



boosting employment through  
small enterprise development

## Small Enterprise Development and Job Creation in the Culture Sector in the SADC Region

### Performing Arts

#### ABSTRACT

This report provides research, analysis and recommendations on the performing arts in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)<sup>1</sup>. The research focused on the dramatic performances of dance, poetry reading, storytelling and theatre. Fieldwork for this report was conducted in Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Although research was not conducted in all of the SADC member countries, reference is made to most of these countries. In some countries, little or no documented information was available and this created an impediment to the research, hence, data collection relied upon interviews conducted with stakeholders and key players in the performing arts.

The development and practice of the performing arts within the SADC region are firmly rooted in traditional ceremonies and communal festivities, which incorporate music, dance, storytelling and puppets. Throughout the world, the performing arts have come to rely heavily on government, corporate and donor sponsorship or individual benefactors. In the SADC region, the status of performing arts is that of a struggling and fragmented industry desperately seeking financial support, recognition and a greater degree of involvement from government. Little or no financial support is provided for the performing arts due to other priorities, such as poverty, illiteracy and AIDS. Hence, the performing arts industry is heavily reliant on international donor agencies and NGOs.

As insufficient funds and resources are available for most of the art institutions in the region, most artists/art institutions struggle to survive. This situation illustrates the need for a holistic approach to the improvement of arts management and management of funds. The formal performing arts are competitive and the level and quality of production is of an international standard, while informal performing arts are characterized as more community-based and amateur, where the focus is on entertaining, educating and informing the community.

The performing arts are a labour-intensive industry, which has not been able to benefit from much mechanization and specialization. Limited use of intellectual property (IP) rights by participants and other stakeholders in the performing arts industry results in the loss of opportunities and benefits that could increase funding and revenue to the industry.

---

<sup>1</sup> SADC comprises 14 countries, namely, Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.