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Funmi Adewole
Guest editor
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Feedback, comments, questions, thoughts triggered by any of the articles in this edition are welcome. Please email them to - hotfoot@adad.org.uk

EDITOR

Re:generations’ unique format brings practitioners and academics together which enables the kind of reflection and action that creates sustainability in the dance profession, something that ADAD as a support organisation nurtures. This edition captures some of the outcomes of this synergy.

The director of ADAD, Mercy Nabirye, and the chair Judith Palmer provide an overview of the conference and discuss how it furthers ADAD’s goals. Dr Adesola Akinleye speaks about the edited book she is planning inspired by the last of three Re:generations conferences and Professors Ramsay Burt and Christy Adair, members of the planning committee talk about their role in designing the academic sessions. Fern Potter, the development director of the consortium who facilitated a mentoring session at the conference gives her advice on creative fundraising and we feature Rachel Achol de Garang one of our volunteers and an important figure in the ADAD network.

On the artistic side of things, interests are diverse. As a way of sampling I interviewed choreographer Rachel Nanyonjo on the benefits of International collaboration and asked dance practitioner Justine Fry to share her experience of the conference workshops. The inspirational Congolese, Canadian philosopher, choreographer and dancer, Zab Maboungou, a highlight of the conference, has given us an article which outlines some of her current thoughts on dance practice – her interest in dance technologies as well as dance techniques. The reflection and activity at Re:generations will no doubt feed into the artistic, educational and social context for dance in Britain. I hope you enjoy this edition.
Mercy Nabirye, Director ADAD and Judith Palmer, the ADAD Chair reflect on the Re:generations International Conference 2014 and how the event furthered the goals of the organisation and its focus on practice and dance forms rooted in the histories of the African Diaspora.

The Association of Dance of the African Diaspora (ADAD) partnered with IRIE! Dance theatre, De Montfort University and Pavilion Dance South West to present Re:generations 2014; the only UK biennial international artistic and academic gathering which brings together scholars, artists, producers/presenters, students and the public, to explore, share and debate practice and development in the field of Dance of the African Diaspora.

The conference furthered each of ADAD’s core values:

• Artists and Art Form Development
• Facilitating and generating discourse
• Collaborative working
• Intergenerational programmes
• International connections

The three days in Bournemouth on 6-8th November 2014 were themed “Rethinking the past to reimagine the future” and carried the weight of engaging with past and current practice and finding connections with new hybrids emerging in the 21st century.

*Bantaba is derived from the word for a large tree, called Bentennie in the Mandinka language meaning a traditional meeting place for the village. Early in Gambian history a big tree formed the basis and foundation of the village. Due to its natural shade it became an obvious meeting place to get out of the stifling sun and heat of their huts during the day. This is where they discussed issues that were pertinent to the village such as ceremonies or communal works.
Keynote presenters for the event were Sharon Watson, Artistic Director Phoenix Dance and Zab Maboungou, Artistic Director Danse Nyata Nyata Canada. Both engaging, thought-provoking speakers focussed on the context of artistic practice and performance. The academic papers that were delivered at the conference furthered our aim to generate discourse. We also have plans to publish a book which will be edited by Adesola Akinleye, who led a session at Re:generation which explored the themes the book will investigate. We also had sessions on business, education/learning, and international exchange.

Collaborations appeared in both staged productions and workshops (Tabu Flo and Jonzi D) and workshops (Alesandra Seutin and Thomas Presto). Elders Namron, Jackie Guy and Robert Solomon (Germany) honoured our invitations to the event and participated in formal and informal discussions enabling much needed intergenerational conversation to take place. It was a diverse gathering of hundreds of individuals sharing stories under one roof. The conference opened up more avenues for healthy discussion and encouraged networks for peer-to-peer learning on a global scale. Delegates came from USA, Canada, Norway, Uganda and Germany.

The performance programme boasted of five foreign dance artists and dance companies – Zab Maboungou from Canada (African Contemporary), Tabu Flo from Uganda (Neo-traditional African dance/Hip-hop), Virtu’o dance company led by Ghislaine Dote from Canada (contemporary dance), Camile Brown from the USA (Contemporary dance) and regular guests Tabanka African and Caribbean Dance Ensemble from Norway (African/Caribbean/Modern) alongside Britain’s own IRIE! Dance theatre (Caribbean/Contemporary), Namron (Contemporary) and Ballet Nimba (Neo-traditional African). The programme revealed the various ways that artists work with African aesthetics, forms and influences. Dote for example infuses her contemporary dance with the breathing patterns and dynamics found in certain African dances and Camile’s riveting performance distilled the formal qualities of jazz and American social dances into a tight, lucid vocabulary.

