

# ANNEX B

## SUMMARY OF STUDIES CONDUCTED

As part of the planning process for Renaissance City III, MICA commissioned two studies to better understand the needs of our various stakeholders – the arts community, the general public and the people and private sectors – as well as to examine what some of the critical gaps were in arts and cultural development. This annex summarises some of the key outcomes from these two studies.

### A) Roles of the 3Ps in the Development of Arts and Culture

By the Institute of Policy Studies, March 2006

The objective of this study was to track and analyse the roles of the public, people and private sectors in the performing, visual and literary arts and to recommend ways to foster partnerships between them. The study noted that the Government has up until now taken the lead in many areas to develop arts and culture. But future growth will depend on the people and the private sectors seizing the initiative and working more closely together.

Focus group sessions and individual interviews were conducted with various stakeholder groups for arts and culture:

**Table B-1: Categories of interviewees and focus group sessions**

Category	Number of participants	Total	
<i>Focus Group Sessions</i>			
Artists and Galleries	13	97	
Critics and Reviewers	7		
Dance and Theatre Groups	8		
Writers, Publishers and Bookstores	9		
<i>Individual Interviews</i>			
Art Galleries	7		
Arts Organisers and Intermediaries	5		
Arts Practitioners	14		
Sponsors and Supporters	10		
Civil Service	12		
Grassroots Arts Organisations	2		
Independent Museums	2		
Public Relations Professionals	2		
Publishers	6		

Some of the key challenges identified by the study include:

- The performing arts have made the most progress. Progress in the visual arts has been patchy. The literary arts scene remains very weak.
- Audiences have grown. But audience development has not kept pace with the growth in the number of arts groups and events.
- The media's role in the arts and scholarship in the arts is under-developed in Singapore.
- Arts groups (included in the definition of the people sector in this study) often under-invest in marketing, fund-raising and other areas not considered to be part of artistic development. At the same time, companies, individuals and foundations (which are defined as part of the private sector in this study) do not give enough compared to the levels of sponsorship and philanthropy in other countries. There is also little partnership between the people and private sectors beyond straight giving of cash or in-kind donations. Both sides need greater know-why, know-what, know-how and know-who in forming partnerships.
- Artists here receive less funding in the form of grants per capita from the Government than elsewhere. Government share of funding compared with the private sector's is closer to European countries than to the US. Direct government funding in the US is relatively low, but there is heavy funding through tax forgone from incentives given to companies, individuals and foundations. The US Government is giving as much to the arts as its European counterparts, but by using tax breaks rather than direct grants. Private funding can supplement but not replace government funding.

Some key recommendations proposed by the study include:

- a) Focusing NAC's role on strategic planning and policy-making, gradually devolving its organising roles to the private sector or arts groups/arts centres
- b) Creating new means of funding support to spur creation of specific types of content (such as Singaporean works) and to do more to plug gaps in arts groups' capabilities (such as marketing and advertising)
- c) Setting up a unit to promote arts and private-sector partnerships, providing match-making services, a cultural commons with directory and research information, facilitation, training and consultation on partnerships
- d) Leveraging on existing infrastructure by encouraging the use of community centres, religious premises, welfare organisation premises, libraries, town council facilities and schools for the arts and enable partnerships between arts groups and owners/managers of these facilities and the communities that they are in.
- e) Developing future audiences by putting more emphasis on the arts in education and arts education in schools
- f) Increasing tax incentives, especially for donations in-kind and other kinds of giving
- g) Promoting the growth of the visual arts by: i) organising exhibitions of corporate art collections, ii) facilitating merchandising using works of local artists, iii) promoting the buying and display of Singapore art and encourage the private sector to nurture, not just paintings and sculptures, but also contemporary visual art forms such as installations and performance art and iv) doing more to promote the best Singapore artists internationally
- h) Promoting the growth of literary arts by: i) starting creative writing programmes in schools and universities, ii) funding overseas market promotion for local fiction and publishers, with tax breaks for overseas income, iii) encouraging the development of genre writing and markets, iv) including more local books in the English language as well as literature curricula and v) starting a literary journal or encouraging the media or tertiary institutions to start literary pages/publications.

## **B) Community Cultural Engagement and the Value of Arts and Culture in Singapore**

Professor Lily Kong

Department of Geography, National University of Singapore,  
January 2008

This study was targeted at the general public and sought to understand what were the needs and expectations of the Singapore public for cultural activities, what were the potential barriers to participation and engagement and how the quality of arts and cultural activities, programmes and community involvement can be improved in a sustainable manner over the long term.

