



Figure 3.1 A map of connections. Participant in Community Performance Professional Development Workshop, DANZ New Zealand, 2006.

Photo: Petra Kupperts

3.1.2 Motives

If you do not identify as a member of the particular grouping you plan to work with, what are your motives for your wish to work with them? Remember that the notion of 'group membership' itself is fluid, and that alliances are formed strategically. Clarifying your motives is a useful step towards shaping your idea, preparing the ground for the interaction with participants, and also for creating language that can be useful for funding applications.

27 Reflection exercise

Part of a group set-up is communication and debate. What's in it for everybody? Write down what you have to offer, what the people that are to become a group have to offer to each other and to you. What does the project you are proposing offer to them as individuals, to them as a group, to the place, location or organization you wish to work with or in?

28 Reflection exercise

Find a partner. Tell them about a project you conceived of, and might wish to carry further. As the project emerges from your mind, or from the writing on a page, notice how different ideas are coming to you in the process of speaking. Encourage your partner to ask questions. Answer them. Try to find ways of asking and answering that are neither offensive nor defensive, but that help you to develop your project idea. Share your experiences: how did your partner perceive your presentation style?

'Capacity building' is a key phrase referred to by many funding organizations when they consider applications. It refers to the ability of community art work to develop other, non-art-specific skills. When describing your project idea to others, it can be useful to think about these issues. They can lead to better 'buy-in' by the local community, particularly when the art project idea itself is still open.

Many community performance projects are open to change, collaboratively conceived, fluid and responsive to multiple inputs. What that means in practice is that things will change, should change, and you won't stay in (total) control. The persuasion or wooing part of the project is a great place to rehearse some of this openness. As you enter a meeting with a user board, a school official, a social worker or a leadership committee, you can present your idea, and it will change in the telling, and in the interaction with these people, even at this first stage.

Exercise note: As this chapter proceeds, I will ask you again and again to think through your project from different perspectives. Of course, you can change your project every time, trying out many different ones, or you can see one project all the way through.

3.1.3 Money

Do you need funding to run the project? Do you require funds either for yourself, as an artist fee, or for other aspects of the work? What do you need, what are the budget items for your project?

'Capacity building' issues in community performance work

Active participation
 Skill building
 Basing work on participants' ideas/issues
 Sense of place
 Building group identity
 Giving the group ownership of the product
 Leaving a pool of equipment for future work
 Participants passing on their skills to their community

List taken from Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Who gets paid?

Some people like to fund all members working in a community group. This belief might be based on an analysis of cultural labor, and on the fact that work is differently valued when it is 'paid'. In this way, providing payment 'professionalizes' the contribution of community artists, even if the payment is only a token amount. Your politics, and the economical politics of your project, can guide you towards making a decision about this issue.

If you can, don't take existing models for granted because 'that's the way things are' – economical processes form one of the areas community performance can touch. Even if you can't or don't wish to pay your participants, be aware that they are investing time and effort, and probably some money, in the group. Exchange and value-generation can happen in different ways.

Sample budget items

Fees	Video-tapes
Transport	Marketing/publicity
Insurance	Postage
Space rental	Copying
Costumes	Copyright fees
Props	Food
Materials	Storage
Development fees for photos	

Finding ways of sharing and preparing

Ohwejagehká: Ha'degaénage is a non-profit organization based on Six Nations of the Grand River in Ontario, Canada. The aim is to help preserve and nurture the Iroquoian languages and songs. On their website (www.ohwejagehka.com), they share instruction for social dances where everybody who comes should be able to join in and enjoy. Their site provides not only basic step instruction but also music examples.

47 Reflection exercise

Read through the examples given on p. 109. What kind of information about potential group issues could emerge from them? Can you imagine first signs of potential friction, tensions and clashes between people? Within these warm-up ideas, how could you deal with them as facilitator or lead artist? Or, how can the group make them core themes for the body of the workshop?

My own primary practical training is in dance, so I always think of warm-ups as the beginning element of any workshop. In genres other than dance, a physical warm-up might not be quite as vital in the same way, but by dividing sessions into warm-up, main part, cool-down, a structure emerges that can be reassuring and practical for facilitators and participants. I often lead workshops of three hours and longer, and I structure an extended coffee or tea break into the workshop, followed by a new short warm-up and a different kind of engagement with art making. Also, if possible, my cool-downs flow from the room or environment we are in for the workshop to the nearest eatery or living room: the Olimpias workshops often end in shared food, a ritual ending that emphasizes communality and the fostering of friendship and respect that shapes much of our work. You will find a workshop structure that is appropriate for you.

A warm-up warms more than muscles:



Figure 4.1 African dance troupe from Perth, Australia, performing at the Fremantle Arts Centre, in the grounds of an old asylum, 2005. Photo: Petra Koppers

- it is a good place to warm up a sense of self and others;
- it allows people to get to know the space they will be working in;
- it allows people to get to know you;
- it helps to let go of the form of sense engagement that is appropriate to everyday living;
- it creates an openness towards different physical, sense and social experiences;
- it can help people to loosen their bodies, shift tensions;
- raised body core temperature, lubricated joints and gently stretched muscles provide benefits that many community performance participants seek.