The ambiance was rich and inviting. It became commonplace to drop into sporadic dance routines regardless of the time or the place. It was all about dance. It was Bantaba. From April 2016, ADAD is planning to be in a consortium with Dance UK, National Dance Teachers Association (NDTA) and Youth Dance England (YDE) so this is a time for reflection and looking forward. We invited ‘Funmi Adewole to come on board as guest editor for this and the next edition of Hotfoot with the aim of capturing reflections on past and recording new beginnings. The next edition of Hotfoot will be celebrating the organisation’s 21st anniversary.

To contact the director and chair of ADAD:
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'EXCHANGE/SHARE... INCORPORATE'

CHOREOGRAPHER RACHAEL NANYONJIO ON THE BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

International collaborations are also exciting because you can never predict what is going to happen and that unknown is exciting because it frees you to being open to all experiences. Another aspect which is great about this way of working is both artists coming together are able to exchange/share creative methods and vocabulary in terms of creating dance theatre. This is something I am really looking forward to and hope to incorporate these new ways of moving and making into my teaching and choreographing in the UK.

Describe your meeting (Rachael and Tabu Flo) at the festival in Uganda in 2014? What had you decided at this point? Why did you decide to work together?

I met Tabu Flo at a dance festival at the National Theatre Kampala in summer 2014. I was introduced to them by Mercy Nabirye (director of ADAD). At the time I was interested in meeting dance artists from Uganda as I knew I was interested in traditional and contemporary dance from there. When I met Tabu Flo and spoke with their artistic director, Abdul, I felt there was a good connection especially as the company fuses dance theatre and makes politically conscious work. All themes I work with. There was a real positive connection especially when I found out about the work the company does helping disadvantaged inner city children through teaching them skills and confidence through dance. As an outreach facilitator in London this is something that resonated with me.

Rachael Nanyonjo, choreographer and ADAD trailblazer fellow 2015/16 talks about the benefits of international collaboration and her project with the Ugandan company, Tabu Flo.

Tabu Flo’s production ‘Kalabanda’, performed on the opening night of Re:generations 2014, was the result of their collaboration with Jonzi D. We look forward to a different but equally tantalizing outcome from Rachael.

What is it about international collaboration that is so exciting for artists? What do you hope to get or achieve through these encounters?

I think collaborating internationally is exciting because you are able to discover and learn more about each other’s culture and for me dance is something that is intrinsically linked with culture. In this case I am partially excited because I am of Ugandan heritage and I feel there so I am going to learn working with Tabu Flo.
‘EXCHANGE/SHARE... INCORPORATE’

CHOREOGRAPHER RACHAEL NANYONJO
ON THE BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

After reconnecting with the group and seeing their work at Re-generations I was blown away and knew for sure I wanted to work with them. I loved how they mixed traditional, contemporary theatre and dance all in their performance.

I had been developing my project for the British Council/Arts Council AIDF and after Re-generations, Abdul and I worked on a programme of development for the project.

How would you describe your collaboration or what are you working on together?

I will be undergoing a period of research, development and documentation of traditional Ugandan dances supported by the British Council and Artist Council England Artists International Development Fund. Tabu Flo are my hosts and we shall work together on the Batalo East festival where I will create work for the youth company. Over the four weeks I will work with Tabu Flo and other organizations (Makerere University, Ndere Centre) learning traditional forms and interviewing/documenting their work. There will also be a period of studio R&D with Tabu Flo and myself, to focus on creative process exchange where I will collaborate / contribute to a new work.

What further plans/happenings towards your collaboration took place during Tabu Flo’s visit to England in November last year?

The great part about Tabu Flo’s visit last year was that I was able to meet and get to know the whole company. This was very helpful because it has created a good base for my visit and collaboration this summer.

What are you planning to work on together in Uganda this year? What have you been working on since Re:generations 2014?

We have not worked on anything as of yet since Re:generations. This visit is really about artistic development and creative exchange. However Abdul did mention that during my R&D with Tabu Flo we will look at developing a work on Uganda’s Political system. Therefore this is something I have been researching ahead of my visit.

How do you see this collaboration with Tabu Flo impacting on your practice as a dance artist?

I feel this collaboration with Tabu Flo is the beginning of me developing my skills and experience working internationally, teaching, choreographing and collaborating especially in Africa. I hope to develop and maintain a good relationship with Tabu Flo and meet new artists in Uganda so that cross cultural exchanges can continue. I feel my process as a choreographer shall expand from this visit. I have also incorporated this project into my 2015/16 ADAD Trailblazer fellowship award where I plan to create and publish a written and video visual resource on traditional and contemporary dance forms and theatre making styles in Uganda. I hope this will be a resource that all artists interested in dances from Uganda can use as a reference. Following on from this I shall spend the year developing and delivering a series of creative / technical workshops regionally that combine my style and those learnt during the trip and through this process hope to develop collaborative new work.

www.kansaze.com
African dance masterclass. It gave us an insight into the way Zab works. An artist of great introspective power and committed body language, has developed a unique style and a research and teaching method called ‘Loketo’. The technique provided a different experience of African Contemporary dance which focuses amongst other things, on relating to the polyrhythms of the drum, the breath, improvisation and displacing the body through space. Zab would support participants to learn and embrace movement, sound, shape and flow as they moved from one moment to the next. This was an interesting refreshing experience; and I enjoyed her intensity and passion about ‘dancing in the moment’.

