding to ensure sustainability and success, establish appropriate opportunities for skills enhancement and individual and organisational development, and ensure the buildings are properly resourced
- The process of applying for capital funds may not produce an appropriate outcome for this infrastructure project. In order to maximise the opportunities offered by the proposed buildings, we recommend that a process be developed that is designed for the task in hand

Ownership

In order to move to the next stage of the process, which should see The Sector take ownership of the buildings proposals, the following recommendations should be implemented.

- This report should be presented to Council for consideration
- As soon as possible afterwards, the executive summary of the report should be sent to The Sector and those who participated in the Sustained Theatre consultation
- The Arts Council's formal response to the report should be circulated
- The Arts Council should construct an action plan, taking advice from Sector professionals as appropriate
- The consultant and the advisory group, together with other Sector colleagues, should work with the Arts Council to devise a process that will ensure a swift, successful handover to The Sector
- A project team should be appointed to facilitate the effective delivery of detailed plans for the development of the buildings programme
- Working in partnership with the Arts Council and other stakeholders, Sector representatives should participate in the design of the process
- Representatives from The Sector must have a leading role in progressing the project to its conclusion. Sector practitioners' skills and experience should be recognised through the payment of appropriate professional fees for their work with additional funds allocated for administrative support, travel costs, etc where necessary. It is not the intention that consultants external to The Sector carry out this work but if The Sector feels it

is appropriate, then funds to buy that expertise should be available

Regional issues

- The Arts Council and The Sector must ensure that practitioners in all regions are equally involved
- The Sector should work with the Arts Council national and regional offices to ensure that the consistent, high-quality support required for the successful implementation of the Sustained Theatre report's recommendations is achieved

2. Leadership – individual, organisational and sector development

- Professional development in The Sector should be promoted as an essential process rather than remedial work with continually 'emerging' practitioners. Opportunities for leaders at all levels – emerging, mid-career and established – should be available in all aspects of theatre practice. Where an organisation needs interim support while a practitioner is on a leadership programme or sabbatical, resources should be provided to cover the temporary loss of staff
- Particular attention should be paid to artists' creative professional development, and to the evolution of the artform. The confidence to experiment, and test the boundaries and conventions of the artform also need to be nurtured. The resources required to establish continuing professional development should be seen as an investment in the sustainability of the artists and the artform
- Training and professional development

programmes should reflect real career progression opportunities

- Issues relating to the recruitment, retention and professional development of boards of trustees in The Sector should be addressed by the Arts Council, Independent Theatre Council and the Theatrical Management Association in collaboration with the organisations concerned
- The Arts Council, in partnership with The Sector, should facilitate effective communication and the sharing of ideas and practice
- All the cultural leadership strategies, not just those devised under the heading of 'diversity', currently being developed by the Arts Council, the Creative and Cultural Sector Skills Council, etc should be closely tied in with the buildings infrastructure project
- Technical staff, set designers, lighting technicians, producers, directors, PR, marketing, creative thinkers, writers, critics and so on should be included in cultural leadership, professional training and development programmes
- Any form of development, training, mentoring, etc should draw on the successes of the past through identifying success factors such as certain kinds of partnerships and/or bursary and fellowship schemes
- The Arts Council should develop much more effective ways of ensuring that individual artists are aware that they may apply for funding for professional development
- The Sector, working in partnership with other key stakeholders, should explore ways of ensuring that high-calibre trustees are retained and developed
- The Arts Council should work with

The Sector to identify and actively support current Sector networks for the promotion of work and dissemination of information as well as creating mechanisms for the development of new networking opportunities