As part of the study, a series of interviews and focus groups were conducted from July to September 2007. A total of 300 people were interviewed, divided into those based in Singapore, and those outside of Singapore:

Table B-2: Categories of interviewees and focus groups

Singapore-based population				
Category	Sub-category	Number of participants	Sub-total	Total
Educational	Students	41	60	242
Educational institutions	Teachers and staff	19		
Community groups/ organisations	PA/CCMC/CCC/RC/NC/Onepeople	21	51	
	CDCs	9		
	NParks	3		
	Ethnic self-help groups	16		
	Ethnically-based cultural organisations	2		
Interest groups (non-arts/ culture)	Environmental associations	7	40	
	Welfare associations	6		
	Women's organisations	4		
	Expatriate/international associations	10		
	Alumni associations	13		
Corporate philanthropists and Patrons of the Arts/Heritage		14		
Arts & Culture Community	Performing arts	26	77	
	Visual arts	7		
	Heritage	14		
	Media	19		
	Design	11		
Non-Singapore-based population				
Tourists		21	58	
Short-term migrants		20		
Permanent migrants		17		
<b>Total: 300</b>				

### Comments on Singapore's Arts and Culture Scene

**Availability.** Many noted that the availability of arts and culture in Singapore has improved and increased over the years, but that the majority of events are ticketed “high art” performances.

**Missing Dimensions.** The following were highlighted as some missing dimensions in the local arts scene:

- **Local arts:** Many interviewees across the eight groups spoke about the lack of original local arts.
- **Leadership:** One participant felt that a major missing dimension is one of leadership – that is, the arts sector lacks a strong organisational structure as well as experienced and qualified leadership.
- **Diversity:** Those from the arts and culture community and some expatriates noted the lack of non-mainstream sub-cultures, and also the lack of independent films, literature, parodies and satires, public art and innovative architecture, which they felt are largely due to the Government’s strict censorship.

**Comparison with Different Countries.** Only the interviewees in the short-term and permanent migrants groups were asked to compare Singapore to other countries, given their dual experiences. It was generally agreed that Singapore’s arts scene does not compare to that of cities such as London, Las Vegas and Toronto in terms of range, quality, vibrancy and diversity. However, many permanent migrants said they did not know Singapore’s scene well enough to be able to adequately compare. While the rest of the interviewed groups were not asked specifically about other countries, many interviewees nonetheless spoke about the arts scenes in other countries such as Japan, China and Germany. They noted that Singapore’s short history as a nation compared to these countries means that it has had far less time to build its arts scene and support.

**Access and Spaces.** Many participants felt that there are sufficient arts spaces and that Singaporeans do have ample access, although it was noted that those from low-income families as well as people with special needs have problems accessing arts and culture, and concessions are needed to encourage them to attend such events. Greater accessibility such as ramps and lifts were also suggested.

Nevertheless, it was noted that a **variety of spaces** was needed:

- One criticism was the lack of smaller venues, such as for a 500-strong audience, as there is a vacuum between the Esplanade and the community theatres
- For the visual arts, the inadequate size of the Singapore Arts Museum was noted, but participants were excited about the plans to turn Supreme Court and City Hall into an art gallery.

- Another thread was the lack of affordable workspaces for artists – participants suggested that schools open their workrooms and studios in the evenings and on weekends. While the presence of arts villages such as at Middle Road and Telok Kurau were noted, participants from the arts community said these rents – at commercial rates – were too high for artists.

### Comments on Strategies to Increase Community Participation

The following were suggestions made for increased community participation:

- **Broad-based:** More performances such as cultural festivals, food festivals, open-air concerts, free events, children’s activities, flea and art markets, traditional arts events such as wayang shows, and other activities with a Singapore flavour.
- **Heartlands:** Bring the arts to the masses – at community centres, schools, shopping malls and hawker centres. This would make it more convenient and dislodge the view that the arts are elitist and expensive. More free, open-air events would also encourage attendance, especially by families.
- **Publicity:** Make information available on mainstream information channels, e.g. in a magazine or on a website in an ongoing manner.
- **Arts education:** Improve Singapore’s tertiary arts education by giving it greater depth, such as by introducing art history courses. Better training for arts teachers in schools was also proposed.
- **Local productions:** More focus should be placed on smaller home-grown productions instead of importing large, foreign ones.
- **Feedback:** Participants from the interest groups felt that arts and cultural needs change over time but that there is no avenue for new ideas to be explored. Thus more avenues for feedback and contribution of ideas to the Government are needed.
- **Funding:** Provide more funding, a more transparent funding process and better concessions for the disadvantaged, as price and costs seemed to be a big barrier for greater involvement in the arts.
- **Heritage and conservation:** Conserve old buildings and pay greater attention to heritage.
- **Support chain:** Develop an arts “ecosystem” of arts facilitators, managers and journalists to ensure more support for the arts community.