The Traditional African workshop was led by Judith Palmer, the chair of ADAD. It was live drumming, hot sweaty studio, great atmosphere, laughter and enjoyment all round. This joyful workshop provided clear instructions of how to learn traditional African dance, responding to the drummers. Judith taught excerpts of three traditional dances – Atsiagbekor from Ghana, a stylised war dance, Lenje from Senegambia with its bird-like imagery and the Zulu warrior dance from South Africa. She focused on the basic techniques of the dances which involved grounded movements, travelling phrases and specific dance motifs. The dancing created a vibe, which enveloped the participants and the observers alike.

Camille A Brown of Camille A Brown & Dancers, USA, gave a masterclass which was an exciting and vibrant way to start the day. The inspirational Camille shared with passion the social dances that influenced her contemporary dance work.
DANCE WORKSHOPS AT RE:GENERATIONS

DANCE ARTIST JUSTINE FRY REVIEWS MASTERCLASSES AT THE CONFERENCE

She took us on a trip through the ages teaching us dance steps from the Charleston, Jitterbug, Two step, Lindy hop, Popping, Vogueing and Running Man to name a few.

Alesandra Seutin & Thomas Presto from the UK and Oslo, Norway respectively, delivered a collaborative class which could be described as Afro/Caribbean/Contemporary. Alesandra taught Acogny Technique, a modern African dance technique created by Germaine Acogny, 'the mother of modern African dance'. This technique is the most well-known and internationally recognized codified modern dance technique from the continent. The technique emphasizes unity with rhythm and uses metaphors to describe body parts such as the 'sun' for the chest, 'moon' for the behind, 'stars' for the lower abdomen and the 'snake of life' for the spine, and encourages us to be expressive yet precise in the execution of movement whilst sharing one another's vibe. Alesandra is a rousing mover and teacher, we enjoyed the energy and her encouragement, and all the participants got a full experience of her expression of the Acogny Technique.

The Talawa technique is an African & Caribbean dance language developed by Thomas. He emphasizes the use of the body’s own weight to create flowing movements, and the use of gravity to control both the small and big muscle groups. This turns the body into an instrument that can carve, draw, illustrate, undulate and vibrate in the same time and space. It was an exciting experience, learning a new technique from a practitioner that shared such passion and enthusiasm. He wanted the participants to recognize and understand where the dance moves originate from and as the Talawa technique consists of movements from traditional dances expressed with a modern twist. We gained an understanding of the technique by carrying a bottle of water on our heads, becoming aware of how the body moves whilst we balanced the bottle. The dancers from his company demonstrated movements at different scales and levels of intensity, which was great to see first hand. Overall the master class was an inspirational way of working and understanding the principles of African and Caribbean dance forms.

Re:generations conference was an inspiring valuable experience that brought together dance artists, producers, managers, academics and educationalists from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, Canada and USA, who are all interested in the continued development of African Peoples Dance to build a positive future of new dance talent in the UK and beyond. The assortment of innovative and energizing dance forms and techniques we explored from the traditional, to the social, to techniques that were transformations of these, gave us insights into what it means to work with dances of the African diaspora. We celebrated the movements, shared the passion, absorbed the inspiration and reimaged the future of dance.

www.facebook.com/justinefrydance
As a response to this ADAD is sponsoring an edited book – a way to tell our own stories. It is important to notice that it is not about the story of Black British dance but a way to tell stories from the field of identifying with Black British dance. There is no one story: in fact there is a danger in one story since it makes people and things two-dimensional. And even more importantly assumes that there is only one meaning for what ‘Black’, ‘British’ and even ‘dance’ mean to us! Instead the book aims to gather a range of perspectives to give the reader a chance to explore the community, family, network of artists and individuals that create the sector.

Adesola Akinleye, dance academic and choreographer, is the editor of ADAD’s forthcoming book. She shares her passion for the project – why and how she intends to capture our stories...