- Work needs to be carried out with existing venues to improve the promotion of work being shown and to develop their understanding of the purpose of the buildings project. This will involve Sector practitioners working out the relationships and/or partnerships they want with mainstream building-based organisations
- The Arts Council should look closely at more effective ways of linking London to the other regional centres and across the publicly funded/commercial sector divide
- The Arts Council and other bodies with regionalised structures should pursue ways of improving communication and understanding of the specific issues each area faces
- The Arts Council should also look urgently at how the differences in the quality of work on, and levels of understanding of, diversity issues at regional offices are addressed
- The Sector should seek engagement with the Creative and Cultural Sector Skills Council, the Clore Leadership Programme and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts to ascertain the extent to which individual practitioners apply to, and are accepted on to, programmes, and identify any barriers to gaining and taking up places
- The Arts Council should work with The Sector to develop more appropriate forms of training. Professional

development should be promoted as a positive opportunity rather than the identification of a lack of skills within The Sector

3. International connections

- There should be more international work coming to Britain in order to counter cultural insularity
- Appropriate resources should be made available so that exchanges that currently take place could be developed further
- As it develops its strategy for pursuing opportunities for international exchanges, the Arts Council should pay particular attention to the specific needs of The Sector, as identified by The Sector
- Resources should be made available for The Sector to play a leading role in the ongoing development of international cultural relations through organising prestigious conferences, seminars, expert classes and so on with practitioners from across the world
- The Arts Council should work in partnership with The Sector, the British Council and other agencies and organisations in the UK and overseas charged with fostering international cultural cooperation and exchange

4. Critical dialogues and historical archives

- More critics in broadcast and print media with in-depth knowledge and understanding of The Sector should be nurtured by the media industry
- Historical material must be preserved so that more people can share information about the complex past of this country and our place in it

- Effective ways of making this and other archival material available and easy to access should be developed
- Working with Sector practitioners, the Arts Council should take a leading role in helping to secure funding from agencies and organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Arts and Humanities Research Council for major archival resources. These facilities should build on and link with appropriate existing resources. Virtual and actual resources should be developed encompassing local, regional, national and international resources
- Arts Council England should develop more effective ways of ensuring that lessons from the past are learned
- In addition to developing specialist archival resources, agencies such as the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and regional and local museums and archives should be encouraged to work in partnership with The Sector and the Arts Council on developing locally accessible resources
- The whole area of archiving should be opened up and linked to education programmes with professional development opportunities for teachers, lecturers to learn about The Sector and vice versa
- Building on current provision, more courses to encourage individuals and organisations to keep their own archives and learn the skills to do it effectively should be funded and developed
- There are many experienced practitioners with documents, images and memories that could make a contribution to an archive that is dynamic

and engages across generations and cultures. This knowledge should continue to be documented and recorded before these histories are lost

- Working with practitioners and the Creative and Cultural Sector Skills Council, the Arts Council should examine ways of encouraging and supporting the development of critical work related to The Sector

5. Arts Council England

- More transparent ways of operating and more effective dissemination of information about Arts Council projects and initiatives that have taken place are needed
- Greater awareness of the opportunities available through funding streams, strategic initiatives, etc has to be developed in The Sector so that practitioners can take ownership of available resources
- The Arts Council should be less process-driven, with more focus on artistic quality and profile-raising. Where the creation of an initiative is being considered, the Arts Council should investigate imaginative methods of involving practitioners in helping to achieve strategic aims, that result in more resources going directly to creative practitioners and organisations in The Sector
- Working with practitioners, thinkers and academics in The Sector, the Arts Council should work to develop further its, understanding, language and thinking in relation to 'race', ethnicity and culture
- Initiatives such as GAIN (the project to diversify the boards of key arts organisations piloted in London), MAXIMISE (the audience development

project being piloted in Yorkshire, West Midlands and London), decibel (the national Arts Council project promoting diversity in the arts) and the Cultural Leadership programme to be launched in early 2006 should work more effectively with each other, sharing information and strategic direction. Whenever possible, individuals and organisations from The Sector should be closely involved in shaping the future direction of such projects

- When working with partners such as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the regional cultural consortia and regional development agencies, the Creative and Cultural Sector Skills Council, BECTU (the entertainment industry trades union), Equity (the actors' union), the Independent Theatre Council, the Theatrical Management Association and the Esmée Fairbairn Trust, the Arts Council should demonstrate leadership in devising effective and efficient ways of involving representatives from The Sector at various stages and levels of discussion and negotiation
- Information about projects being piloted regionally and nationally should be disseminated more widely, including the evaluation of outcomes of such projects
- The Arts Council should apply good practice principles of consultation and communication processes across its regional offices
- To assess the impact of investment on target sectors, all projects and programmes should be evaluated, the results widely discussed, and the progress and experiences of participants tracked

