



Canadian Dance Assembly

L'Assemblée canadienne de la danse

**CANADIAN DANCE ASSEMBLY**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2009-2013**

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## **Executive Summary**

The National Council of the Canadian Dance Assembly, as part of its ongoing commitment to planning and evaluation, engaged in a Strategic Planning Process to encompass the fiscal years 2009/2010 – 2012/ 2013, in the fall of 2009.

A membership based, National Service Organization with charitable status, *The Canadian Dance Assembly* was formed in 2002 to facilitate the dynamic exchange of information relevant to Canadian professional dance of all forms and aesthetics, to cultivate a strong national voice for Canadian professional dance, and to support the development of resources for this field of artistic expression.

At its inception the CDA faced a diverse and fragmented dance community, which had not been served by an encompassing national service organization for almost 15 years. Over the last seven years, despite many challenges, the organization has established itself as an essential contributor to the development of the dance and culture sectors. It has effectively developed both its mandate and strategic directions, served the community successfully, and built its membership and profile. The CDA is now entering a period of maturity and national leadership that will benefit not only its many members, but also the entire dance milieu and its partners in the arts and culture sector.

This plan is built on five strategic priorities, each with key goals for success:

### ***1. Sustain and strengthen advocacy and public policy initiatives to:***

- Build awareness of and visibility for the dance sector
- Contribute to building awareness for the arts and cultural sector
- Build profile for CDA and its membership
- Increase funding for dance
- Build responsiveness to dance community and arts and culture sector needs

### ***2. Strengthen the national dance network to:***

- Develop a healthy ecology that embraces its diversity
- Reduce duplication, overlap and confusion of services to the sector
- Reduce circumstances of isolation

### ***3. Develop an informed and engaged dance community to:***

- Assist in empowering individuals and organizations to carry out their work
- Leverage the collective energy of the sector

### ***4. Build membership to:***

- Support influence and action
- Increase engagement
- Ensure a fully national membership
- Ensure connection to the breadth and diversity of the dance sector
- Generate revenue

***5. Maintain a healthy organizational culture and develop human and financial resources to:***

- Support the organization's ability to lead the national dance community
- Ensure the capacity to effectively carry out the organizational mandate

These strategic priorities, and the objectives and actions planned for the ensuing four years, are focused to support the success, wellbeing and growth of the national dance community. The National Council of the CDA has prioritized and committed to this work as the natural evolution of its development in serving its constituents.

**About the Process**

Barbara Richman, independent Arts Consultant and former CDA National Council member, was hired to facilitate this process and develop the planning document. For this process she researched background information on the history of the CDA and the role of National and Regional Service Organizations in the development of the dance community; interviewed both internal and external stakeholders; and developed the process for a 1.5 day facilitated meeting of National Council members and staff. The National Council, Executive Director, staff members and external resources subsequently reviewed the prepared draft documents and worked with the facilitator on revisions.

## **Mission, Mandate and Values**

### **Mission**

The Canadian Dance Assembly exists to facilitate the dynamic exchange of information relevant to Canadian professional dance of all forms and aesthetics. It strives to cultivate a strong national voice for Canadian professional dance and to support the development of resources for this field of artistic expression. It is the members of the Canadian Dance Assembly, through their activities, experience and participation, that provide the dynamism and the synergy that make the organization vital in the Canadian arts milieu.

### **Mandate**

The Canadian Dance Assembly (CDA) is the voice of the professional dance sector in Canada and advocates for a healthy, sustainable environment in which professional dance practice can grow and thrive.

CDA is a reputable source of information on the current state of dance in Canada and provides representation to policy makers and the public.

CDA enables its national membership of dance professionals and organizations to connect with their peers through regular communications, conferences, forums and workshops, and facilitates opportunities for networking, dialogue and exchange relevant to the Canadian dance sector

### **Value Statement**

The Canadian Dance Assembly is a membership driven organization that, through the design and delivery of its activities, programs and services, upholds the core principles of being a collaborative, inclusive, consultative, non-partisan, proactive, diplomatic and transparent organization that represents the diverse professional dance milieu in all regions of Canada.