The Re:generations conferences have made it clear how valuable it is to get together and listen to each other. In all three conferences artists, educators and historians have gathered from across the field and help to inspire and motivate one another. As a response to this ADAD is sponsoring an edited book. Despite the long history of dance that could be identified as ‘of the diaspora’ there is still very little information out there. As a response to this ADAD is sponsoring an edited book – a way to tell our own stories.
EMBODYING PRACTICES: TELLING OUR OWN STORIES

DR ADESOLA AKINLEYE ON EDITING ADAD’S FORTHCOMING BOOK

I am editing the book and I am very excited to do so because as I have grown-up in dance in UK I have seen the stories, work and artistry of people shine but also for some almost disappear. Working outside the mainstream as many ‘Black’ artists do has meant that some people’s work is only alive in our memories. It can also lead to doubt in ourselves and in our community. During trying times our own personal artistry can seem to only hang on to life through hopes and dreams rather than solid recognition of our artistic process. However, as in our Africanist traditions our past and future is alive in the stories we tell about our work and those who have trained and inspired us. This is an embodied practice. Those early pioneers who identified as Black and British and dancers and our best creative Selves are alive in our bodies, our technique and our approaches all the time. I think it is so important to capture our work across the sector in order to honour ourselves and them. This is also important for those to come, who without access to all that has gone before them often feel they have to ‘reinvent the wheel’, stand alone or innovate along paths that have already been trod: Re:generations.

As well as celebrating the multi-layered meaning and stories the experience of identifying with Black, British and dance brings, the book acknowledges that the diaspora does not sit within countries’ boarders.

We are part of networks that reach across the world. Part of the legacy of our ‘British’ history is the far reaching networks that colonialism created. Part of the legacy of our ‘Blackness’ origins is the extended family of individuals we create around us. Currently contributors to the book range from Europe to North America to Africa. We have also encouraged different types of stories and knowledge, so the book mixes more academic approaches, with physical practises, and also oral remembrances.

The project is taking what feels like a long time since I am a ‘Think it, Do it’ type person, but I feel it is very important and I feel very honoured to be driving it forwards with ADAD. We are just completing the gathering of contributions and are starting to move to seeing how the book manifests itself as one event. We will keep you posted as the project progresses, so bare with us.

Adesola Akinleye, PhD
Dance Academic, Choreographer, Film maker
www.dancingstrong.com
People in the sector don’t just want to share their practice and see each other’s work. They need to talk about things they have in common and compare experiences in what the two of us would call a political way. The eminent special guest at the first Re:Generations conference at London Met, Professor Kariamu Welsh Asante, commented that people during the discussion of her paper seemed to be engaging in a kind of critical discussion that was not at that time taking place among Black artists in the US. Reflecting on her comment, there seem, to us, to be two reasons for this level of discussion in the UK.

First, British-based artists who are Black, since the 1970s, have been applying for grants from the Arts Council and other funding bodies, and engaging in dialogue with Arts Council officers. Artists have learnt from this over the years as they have had to adapt what they say about their projects to changing priorities in cultural policy. In Britain, like other European countries, people (still) expect the state to play an important role in supporting artists and advocating their value to society as a whole. In the US, the National Endowment for the Arts has never played as central a role in arts development as the British Arts Council, and was from the early 1990s the target of attacks from right-wing politicians that had the effect of closing down any possibilities of even thinking about engaging in the kinds of discussions that take place during the Re:Generations conferences.

The second reason is that the critical mass of dancers in the sector in Britain is large enough for these discussions to take place.

Dance scholars Christy Adair and Ramsay Burt, part of ADAD’s planning committee, reflect on the 2014 Re:generations conference.

The two of us attended the first two Re:Generations conferences in 2010 and 2012, each presenting papers at them. We were very pleased when we were invited to help plan and organise the 2014 Re:Generations at Pavilion Dance, Bournemouth because we thought it was a great opportunity to help the conference develop and grow. Re:Generations has developed into a very special event. There is nothing, in our opinion, quite like it in other sectors of the British dance community because of the way it brings together upcoming dance artists from the UK with elders in an event, international dance artists – this year from Africa, Canada, Norway, Germany and the US – and dance scholars for a series of keynotes, panel presentations, workshops, film screenings, and performances, not to mention spontaneous late night pop-up parties.
In mainland Europe, there may be a higher level of financial support for the arts than in Britain, and this support is often targeted towards dance artists in more supportive ways than in Britain. There isn’t, however, the same critical mass of Black dance artists in, for example, France, Belgium or Germany that exists in Britain. At Re:Generations and at other events during the year, ADAD is extremely successful at bringing members of the sector together and this means that there are sufficient opportunities for discussions to keep going and to develop and change in the light of changing circumstances.

The 2014 Re:Generations conference was planned and organised by IRIE! dance theatre, ADAD, Pavilion Dance South West, DeMontfort University and Christy Adair (independent consultant). Here are some of the main things that we tried to do in this conference. We created a timetable that balanced keynotes, paper presentations, panels discussing aspects of professional practice, video screenings, and practical workshops. On one day the focus was for developing artists, on another for students and lecturers, and on the final day a celebration of artists. Each night saw performances by British and international artists. We developed a conference theme – Rethinking the past to reimagine the future – and elaborated different ways in which contributors could address this. The underlying question is how to rethink the past with benefit of hindsight so that a better understanding of what happened can stop people reinventing the wheel and help the sector imagine a better future. We talked to our distinguished keynote speakers, Sharon Watson and Zab Maboungo, about our understanding of the theme with the result that there seemed to be an ongoing, developing discussion of these ideas throughout the conference. In the final, wrap-up session where people shared what they had got out of the conference, people were talking about the theme but in a much more sophisticated way than they had on previous days.