Concluding recommendations and remarks

- We request the Arts Council to respond formally to the recommendations in this report as soon as possible
- We urge the Arts Council to draw up an action plan that takes on board the recommendation that it is The Sector that has to lead this project, working in partnership with the Arts Council and with appropriate levels of support from national and regional offices and other key stakeholders
- The process for taking forward these recommendations should be led by The Sector in partnership with the Arts Council, drawing on a cross-section of experience and talent

The primary focus of the process must be on what the production of the art needs, rather than building/s for their own sake. The question regarding buildings is: Does this structure allow the work of our individual practitioners, organisations to thrive and enable the artform to flourish?

We feel it is important to examine the needs of the full range of practitioners – from the establishment, to those who see their role as more challenging and on the edge, and everyone in between – to determine what best will serve The Sector for the next 10 years or so.

Much progress has been made but there is still much more work to do. A significant shift in the way the mainstream perceives and works with practitioners in The Sector is still urgently needed. Some of these changes will occur organically but experience has

shown that mechanisms of one kind or another are necessary if a fundamental transformation is to take place.

With these recommendations, we are not proposing a one-off initiative or a short-lived scheme but taking a long view. Practitioners in The Sector need properly resourced opportunities to develop their artform, hone their managerial and leadership skills, enhance their career prospects and embed themselves in the cultural life of this society.

The Sector is faced with a challenging and ambitious programme of work. We believe that with the appropriate resources and cooperation from funding agencies, the mainstream, and other stakeholders this programme can be achieved. We also believe that all theatre will benefit from the implementation of these proposals.

Footnotes

¹ 'Wider theatre sector/ecology' and 'mainstream theatre' have slightly different meanings, as not all organisations in the former category would see themselves as part of the latter. When participants from The Sector refer to the mainstream, for the most part, they mean the 'white-led', more establishment organisations in the wider theatre, largely building-based and usually Arts Council regularly funded organisations.

² All of these organisations and projects are based in London. Positive Steps houses one of the biggest and most authoritative collections of primary source material on the history of African Caribbean artists' contribution to Britain's cultural life since the 19th century. The South Asian Literature Digital Archive (SALIDAA) is a free online resource featuring collections of South Asian arts, theatre, dance and music of British-based artists and organisations. Future Histories is an archive of black theatre history. Working in partnership with other organisations, the project has developed exhibitions and information packs. The Theatre Museum is a part of the Victoria and Albert Museum and holds several collections and other resources relating to the history of The Sector.

³ Khan, N (1976) The Arts Britain Ignores

⁴ The Black Theatre Season Limited: a Report – the copy of the document

referred to here is undated and the author is unidentified.

⁵ Khan, N (1994) British Asian Theatre Report

⁶ mpr ltd (1999) Archiving the Arts of England's Culturally Diverse Communities. In a wide-ranging report commissioned by the Arts Council and written and researched by Jacob Ross and Valery Small of mpr ltd, a number of recommendations regarding archiving were made which resonate directly with points raised during the Sustained Theatre consultation. The mpr research found that most participants did not want a centralised resource available only to a relatively small number of people.

⁷ Evaluation report on decibel at www.artscouncil.org.uk

⁸ At the next stage, it will be useful to look at current and future capital projects in the arts for potential models of the facilities to be established. An example of a performing arts-based building project due for completion later in 2006 is that of Arts Admin in east London (www.artsadmin.co.uk). In addition to its existing theatre (currently being refurbished) and rehearsal spaces, Arts Admin states there will be:
...a brand new rooftop dance studio and eight additional creative media units in the basement.