## **Structures**

### **Incorporation**

The CDA is a bilingual, not-for-profit, National Arts Service Organization, with registered charitable status. It was fully incorporated in 2003, and received NASO and charitable status in 2006. The organization's fiscal year is April 1 – March 31.

### **Membership**

The CDA serves both individual and organizational members. The membership is representative of all provinces of Canada, and includes a wide range of dance disciplines and practices. Voting Members are currently organized into seven Standing Councils:

- Freelancers and Consultants
- Independent Artists
- Training and Education/Research and Writing
- Ballet Companies
- Dance Companies
- Service and Support
- Dance Presenters

Additionally, there are two non-voting membership categories:

- Students
- Business Affiliates

### **National Council**

The CDA is governed by a National Council of up to 15 members. The Council currently is composed of the Chairs of the seven Standing Councils, who are elected by, and represent, their Council members. The National Council additionally appoints up to seven Members at Large, to help balance sectoral, geographic and cultural diversity, and to ensure a good balance of skills, gender and generations. The Past President is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the National Council. The terms for the Chairs of the Standing Councils are three years. Appointed members serve for renewable terms of one year. Directors are allowed a maximum of six years of continuous service.

### **Staff**

Led by the Executive Director, the CDA's small staff implements the work of the organization. In addition to the Executive Director, staff includes a full time Programs and Services Manager, as well as part time employees and contract service providers, who are hired on a project basis. Some staff activities are outsourced to external contractors. The CDA provides training and guidance through a combination of mentorship and professional development opportunities for the Executive Director and full time staff.

**Financial Resources** - The CDA is funded through a combination of earned, private and public revenues. Public funding currently contributes 68% of revenue. Earned revenues, which come primarily from membership, bring in another 26%, and income from private sources such as donations, provides the remaining 6%.

## Background

### Precursors:

- **1937 until the 1970s:** the Ballet festivals were the primary force for bringing the dance community together. The Canadian Ballet Festival Association existed from 1948-1955, its goals were to encourage work of existing and future dance groups, develop an appreciation for Canadian dance, create a professional field for Canadian dancers so that they could earn a living in Canada, and to develop a national ballet company. These goals were presented to the Massey commission in 1949-1951. In 1951 the commission issued a report which became known as the 'Massey report'. This report advocated for a level of federal government patronage of a wide range of cultural activities and proposed the establishment of a Canada Council.
- **1957:** Further efforts to drive the ecology of the arts community forward began with the formation of the Canada Council in 1957. In Canada Council's first year of operation, three dance companies received grants. The Dance Section, which was initially part of the Theatre Section, was not formed as an independent unit until 1967.
- **1972 - 1989:** a public conversation around the needs of the dance community, supported by the Dance Section of Canada Council, led to the formation of the **Dance in Canada Association** (DICA). The organization was a broadly based national service organization with a mandate to serve both the professional and non-professional dance communities, though social dance and folk dance were not included.
  - DICA ran regular festivals and conferences, produced the publication *Dance In Canada*, and developed some special initiatives such as the Dancers Forum, the Canadian Dancers Survival Manual, a handbook for dance managers, and the administration of an awards program.
  - During DICA's existence many organizations arose either independently, or directly through DICA's encouragement, or in reaction to needs that DICA was not addressing. Key among those organizations were:
    - CAPDO (1977 – 1996 active; formally closed in 2004) – CAPDO – the Canadian Association of Professional Dance Organizations, was informally developed in 1977, and established as an organization in 1982. Its original mandate was to serve dance organizations that felt they were underserved by DICA. Originally, membership was limited to the eight to ten organizations that received operating funding from the Canada Council at that time. By the late-1980's, CAPDO was opening its membership to other professional dance organizations, growing to over 35 members by the time it closed active operations. CAPDO became inactive in 1996 when the Canada Council cut funding programs for National Service Organizations. The organization was temporarily housed within the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres while dedicated members of the community tried to maintain national communications and worked toward rebuilding an association for dance, with the assistance of occasional project grants. CAPDO existed as a legal entity until 2004, and served as the official structure for the formation and activities of CDA until it became incorporated in its own name.