The two of us feel that a very fruitful and productive dialogue is developing between those of us who work in the university sector and those working in the industry. There is not, we suspect, anything comparable at the moment in any other sector of British dance. Together we can find ways of looking back and recognising that some artistic and organisational achievements were more important than some people perhaps realised at the time. Why couldn’t people see it then? It is tempting to blame everything on the actions of funding bodies, theatre and festival programmers and dance critics. That may not always be productive. Those of us working in the university sector can help create a more useful space in which to discuss these issues than other stake holders because of our deep interest and commitment to the sector and our relative neutrality. The next Re:Generations conference in 2016 is already at the planning stage. We look forward to hearing and contributing to more of the critical discourse there that Professor Asante noted at the first one, and to more opportunities to engage with new emerging issues that will by then be facing the sector.

Ramsay Burt and Christy Adair
www.dmu.ac.uk/.../dance/british-dance.../british-dance-black-routes.aspx
BE A CREATIVE AND RAISE MORE FUNDS FOR YOUR WORK!

FERN POTTER, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT OFFERS ADVICE

Fern Potter, is an experienced consultant. At Re:generations 2014, she facilitated the ‘speed-dating style’ professional development session which allowed dance artists the opportunity to speak to a number of established dance managers/ producers about their ideas in a short, intense and highly useful space of time.

People often ask how I manage to raise so much money for dance...especially non-ballet dance projects. My immediate response is - by thinking creatively about the approach and not being afraid to take risks - especially when asking for support!

I did not start my career as a fundraiser - I started as a dancer who needed to raise funds for my work (in New York City, where public funding is scarce). After rehearsing all day, I wrote the letters at night (these were the days before emails) and also phoned my nearest and dearest - friends and family - to support me in any way possible. Using this approach I managed to raise enough funds to produce two New York seasons! It also taught me that if you believe in your artistic intention, others will believe in you too. The key is making ‘the ask’. Think about it - how many times have you been asked to support a charitable fundraiser (a marathon, fun-run, cake sale) and you’ve given support? I believe we must be prepared to do the same when it comes to supporting dance.

Of course one has to be strategic and have a game plan with a firm target in place as an essential first step to getting started and staying on track. Once your strategy is in place, the key to being successful in raising funds is just thinking ‘outside the box’ and not being afraid to ask.

In this day of social media channels, use this to your advantage and build interest in what you are doing from the very start. Create excitement and buzz around the development of your new show or project. Take photos and blog a bit about what’s happening. Ask people for advice; bring people into your project even if it’s only asking should the costumes be one colour or another. People love being asked for advice and will respond with enthusiasm. Use this as your ‘warm up’ to getting them more involved. See who ‘likes’ and responds and build on this group as your core potential supporters. Not only will you be developing your fundraising potential, you will be building audiences for your work!
Consider developing a ‘crowdfunding’ campaign using your core group’s interest as a spring-board to develop levels of support. Try different ways of engaging people whilst asking them to donate funds. For example, perhaps your piece uses a set design or costume that requires something hanging. Ask people to donate a trinket, earring, or leaf along with their £10 and then use their contribution as a way of building content for your social media communication, thus further engaging your core group. Ask them to spread the word to others so you can widen your sphere to new people. The bigger the potential ‘pool’ of people you are able to attract, the more likely you will be in garnering greater support.

In terms of fundraisers, critical to achieving your funding targets, is developing a detailed strategy and creating an event committee for peer-to-peer help. This committee will be your key to successfully attracting the right group of people to attend. Use your Board if you have one, or find some of your core supporters who know others who might be in the position to get involved. And, by working with another organisation, you also widen your potential for attracting committee members.

The joint-fundraisers also included a range of activities to raise funds – from ticket sales, to the auctions (both silent and live), to ‘treats’ (a tombola-like activity where everyone who donates a specific amount wins a prize such as restaurant vouchers for meals or theatre tickets or a product), to selling adverts for our fundraiser programme, to obtaining sponsorship. The key is to be prepared to ask anyone and everyone!

My biggest surprise was the extent to which the organisations’ wider group of stakeholders (artists and members) rallied around to provide some of the most amazing prizes for our auctions and ‘treats’. Social media was key in helping to put the SOS out to members and contacts.
Acquiring 'treat' prizes also demanded a concentrated effort of cold-calling and literally walking the streets of London. But it paid off.