In addition to spaces for performance and rehearsal:

Artsadmin provides a comprehensive management service and unique national resource for contemporary artists who cross the spectrum of new theatre, dance, music, live art and mixed media work. With consistent and supportive administration we develop and promote artists' work, from the initial stages of a project through to its final presentation. Seeking to establish partnerships with producers, promoters and relevant arts organisations in Britain and abroad, we endeavour to bring the new and challenging work of our artists to an ever increasing audience.

Appendix 1

Organisational structure of the Sustained Theatre consultation

Consultant

Lola Young

Advisory group

SuAndi: Cultural Director, freelance, Black Arts Alliance, Manchester

Marcia Hewitt: General Manager, Collective Artistes, London

Tyrone Huggins: Writer, actor and director, Birmingham

Kully Thiarai: Artistic Director, Leicester Haymarket Theatre, Leicester

Deborah Williams: Creative Producer, Reality Productions, London

Project lead

Isobel Hawson: Senior Theatre Officer, Arts Council England, National office

Project manager

Natasha Graham

Support

Neena Agarwal

Arts Council England Executive group

Sian Alexander: Head of Theatre, Arts Council England, London office

Natasha Graham: Project Manager

Isobel Hawson: Senior Theatre Officer, Arts Council England, National office

Hassan Mahamadallie: Head of Diversity Officer, Arts Council England, National office

Samenua Seshar: Director, decibel, Arts Council England, National office

Nicola Thorold: Director of Theatre, Arts Council England, National office

Sarah Weir: Executive Director, Arts Council England, London office

Appendix 2

Arts Council England major lottery awards to theatre 1995–2004*

Project	Project received (date)	Award amount (£)
Royal National Theatre Board	11 Aug 1995	31,590,000
Royal Academy Of Dramatic Art	12 Feb 1996	26,146,871
Royal Exchange Theatre Company	14 Apr 1997	24,984,168
English Stage Company	3 Apr 1995	21,159,031
Milton Keynes Council	2 Jun 1995	20,171,485
Shakespeare Globe Trust	13 Feb 1995	12,400,000
Leicester City Council	29 Jun 2004	12,220,000
Hampstead Theatre	10 May 1999	11,292,478
Soho Theatre Company	7 Sep 1995	7,934,713
Empire Theatre Trust (Merseyside)	15 Jan 1996	7,630,000
Cambridge Arts Theatre Trust	23 Jan 1995	7,490,000
Norden Farm Centre Trust	21 May 1997	7,074,195
Birmingham Repertory Theatre	1 Mar 1999	6,523,500
Almeida Theatre Company	28 Jul 1999	5,607,161
Malvern Festival Theatre Trust	29 Nov 1995	5,087,640
Theatre Royal Plymouth	6 Sep 1999	5,025,767
Contact Theatre Company	24 Apr 1995	4,802,292
Cumbria Theatre Trust	25 Mar 1996	4,685,704
Royal Shakespeare Company	30 Mar 2004	4,468,278
Palace Theatre Watford Ltd	19 Dec 2001	4,342,518
Unicorn Theatre For Children	27 Jul 2001	4,110,000
Herefordshire Council	20 Jun 1995	3,750,000
Northern Stage (Theatrical Productions)	18 Jan 2002	3,610,000
Brewery Arts Centre	24 Jul 1995	3,444,530
Coventry Theatre Network	24 Jul 2002	3,110,000
North Devon District Council	7 Sep 1995	3,042,973
Winchester Theatre Fund	11 Jul 1995	3,025,250
Dormston School	18 May 1995	2,940,295
Oxford Playhouse	7 Jul 1995	2,930,660
Royal Academy Of Dramatic Art	6 Feb 2002	2,400,000
Tricycle Theatre Company	5 Jan 1996	2,384,986
Wimbledon Civic Theatre Trust	29 Dec 1995	2,082,389
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	24 May 2002	2,060,000
Mansfield District Council	5 Dec 1996	1,799,891
National Youth Theatre Of Great Britain	15 Dec 1995	1,758,750
Northampton Theatres Trust	18 Sep 2003	1,718,477
Octagon Theatre Trust	6 Nov 1995	1,684,768
Teddington Theatre Club	29 Jan 1996	1,668,711
Dartington Hall Trust	5 Dec 1995	1,616,383
Scarborough Theatre Trust	11 Jan 1995	1,578,000
Trestle Theatre Company	8 Aug 2000	1,562,036
Louth Playgoers' Society	2 Oct 2000	1,507,500
New Shakespeare Company	29 Jan 1999	1,492,479
Salisbury Playhouse	8 Nov 1995	1,476,143