- The RQD (1984), Dance Ontario (founded in 1976, incorporated 1985) and Dance Saskatchewan grew from DICA's efforts to develop regional service organizations.
- 1974-1991 Regional Dance Service organizations originated from grassroots movements in different provinces. Dance Nova Scotia (founded in 1974 and incorporated in 1975), Dance Manitoba (1983), Alberta Dance Alliance (created in 1984, in 1996 officially named as the provincial arts service organization), The Dance Centre (1986), CADA-ON (1989), CADA-BC (1991)
  - 1985 - The Dancer Transition Resource Centre formed
  - 1986 - Dance Collection Danse (DCD) is founded
  - 1986 - Canada Dance Festival (CDF) formed to take over the Dance Festival component of DICA, DICA collapsed shortly after 1989, with the last DICA magazine published in 1989.
  - A number of organizations arose to support the culturally diverse dance forms
- 1989 – 2003 Following the demise of DICA, these and numerous new organizations carried on the work of supporting the development of the Canadian dance community, each through their own particular mandates. Most continue to exist and to have specialized roles in supporting the dance milieu.
- 1992/93 – the Canada Council opened its program funding to a greater diversity of forms. Until this time, grants were available only to ballet and modern companies.
- Early 90's - Association of Dance in Universities and Colleges in Canada (ADUCC)
- late 1990's Quebec initiated a meeting to bring community together; the first discussions of the need for a unifying NASO began.
- 1991- 2006 - fFIDA
- 1998 - The Dance Current magazine begins publication
- 1999 – Funding for National Service Organizations was restored at Canada Council, setting the stage for the development of a dance umbrella NASO
- 2000 - Society for Canadian Dance Studies (SCDS)
- 2000 - The CanDance Network is formed
- 2001 - The Canada Council supported conference, *Blazing the Trail*, furthered the discussion of dance's need for an umbrella NASO, and a group was formed that developed the founding concepts for CDA.
- 2002 – CDA was founded, under the legal aegis of CAPDO, which had maintained its organizational status and bank account.
- 2004 – CDA becomes incorporated as its own legal entity, and CAPDO closes.

## **CDA milestones**

- **2001-2003**
  - First National Council elected
  - Hire of first staff
  - Website launched
  - Office open
  - Behind the scenes advocacy
  - 54 members
  
- **2003-2004**
  - Achieved independent legal status (no longer under CAPDO)
  - Mentor-led staffing
  - Strategic planning
  - Database strengthened
  - Ad hoc communications
  - Grant MacEwan advocacy (cancellation of dance program)
  - Partnering with RQD around national study
  - Beginning of building of relationships
  - Begin conversations / relationship with RQD
  - Standing Councils consist of: Dance Companies, Service & Support, Independent Artists, Dance Presenters, Dance Consultants & Freelancers, Ballet Companies
  - 59 members
  
- **2004-2005**
  - Strategic plan
  - Part time staff added
  - Operating relationship at council
  - Dance Current pieces, relationship between these organizations is strengthened
  - Communications increase with distribution of e-bulletins, more efforts to be bilingual
  - Regional meetings - a grant was received from Heritage to enable more regional activity. Meetings take place in Halifax, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Vancouver
  - First national conference held in Toronto – *Finding Our Balance*
  - Two more Standing Councils are formed: Training & Education, Research and Writing
  - 88 members
  
- **2005-2006**
  - More support staff, increased # of hours
  - Regular news bulletins, more regular communications
  - Further regional meetings take place, Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Edmonton
  - Advocacy committee is form in July of 2005
  - First face to face meetings of the Standing Councils
  - Beginning of focused discussion with RQD
  - National conference held in Ottawa in partnership with the Canada Dance Festival

