

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	Indepen-dance	
Application Reference number:	G201001072	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£53,187	£55,741
Officer's recommendation		
<p>Summarise the key points of your assessment and draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the application taken together with any comments you have received from source evidence (portfolio of evidence/ internal / external consultation). Highlight any specific risks</p> <p><i>Note: The amount of information you provide here should be sufficient for the decision maker to reach a decision. As with all previous commentary boxes please do not exceed 250 words</i></p>		
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Indepen-dance is an integrated dance and disability organisation working primarily in Glasgow. They deliver classes, training sessions and performances working with physically and mentally disabled dancers together with their carers. They have strong partnerships with venues in Glasgow and the local council.</p> <p>The Flexible funding criteria that organisations should demonstrate ‘ excellent artistic vision and leadership’ and be able to demonstrate this through their activities. The good quality elements of what Independence deliver are their workshops and training seminars which focus on participation therefore meeting the criteria for widening access and engagement with the public. The’ reach’ of the work in terms of classes is mainly limited to Glasgow but performances and training events are offered nationally.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indepen-dance is an excellent model for working and practicing inclusively and was set up in 1996 with the specific aims of offering dance opportunities to adults with learning difficulties. ▪ There is an established users group facilitated by one of the carers to formalise input on the service indepen-dance provides to disabled people. This meets quarterly and evidence is presented at quarterly board meetings. ▪ Part of the funding applied for is to employ a disabled dance assistant (previously it has been on an in-kind basis). ▪ The budget is viable and realistic as it based on prior experience of running classes, training and events and this is just an extension of current events which requires a greater level of funding <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed international collaboration is new developments and requires a greater focus to make sure the ambition to become an international centre for excellence is realised while maintaining their on-going programme. ▪ There is little detail relating to the planned artistic programme for 2009/10 – 2010/11 ▪ The artistic quality needs to be improved as outlined in their last internal review. ▪ Development of greater links/collaborations within Scotland. ▪ Development of equal opportunities policy so it’s being implemented. <p>Track record</p> <p>Both of the evaluations of indepen-dance in 2007 have rated the company’s work as good or good/competent.</p>		

Summary

Indepen-dance is organisationally strong and has a strong voice in the disabled community in Glasgow. The education work they do is invaluable in Glasgow but there are aspirations towards being recognised more as a performance company. The consistent artistic quality of performances is currently holding them back from being a ground breaking force within Scottish dance, if they could address this then they could achieve greater recognition.

There are examples of integrated dance companies in the UK who are working at high levels of artistic ambition who could provide strong models of practice for Indepen-dance as they move forward. Given the current development needs of the organisation identified above and the lack of detail in the artistic plans included in the application, I have rated them as medium rather than high.

Officer's overall priority recommendation

MEDIUM

Lead Officer signature:

Date:22/1/08

Print name:

Katy McKeown

Revised: 20 March 2008

Stage 2: Heads of Departments prioritise applications with advice from Specialist Advisors

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the application identified by the Specialist Advisors? Please summarise their comments below. What were their ratings of the importance of the application in being supported?

Comments:

The panel of Dance specialist advisors who considered this application involved Dawn Hartley, Ian Spink, Lucy Mason and David Williams. The panel commented:

There is a strong vision articulated in this application and **Indepen-dance** has an established track record for their work in dance and disability. The panel were disappointed that the business plan was for 2007/08 so did not articulate the future plans. However, they were supportive of the importance Indepen-dance places on training and professional development. The organisation has developed strong partnerships with a wide range of organisations and artists. The panel recognised that Indepen-dance is striving for artistic quality in their work.

The panel rated this application as medium priority for support.

2. Summarise the role of the organisation within the infrastructure of the sector. Assess to what extent the organisation's vision will contribute to the department's and to Scottish Arts Council's aims: (to fulfil artists' potential, to increase participation, to place creativity at the heart of learning)

Comments:

Indepen-dance has established itself as the major provider of participatory dance activity for people with learning disabilities and care staff in Glasgow. In recent years the company has received Scottish Arts Council project funding through Equalities for choreographic workshops and the creation of new work. Indepen-dance is recognised by Glasgow City Council and attracts support from a range of funders for their programme.

1. *Fit with FXO criteria:*

1.1 Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists

Indepen-dance articulates a commitment to artistic excellence and plays a leadership role in dance and disability in Scotland. However, the lack of detail in the future artistic plans included within the application was disappointing.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public

The company strongly meets the criteria of public engagement, providing opportunities for a sector of the community often marginalised from arts activity.

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management

Indepen-dance is a limited company with charitable status. It is a small and developing company that has only recently been able to strengthen its staffing structure. It operates well within this context but is successful in achieving flexible funding should aim to further strengthen its infrastructure.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access

Indepen-dance is an excellent model for working and practicing inclusively and was established with the specific aim of creating dance opportunities to adults with learning difficulties.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%

Indepen-dance has met the matched funding requirement.

2. Fit with Departmental priorities

Although I am aware from their company's track record of their work in developing choreographic practice and production, the priority for dance, the application is disappointing in the lack of information on its proposed artistic programme and collaborations.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims

Indepen-Dance contributes significantly to the Scottish Arts Council's Aim 2: 'to increase participation in the arts' and to a lesser extent Aims 1 and 3.

3. Based on the lead officer's assessment and the subsequent meeting with Specialist advisors, please rate the application (High, medium, low) summarise your reasons for assessing the application as you have (drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and highlighting any specific risks)

Comments:

1.1 Application rating

I concur with the Assessing Officer and the panel of Specialist Advisors and rate this application as medium priority for support.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating

I recognise the strategically significant role that Indepen-dance plays in dance and disability in Scotland. The rating recognises the areas of development that have been identified.

1.3 Strengths of application

- The application meets the criteria for Flexible funding and the priority established by the dance department
- Strong model for inclusive dance practice.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications

- Limited detail on the planned artistic programme for 2009/10 – 2010/11
- Ensuring artistic quality throughout all activities requires greater attention
- Proposed international collaboration requires a greater focus to ensure the ambition to become an international centre for excellence is realised while continuing to develop the on-going programme.

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application

Aspirations are wide which could detract from developing excellence in the core work of the organisation if not fully considered and planned. Additionally clarification should be sought on the staffing commitment and responsibilities.

1.6 Development areas identified

Development areas include artistic planning and development. If supported, I would recommend as a condition, facilitated mentoring to consolidate and focus the artistic programme of work in 2009/10 – 2010/11.

1.7 Recommended level of support

The level of support applied for is appropriate and I would recommend support at the level of £50,000 in 2009/10.

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?

Indepen-dance is based in Glasgow and the majority of their activities take place in the city with occasional performances elsewhere.

1.2 Where will the audience come from?

Indepen-dance's programme has a reach far beyond this, in particular drawing participants from the surrounding local authorities (Strathclyde region) and across Scotland for their training events.

Head of Department's overall priority recommendation		MEDIUM
Head of Department's signature:		Date:12 February 2008 Revised: 26 March 2008
Print name:	Anita Clark	

Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
Comments: Good overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects development areas identified, the competitive funding context and assessment recommendation. Suggested level of support: £50,000 annually		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		Strong medium
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: Agree with Stage 3 recommendation. Suggested level of support: £50,000 annually		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		Strong medium
Acting Chief Executive signature:		Date:10 April 2008
Print name:	Jim Tough	

Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation.		
Joint Board Final Decision		APPROVE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£50,000 annually

End of Assessment