Lyric Theatre Hammersmith	17 Sep 2001	1,441,500
Southampton Nuffield Theatre Trust Ltd.	31 May 1995	1,279,330
University Of Wolverhampton	30 Apr 1997	1,259,078
Unity Theatre	14 Oct 1996	1,241,120
Latimer School Enterprises	29 Mar 1996	1,222,125
Hackney Empire Theatre	7 Jan 2003	1,200,000
Cranleigh Arts Centre	15 Nov 1995	1,056,000
North East Theatre Trust	20 Jun 1995	1,049,650
Clean Break Theatre Company	3 Jun 1996	1,049,041
Nomad Players	27 Dec 1995	1,024,000
English Stage Company Ltd	19 Oct 2001	1,008,411
Almeida Theatre Company Ltd	13 Jan 2003	1,000,000
		301,220,277

*Awards over £1 million. Table compiled January 2005

Appendix 3

Consultation venues and participants

Venues

Birmingham – Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Bristol – Kuumba

Leeds – West Yorkshire Playhouse

London – HMS President 1918

Manchester – Black Arts Alliance

Nottingham – EMACA (East Midlands African Caribbean Arts)

Number of participants

Evaluation forms – 93

One-to-one sessions – 26

Open sessions – 167

Telephone interviews – 10

Written submissions – 21

Consultation facilitators

SuAndi

Gabriel Gbadamosi

Tyrone Huggins

Mel Larsen

Jaquie Moses

Consultation chairs

Paulette Clunie (Arts Council England)

Gabriel Gbadamosi

Isobel Hawson (Arts Council England)

Tyrone Huggins

Hassan Mahamdallie (Arts Council England)

Wesley Zepherin (Arts Council England)

Consultation note-takers

Nana Ocran

Chris Scott

Appendix 4

Sustained Theatre consultation written submission questionnaire

This questionnaire is for the consultation on Sustained Theatre, developing BME* theatre for the 21st century. This form is to be used for those unable to attend the consultation meetings taking place throughout November 2005.

The deadline for written submissions to be sent back is Friday 18th November 2005, 6pm.

Data protection

The information you provide will be processed by or for Arts Council England. We will hold the information you give us on computer and use it for statistical purpose.

*BME definition: Black Minority Ethnic – African, Caribbean, Asian and Eastern Asian

Section 1. About you

Your name

Full address

Please provide the full, correct post code. Please also give the area code for your phone number.

Full postcode

Phone number

Email address

Website address

Section 2. About you

You do not have to give us the following information but we would be very grateful if you would answer the details below.

Please mark the box that applies to your background.

- White
- British
- Irish

Asian or British Asian:

- Asian Bangladeshi
- Asian Indian
- Asian Pakistani
- Any other Asian background

Black or British Black:

- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Any other Black background
- Any other Black background

- Chinese
- Asian and white
- Black African and white
- Black Caribbean and white
- Chinese and white.

- Any other background from more than one ethnic group
- Any other ethnic group

If you have marked 'Any other ethnic group', please give details.

Section 3. Questions

Please answer the questions below in the boxes provided.

Question 1.

What has helped you develop or grow your work, your organisation and you as an artist?

What support have you received from an organisation or venue that has supported your professional development?