Once prizes were offered, we looked at ways to ‘up-scale’ them, such as combining tickets to performances with ‘money can’t buy’ opportunities – e.g. the chance to go behind the scenes and watch the show from the wings of the Opera House. We also ensured each organisation had a separate ‘project lot’. The ‘project lots’ were simply opportunities for guests to donate at various levels to a selected project that represented each organisation’s work. This was a very effective way to raise money for specific initiatives.

With regards to the auctions, because I knew the actual event would be limited in terms of people attending, I built into the strategy a campaign to auction the prizes online across the organisations’ social media networks. The campaign started three weeks prior to our actual event and was very effective in raising bids PRIOR to the event. This was a strategy used for both fundraisers; for our second event, we also decided to use bid technology. In both cases, we were able to generate thousands of pounds of bids before we even stepped into the room.

These are just a few ideas about how you can raise funds from sources apart from Arts Council England. ACE funds are dwindling and it is critical to build your skills and confidence in asking for money from private sources.

This is one of the reasons why I created the Agile Fundraising programme specifically for the dance sector. Designed to help you become more proficient in raising funds from individuals, the first year finished with a Dragons’ Den session raising more than £6,000 for 10 dance projects, but the programme’s online resources including presentation from guest speakers: Michael Kaiser (speaking about the powerful fundraising tool, The Cycle), Bernard Ross’ wonderful presentation on going after individuals for support, and Matt Haworth’s engaging presentation on digital fundraising is still available to access via ArtstreamingTV to view the Agile Fundraising videos.

Fundraising is a way to build new audiences for your work as well as bringing in much needed resources. Be creative and don’t be afraid to ask people to support you. Who knows, you may even find you enjoy the process!

Fern Potter
Director of Development
www.danceuk.org/events/agile/
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Some of their events are considered to be professional development opportunities and have been the route into professional work for many a dancer and performer. Rachel Achol de Garang is one such leader.

Rachel is a well-known dance practitioner based in the South-west of England. She volunteered at Re:generations 2014, moving furniture, putting together delegate packs and providing directions in her positive, calm, welcoming way. Her non-assuming manner belies her level of responsibility in the dance sector. She is the chair of Tribe of Doris, an organisation approaching its 25th birthday.

Many of the organisations involved in the dance of the African diaspora work outside the theatrical dance touring circuit and structures. Some of the volunteers and freelancers who worked behind the scenes to make Re:generations are leaders in their own right, organising workshops, festivals, carnivals, performances mostly with and for recreational dancers and arts enthusiasts yet to a high standard.
A VOLUNTEER AND CONNECTOR

RACHEL DE GARANG
IS OUR FEATURED MEMBER

founded by Siobhan Kieran and Deasy Bamford. She is also in charge of the artist liaison team of the organisation.

An attribute that attracted Rachel to Tribe of Doris which she has been attending since 1994 is the values underpinning the work of the organization. Deasy Bamford the co-founder, insists that cultural diversity is a reality and not a choice. The strapline of Tribe of Doris is ‘many cultures, one race’. Bamford’s approach to interculturalism comes from personal experience and research. She has found that participation in cultural activities, especially those that focus on rhythm, create affinity and bonding between different groups of people. Rachel, who is also a cultural diversity trainer, is of the same opinion. She says “bringing people together and promoting intercultural learning, participation generates respect and appreciation of different cultures.”

Besides working with Tribe of Doris, Rachel runs her own organisation called African Sambistas, which delivers dance and drumming workshops and performances. Originally from Sudan, with a BA in Dance Studies, Rachel is an experienced dance teacher, specialising in African styles of dance.

She also interested in developing the context for professional practice of dance of the Africa diaspora and so collaborated with ADAD in 2009 to bring its touring photo exhibition ‘moments’ to Bristol. The launch event brought together a number of dance practitioners and advocates in the southwest together and helped to develop ADAD’s connections in the region. I asked Rachel what she gained from volunteering at Re: generations. She answered that besides the opportunity to get involved and be part of a great event she learnt a lot about working on a different type of international gathering, learning about costing and logistics, an experience which she found eye-opening. For ADAD it was valuable to have Rachel mixing with other leaders and participants at the conference taking part in discussions and building networks between groups located in different parts of the dance industry and different parts of the country alike.

Tribe of Doris annual festival was on the 29th July to the 2nd of August at Sanford Hall, Leicestershire

www.tribeofdoris.co.uk
www.africansambistas.co.uk
Zab Maboungou, a key note speaker at Re:generations 2014 shares her current thinking on dance.

We humans have the power to imagine and reflect on what can be. And yet, while the field of possibilities may appear unlimited to us, it inevitably comes up against a more limited scope of such possibilities, in part defined according to parameters of scientific value, but also, undeniably, related to the brevity of our lives.

This applies to our perceptions and what 'contains' them, that is, what ultimately reveals itself as a source of creative activity and therefore technical invention.