Finding place

This warm-up is one of the most-used exercises in the performing arts, and you might be familiar with many different versions of it.

- Everybody starts walking. Move around the space you are working in – the community center, studio, outdoor space. Look at the space, take it its shape, smell, sound. [Call for varied speeds: slowed down, speeded up, on tip-toes, low to the ground. The aim is to experience the space in different ways – shaking off the everyday, opening up to different experiences.]
- Find a point in space – and move to it, touching it, or pointing to it. Find another one.
- As you continue walking, begin to see the others in space. Acknowledge each other. Smile. Nod. When the facilitator calls for it, touch hand to hand. Move on, find someone else. [If the group seems ready to touch and engage in ways different from everyday conventions, you can extend the touch: touching leg to leg, head to head, leg to head . . . you can play with different ideas, but keep an eye out for social discomfort.]
- Touch two people at a time. Touch four.
- Everybody touch.

Depending on how you facilitate this warm-up, you can focus on the physical and sensual environment you are in, or on the people, bringing them into contact. You can incorporate hints of the main session to come into this warm-up, creating echoes and connections across the different workshop elements. You can also gauge comfort levels, observing how comfortable people seem with the progression you are offering, how easily touch comes to them, and how they use space.

Games

Games are an excellent warm-up for all kinds of community groups. One of the most important practitioners in this area is Augusto Boal, and his work with games has influenced the whole field. Games can help to not only loosen the body and the mind, leaving normal life and its certainties and hierarchies behind, but they are also very useful in setting up new community relations. In games, new social dynamics emerge, and people can rehearse new forms of communication and interaction.



Figure 4.2 Lucas explains why diabetes management is so important to Tia Jo-Ann before Mass at Iglesia de San Felipe. Teatre Lucha/de Madres a Madres & Colonial Cameron Park, Brownville, TX, 2005. Photo: John Sullivan

7.3 Reflexive practice: taking care of yourself

If you work as an animator, community dance artist, theatre workshop leader, choral leader, or as an individual artist who supplements her practice with work in community settings, you might face certain problems and difficulties as part of your job:

- burn-out;
- energy loss;
- isolation;
- loneliness;
- lack of professional development;
- financial difficulties;
- stressful interpersonal relations.

The final part of this chapter discusses some of the strategies and ways of thinking and being that have helped community performance practitioners to maintain their practice.

89 Reflection exercise

- Look at the list of potential needs or problems above. Do any of these impact on your life? Could they be part of your future?
- Focus on one of the areas of difficulty, and think about ways in which this difficulty could be alleviated for you. Ask yourself questions such as: where to go (physically or emotionally)
 - for support?
 - for understanding?
 - for healing?
 - for creativity?
 - for advice/mentoring?
 - for financial/structural support?
- In Chapter 3, you created network maps. In this map, can you see places, people, organizations, environments that could offer support for you of some kind or another? By now, can you expand/change the map? Can you add on-line, international, national or cross-regional supports or networks?

7.3.1 Practitioner networks

Networks are one of the most sustaining supports for many community performance practitioners. They alleviate a major problem facing people working in the field: isolation. While many of us are helping to build communities, sustain them and develop them,

ironically isolation is something many seem to live with. Isolation is not in itself a negative experience, and many of us might search it out in geographic or aesthetic terms. But professional development, skill building and information sharing are needs for many community practitioners. Networks address these issues. There follow some examples of community performance-focused networks.

Foundation for Community Dance (journals and web-based, UK-focused, but with international contributions)

The Foundation for Community Dance is the national development agency for community dance. At the centre of the national network for community dance, we represent the diversity of dance in the UK. Established in 1986 by dance artists to raise the profile and be the national voice for community dance, we work for the development of dance for all.

We campaign, take action and represent the concerns, interests and practice of community dance at all levels, acting as a catalyst for the development of partnerships between dance and communities.

Our network of members includes: dancers, amateurs, artists and dance teachers; choreographers and dancemakers; dance companies, organisations, agencies and venues; colleges, universities and training establishments; funding bodies and local authorities.

Through events, conferences, seminars, an advice service and two regular journals, we offer up-to-the-minute information, debate and dialogue about current issues in dance and the arts.

From Introduction screen of webpage, www.communitydance.org.uk

Community Arts Network (web-based, US-focused, but with international contributions)

The Community Arts Network (CAN) supports the belief that the arts are an integral part of a healthy culture, providing both intellectual nourishment and social benefit, and that community-based arts provide significant value both to communities and artists.

CAN's Web site is an international resource focusing on the work of artists and their community partners – projects and programs that actively promote the arts as part of education, political life, health recovery, prisoner rehabilitation, environmental protection, community regeneration, electronic communication, and more. Here you will find a wealth of data, documentation and criticism about art that is doing important work: improving students' test scores, reducing prison violence and recidivism, reaching across racial and class barriers, bringing generations together, preserving history and culture that will otherwise be lost.

What Is community art?

CAN's *founders* chose to identify this work as 'community arts' for several reasons. Practically speaking, our Internet audience locates us through search engines, which best respond to the least common denominator. Also, the term 'community,' though

From Welcoming Page of website, www.communityarts.net