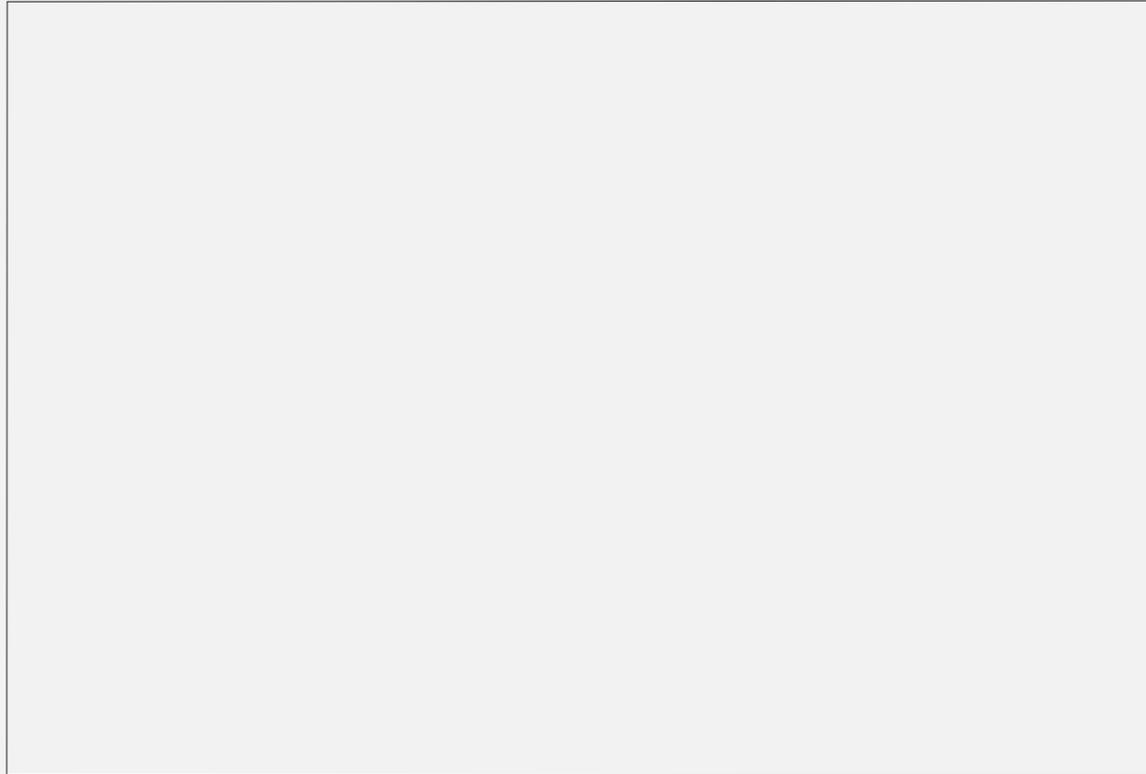
Question 2.

Are there any effective formal networks /informal networks in Black theatre / performance practice?

Do they work as you know them or could they be improved? Are you aware of any Arts Council England Black Theatre initiatives? If so do you have any opinion on how they work?

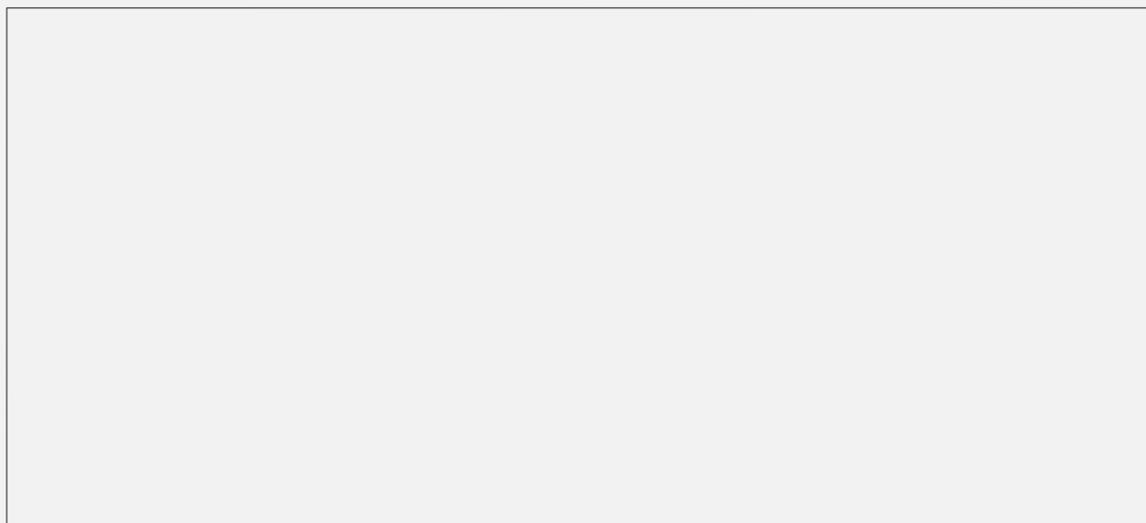
Question 3.