When considering technique as a derivative of a type of manipulation, inseparable from know-how, in order to produce a specific outcome and technology as deriving from a more systematic and global approach to this technical capacity, we also enter the field of transformation (i.e. ‘what can be’) and what the latter involves on the highest level.

This is the aspect of things that I have chosen to study in terms of dance, starting with considerations which I have often taken time to think about, striving to understand this art in a universal framework, while examining one of its most fascinating socio-cultural and aesthetic forms namely the circle of African Dance.

We can easily visualize the idea of a circle in particular with regard to traditional dances of Sub-Saharan Africa, this circle seems to correspond to the form and arrangement of many manifestations of dance and music occurring there.
However the term refers to a reality beyond the spatial representation we are accustomed to imagining. Indeed, it refers to the dynamic relations dance and music carry on with each other and the entire universe, in other words a continuous progressing regenerative process.

On the subject of African music, here is what Mr Alta Annaus Mensah says ‘Frequently in African music two or more time sequences are juxtaposed while admitting an additional sequence between the first one or four sequences starting from three and so forth. Part of the task of ethnomusicology consists of recognizing this phenomenon, revealing what seems obscure to a casual listener. It must be able to recognize these dynamics unique to African music, consisting of a multiplication of times’*

For my part it is no different when answering journalists’ questions about the ‘motif’ of my choreographic creations, I say ‘I make time’.

Another researcher in the literary field Mr Tilinga Frederic Pacere, regarding the drum, makes an interesting point in his book ‘Le langage des tam-tams et masques d’Afrique’. From his viewpoint we should speak of a ‘drummed literature’ (falsely associated with oral literature) because such literature refers to the profound and complex text of the drum, a sort of meta-language. He has studies the example of the Bendre, (drum of the Mosi people of Burkina Faso)**

From this point we can glimpse how it is possible to understand the role of the drum (a central instrument among the many other musical instruments in Africa); its technology and how it is associated with the circle of dance in Sub-Saharan Africa. The drum makes sound and time work together (this is the code) so it ‘calls’, while taking many directions (challenging the code) and demanding a response (participatory mode).

Here it is impossible to rely on exotic viewpoints (even if they claim to be scholarly) about African dances where it is often a question of surrendering to uncontrolled and uncontrollable rhythms of the drum. The circle of dance described here, where musicians and dancers challenge one another, embodies and fulfils human intelligence.

Organising the whole while making time sequences – which define rhythm – constantly evolving (this is the mode of progression), means on the part of all, musicians and dancers, full participation in an ongoing process which is both rigorously established and open: this is what defines the circle of dance. This is how M Chernoff describes it in this book that explores what he calls ‘African rhythm and sensibility’***

The aesthetic decision which constitutes excellence will be the timing of the change and the choice of a new pattern.


**Le Langage des Tam-Tams en Afrique, Tilinga Frederic Pacere. L’Harmattan, Paris, 2001 p.84

In my opinion the idea of progression is far more important than that of improvisation in this circle of dance and it refers to a far more comprehensive understanding of all the elements involved in the dynamics of transformation. In fact here it involves identifying a means of taking charge of living relational forces. These cannot be simply stated or affirmed without being challenged in order to negotiate them, implying on an aesthetic level, inseparable from the level of transformation required, a change in the level of complexity which both integrates and retains (retention and inclusion aspects) and opens up (space and possibility).

Thus, the circle of dance offers us the model of what can be defined aesthetically as deriving from a very high level of participation, itself very reliant on these techn/iques/ologies we have discussed above.

‘WHILE WE COUNT OUR ACTIONS, TIME DISMISSES THEM.’
ZAB MABOUNGOU, DÉCOMPTE.2007.

www.nyata-nyata.org
Conferences like Re:generations generate anxiety as well as excitement. The fear is that the excitement will be short lived and no improvements or hoped for developments will take place. The consensus of people involved in the planning of the last three generations conferences however is that things are moving forward. They all concur that if the aim of Re:generations was to raise Britain’s profile within the global practice of dance of Africa and the diaspora the event has achieved this aim.

Some of the event’s success is as a result of it reviving and building upon already established international connections. According to Jeanette Bain-Burnett, who was the director of ADAD when it spearheaded the initiative, the careful choosing of keynote speakers played a part in this. In 2010 the keynote speaker was Brenda Dixon-Gottschild. Gottschild had already made a strong impact on a number of British practitioners as a guest of De Montfort University some years before. Bain-Burnett who was a master’s degree student at the time found Gottschild’s theoretical framework useful as an alternative lens through which to look at choreographic practice and found that theories resonated with theorists and artists alike and would be a great starting point for conversation. Gottschild’s presence proved inspirational.