- 138 members
- **2006-2007**
  - official NASO & charitable designation
  - Business plan created
  - Built cross-sectoral relationships (PACT, Opera.ca, Orchestras Canada, and later CAPACOA)
  - RQD conversations continue
  - Explore research
  - Students and Business Affiliates represent non-voting categories of membership, added in May 2006.
  - Canada Council got increase and the Dance section got the highest percentage increase
  - National conference in Halifax – *Interconnections*, included shared programming with the CanDance Network
  - 200 members
- **2007-2008**
  - Transition into full-time Executive Director
  - Developed communications plan
  - Establishment of the Performing Arts Alliance (PAA)
  - Promoting the advocacy role, making it public, claiming the credit
  - RQD discussions continue
  - National conference held in Ottawa – *Advancing Dance in Canada*
  - Training & Education, Research & Writing Standing Councils merge
  - Membership – CADA conversations begin
  - 220 members
- **2008-2009**
  - CADA Ontario relationship begins, CADA BC to start in October 2009
  - Media presence
  - Profile, much action around advocacy
  - No conference this year
  - Two full time staff + intern
  - Conversation w/ RQD continues
  - Convening of Board members of the Performing Arts Alliance, December 2008
  - Conversations with Quebec community
  - Status of dance on national scene improves
  - 344 members

## **Current Situation**

### **Roles of National Service Organizations**

The National Council reviewed the following identified roles often undertaken by NASOs

- ***Provide Opportunities for Networking and Peer Support***
  - Conferences and regional meetings
  
- ***Encourage Sector Communication and Sharing of Information***
  - Develop an informed dance community
  - Communicate Internally (membership, staff, National Council)
  - Communicate Externally (funders, public, non-members)
  
- ***Encourage Public Awareness and Develop Audiences***
  
- ***Program/Project Delivery***
  - Research
  - Professional Development and Training (Identify needs, provide or support professional development)
  - Outreach
  - Member Benefits
  
- ***Policy Development and Advocacy***
  - Create visibility and a voice for dance
  - National lobbying and advocacy
  - Create a vehicle for addressing shared concerns
  - Help shape public policy
  
- ***Support the Development of a complete and healthy ecology***
  - Pull together disparate groups, unify, build a national network
  - Reduce polarization and isolation; encompass
  - Support and coordinate the services that already exist
  - Support diversity of the sector (regional, socio-cultural, professional/non professional, genre, etc.)
  
- ***Maintain A Healthy Organization***
  - Sound governance structures and policies
  - Appropriate Financial Resources , effectively used
  - Appropriate Human Resources, effectively used
  - Good leadership at staff and National Council level
  - Ongoing Planning -rate of progress, evaluation, clarity
  - Build effective and productive relationships with full range of stakeholders/potential partners
  - Build good funder relationships

## **Strategic Directions and Arcs of Achievement**

In reviewing the development of CDA since its inception seven years ago, we see key repeated elements in the organization's trajectory of growth. The seeds of strategic positioning and activity generally begin in the two year period prior to the period of strategic focus. In the two years following the period of strategic focus these directions and activities become more established and better integrated into ongoing operations.

### **1998-2001 – Conceptual Development**

#### **2002-2004 - Formation**

- Creation of governance & legal structure
- Development of operations and staffing
- Establishment of mechanisms
- Start strategic planning
- Creation of identity
- Inception of membership development

### **2005-2007 – Development of Direction**

- Establish communication as a priority
- Develop & strengthen bilingual capacity
- Focus on membership development
- Initiation of advocacy as a priority
- Strengthening of operations/staffing and governance

### **2007-2009 – Establishment of National Presence**

- Increased Capacity and Profile in Advocacy
- Building of national profile
- Strengthening communications
- Building cross sectoral relationships
- Working towards national leadership
- Building membership
- Developing staff structures

### **Looking Ahead**

Taking into consideration the National Council's internal evaluation of key directions and the natural evolution of strategic arcs, we see the following thrusts for 2010 -2012:

### **2010 – 2013 - Development as a National Leader**

- Building the Advocacy function and taking an increasing role in Advocacy leadership
- Building membership numbers and connection to CDA
- Facilitating national discourse
- Improving working relationships with the regions
- Strengthening Cross Sectoral relationships and leadership functions
- Strengthening internal leadership and structures
- Strengthening external communications and national/international profile

## **Strategic Priorities**

The National Council of the Canadian Dance Assembly has identified the following Strategic Priorities for 2010-2013:

### ***Strategic Priority 1: Sustain and Strengthen Advocacy and Public Policy Initiatives***

#### **Goals:**

- Build awareness of and visibility for the dance sector
- Contribute to building awareness for the arts and cultural sector
- Build profile for CDA and its membership
- Increase funding for dance
- Build responsiveness to dance community and arts and culture sector needs

#### **Objectives:**

- 1.1 Undertake and inform research to support advocacy and public policy development
- 1.2 Build strategic partnerships to strengthen reach and influence (fundors, RASOs, NASOs, )
- 1.3 Identify, initiate and engage in national lobbying and advocacy initiatives
- 1.4 Support our regional partners in their lobbying and advocacy
- 1.5 Develop CDA's profile as a leader in advocacy
- 1.6 Build relationships to strengthen advocacy

## ***Strategic Priority 2: Strengthen the national Dance network***

### Goals:

- To develop a healthy ecology that embraces its diversity
- To reduce duplication, overlap and confusion of services to the sector
- Reduce circumstances of isolation

### Objectives:

#### 2.1 Provide opportunities for networking and peer support

- Work towards annual conferences
- Increase the effectiveness of regional programming in partnership with other service organizations
- Explore other modes of connectivity (web based and electronic presence; better use of the Standing Councils)
- Create face to face opportunities for targeted discussion around identified issues (Ballet companies, other Standing Councils or Special Interest Groups)

#### 2.2 Seek to find common ground and shared concerns

- Develop NASO/RASO cross sector meeting to discuss research opportunities and sharing
- Help coordinate sectoral activities to reduce duplication, overlap and stress (Initiate dance NASO/RASO cross sector meeting to plan around scheduling, sharing of conferences/activities and ideas)

#### 2.3 Embrace diversity in the dance sector (artistic practice, regional, cultural, professional, non-professional, genres, organizational structures and size)

### ***Strategic Priority 3: Develop an informed and engaged Dance community***

#### Goal:

- To assist in empowering individuals and organizations to carry out their work
- To leverage the collective energy of the sector

#### Objectives:

##### 3.1 Strengthen communications to inform and engage

- Develop the website as a tool for information and engagement
- Maintain the level of internal communications and news bulletins

##### 3.2 Provide tools, materials and information

- Through website, conference, staff activity, developing a resource base of existing tools, outreach activity.

## ***Strategic Priority 4: Build Membership***

### Goals:

- To support influence and action
- To increase engagement
- To ensure a fully national membership
- To ensure connection to the breadth and diversity of the dance sector
- To generate revenue

### Objectives:

#### 4.1 Provide tangible benefits to the Membership

- National Training Subsidy Program
- Professional Development opportunities that target areas not well served by other organizations such as Management and Leadership Development

#### 4.2 Develop strategic partnerships for shared membership

- Advocate and educate about CDA and its benefits
- Make strategic choices about partnerships and implement

***Strategic Priority 5: Maintain a healthy organizational culture and develop human and financial resources***

Goals:

- To support organization's ability to lead the national dance community
- Ensure the capacity to effectively carry out the organizational mandate

Objectives:

5.1 – Ensure strong leadership for National Council

- Build succession plan for National Council Executive and Chair
- Ensure greater cultural diversity on National Council

5.2 Ensure strong staff leadership

- Recruit and hire new Executive Director strong leadership capacity and the skills and experience to ensure financial viability and sustainability, and to direct the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Ensure an effective transition for new staff leadership
- Increase staff size as needed to support programming

5.3 - Build effective and productive relationships with stakeholders and partners

- Cross Sectoral
- National
- Regional
- Funders
- International

5.4 - Plan and evaluate regularly to ensure clarity of vision and effectiveness of action

- Annual strategic plan review and evaluation
- 2011-2012 – review and revise plan as needed

5.5 – Ensure governance structures and policies that effectively serve our mandate and membership

- Governance review
- Evaluation of Standing Council system and research on other models

5.6 – Ensure adequate revenue streams

- Earned Revenue from Membership fees and other sources such as conferences
- Private Sector Funding
- Public Sector Funding