Are there particular ways of working in the sector that need to be addressed?
What are the restrictions that arise from the particular ways or methods that you use?
What do you see are the risks involved that you have to negotiate in your work?
What are the risks that you are prepared to take to undertake to create your work?



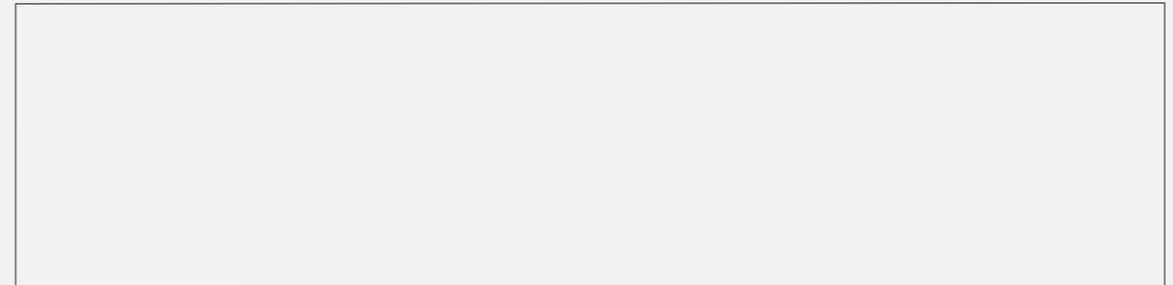
Question 4.

Should Black theatre / performance practice be consolidated to a centralised place or venue?
There is a range of theatre and performance festivals. Do they serve a useful function in your area of practice?



Question 5.

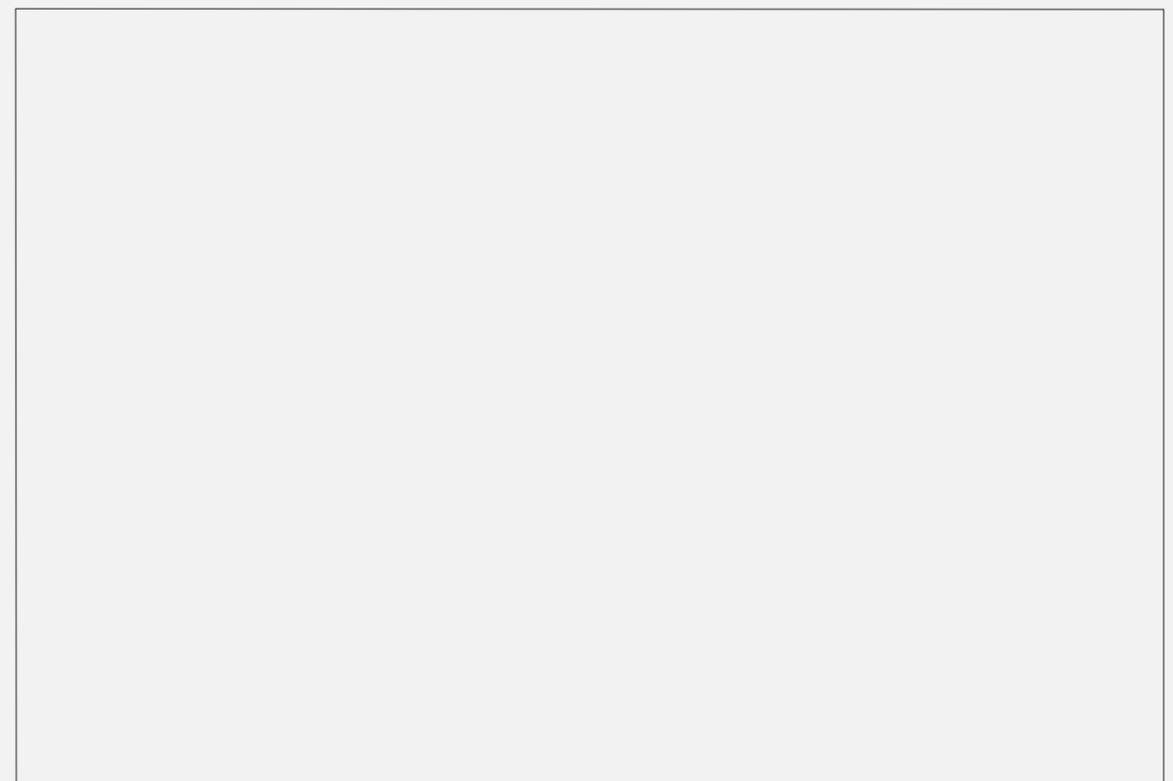
Do you see yourself, as an artist, or your organisation having a role to play in the international arts scene?