The 2012 conference was fortunate to have two keynote speakers in the persons of Kariamu Welsh Asante (who was a special guest in 2010) and Germaine Acogny. Both are also highly regarded in Britain. ‘Transmission’ was a key theme in 2012 and both practitioners have developed dance techniques and training methodologies. Beverley Glean, the artistic director of IRIE! Dance theatre and a Re:generations partner and Rosie Lehan the co-director of the Foundation degree that IRIE! runs, had interviewed Kariamu Welsh Asante for the report they had written on Dance and Diversity. She is also the editor of a book that appears on the reading lists of most courses on dance from Africa and the diaspora, African Dance: An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry. Welsh Asante attended the conference with her dance company who performed and supported her in a workshop which introduced the Umfundalai dance technique, a Pan African contemporary technique she has created.
The other keynote speaker was Germaine Acogny who is commonly known as the mother of contemporary African dance began teaching masterclasses introducing her modern African dance technique for many years. At the time in the conference she was delivering her three-year transmission project. The project involved passing her dance technique to a cohort of international students. Choreographer Alesandra Seutin, an ADAD trailblazer was one of this invited cohort and was on hand at the conference to assist Acogny in the demonstration of the technique and the delivery of her masterclass.

For Bain-Burnett, attending the 2014 conference after her time as director of ADAD was very satisfying. She found that the international dimension of the conference had expanded and new voices were entering into the debate.

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dancing days to where she is at present as artistic director of Phoenix dance theatre, which is what the company is now called. Peppered with reflections on what she has learnt on the way, we gained an insight not only into how she had negotiated various transitions in her career in dance. On another level she was providing a case study in how to protect roots whilst nurturing shoots. She talked about safeguarding the legacy of the original founders of Phoenix, building on the archive started by Thea Nerissa Barnes and how she has worked to push the aesthetic boundaries and reach of the Phoenix and place the company in new arenas.

The 2014 conference also provided a platform for the growing interest in exploring in hip-hop dance styles in terms of their roots in the African diaspora. The relationship between Jonzi D and Tabu Flo, a Ugandan dance company began to take shape in during Breakin Convention 2010. This lead to the Re:generation partners commissioning Jonzi D to travel to Uganda to work with Tabu Flo on a collaborative theatre production which would display the fusing of hip hop and traditional African styles. The result was ‘Kalabanda’ which was performed by the company on the first night of the conference. Hakeem Onibudo, who was the MC of the conference, is a champion of this investigation. He was part of the panel on international collaboration, he spoke passionately about his work at for the British Council in North Africa. He is presently working on youth project with ACE dance and music around this artistic theme.

Not only did Pavilion Dance provide a building that enabled the various activities to take place under one roof but the staff contributed to the ambiance over the three days.

Beverley Glean, a Re:generations partner describes, the first conference as demonstrating the needs of dance, the second as creating a footprint and the third and developing partnerships and recognition. Glean’s pride at being associated with Re:generations comes from the fact that it is helping to reshape the UK cultural landscape. Though strengthening the voice of the African and Diaspora dance sector and promoting dialogue between artists and stakeholders, British and international contingents, it is creating a more inclusive, integrated and dynamic field.

Judith Palmer the Development Director of IRIE! Dance theatre and ADAD chair agrees. She points out that Re:generations gave British dance an international profile and attracted foreign partners who are interested in collaborations. ‘It has put Britain on the global map’ she adds. The challenge is how to take these successes forward.

An interest of Mercy Nabirye, has been to keep the dialogue going between conferences. She decided therefore to theme the ADAD panel at the Dance UK Industry Wide Conference (April 9 to 12, 2015), Reimagining the Future: After Re:generations 2014.
POSTSCRIPT

RETHINKING THE PAST TO REIMAGINE 2016
BY ‘FUNMI ADEWOLE’

Noxolo’s paper discusses how traditional dance forms have operated within their societies as unwritten maps and how the choreographer who stages traditional dance forms can be considered as creating a map. Her paper was very well received at both conferences. Jonzi D, who wishes to change how the mainstream press reviews hip-hop theatre, talked about viewing theatre through a Hip-hop lens whilst Yassmin Foster, discussed her interest in developing a framework for the technical exploration of dance forms from the African diaspora, through structural, movement and aesthetic analysis. Freddie Opoku-Addaie, on his part talked about the need for the dance artist to have space for play and open studio practice. The response to the panel’s contribution at the conference stimulated discussion of the absence of in-depth curriculum and research materials, the links between dance forms of Africa and the Diaspora and how these links are being explored internationally and the necessity of interracial dialogue to avoid ghettoization.

Bearing in mind the thinking and conversations that Re:generations has stimulated so far, partners will be looking at how they can deepen intergenerational and international dialogues. Themes, keynotes or activities around Legacy and Heritage are in discussion for the next conference, which will take place in Birmingham on the 3rd, 4th, 5th of November 2016.

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