Question 6.

What kind of Black arts leadership needs to be supported and developed?

- Give examples of what has worked
- How do you develop a critical body of debate or a critical vocabulary?
- The examples are of where we are now and how we look at our past. Examples could be archiving, legacy, the need for analysis and do we record our past
 - How do we develop/engage with the critical debate at the point of production?
 - Who should be assessing?
 - How does this fit into the current mainstream critical publication on theatre?
 - How can this change to engage with audiences and a wider debate?



Question 7.

We want to see audiences develop, but more importantly we want to see audiences participate. Unless we can get really solid audience engagement with the work we will not have the critical debate. What are the ways of facilitating audience involvement and participation?

Thank you for completing the form. Please email your written submission to:
BlackTheatreConsultation@arts council.org.uk

Or alternatively you can post to: Sustained Theatre, Written Submissions,
Theatre Department, Arts Council England, 14 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3NQ

Appendix 5

Participants' evaluation of open meetings

On the whole, the open meetings were well received, with most of the forms returned noting that the session was good/very good. The main criticisms were that the sessions should have lasted longer and that some of the questions were dense and hard to understand.

Question 1.

How well do you think this session was executed?

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Average
- Good
- Very Good
- Exceptional

Question 2.

What were your objectives in attending this meeting?

- Networking
- Discussion
- Observation / listening
- Understanding
- To Inform / contribute
- No response

Question 3.

Were your objectives met? If not why?

- Yes
- Dependant on action
- Exceeded expectations
- No
- Partially
- Unsure
- No response

If there was anything you did not mention in the consultation meeting that you feel is relevant, please add. This question elicited a wide range of responses, most of which were picked up in other consultative sessions and written submissions.

Please give one example of something you would like to see developed over the coming months or years and your reasons why. This question elicited a wide range of responses, most of which were picked up in other consultative sessions and written submissions.

Sex

- Female
- Male
- N/K

Age groups

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20-29 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-59 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 | <input type="checkbox"/> N/K |

Age groups

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White-British | <input type="checkbox"/> American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dual Black Caribbean / White | <input type="checkbox"/> Black American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iranian | <input type="checkbox"/> Burmese British |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black African | <input type="checkbox"/> Afghanistan / Pakistani |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mediterranean | <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern European |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Pakistani |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Singaporean / Malaysian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> African Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed: Trinidadian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Malaysian | <input type="checkbox"/> Taiwanese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Dual Yemen / Pakistani |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dual Asian Indian / African | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian / White | <input type="checkbox"/> Dual Black Caribbean + white |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dual Trinidad / Pakistani | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dual White / Arab | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black British | |