

REACH PROGRAMME

Project : Outreach Programme

Implementation Institution : Dance Trust of Zimbabwe

Other Partners : Oak Foundation

BACKGROUND

The Outreach Programme was started in the early 1980s as the *õVana vano tambaõ* (children who can dance) project. Initially it was confined to children under the age of twelve years old, who otherwise had had no exposure to dance lessons other than Zimbabwean traditional dances, in Harare's high density areas. From this project the first dance foundation was launched, this was a three-year course, which was and is still recognised by the International Dancing Teachers Association. The Programme provided young underprivileged Zimbabweans with the skills necessary to obtain jobs in the field of dance. Some of the graduates of the first Dance Foundation Course were the founder members of the Tumbuka Dance Company, Zimbabwe's first professional contemporary dance company as dancers and others were taken into the Outreach Programme as dance teachers. This meant that the programme could comprehensively include centres that provide for physically and mentally challenged children, the children's homes and orphanages.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Outreach Programme is the provision of dance programmes for those sections of the community, including those from the special needs, for whom dance is an inaccessible art form.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Continue the development of community Dance programmes for all interested people, above all the underprivileged and those from the special needs groups, and other sections of the community to whom dance is an inaccessible art form.
- Raise the profile of dance for young people within the community and to make Dance relevant and popular to youth of Zimbabwe through pilot classes, workshops, training courses and performances.
- Cover a diverse and extensive section of the community and to use mixed dance forms to increase understanding between the various ethnic groups in Zimbabwe.
- Work with people with special needs through residencies in specific locations.
- Identify groups of underprivileged children, e.g. AIDS orphans and street children and encourage expression of their plight and feelings through the medium of music and dance.

PROJECT

This project came as a result of the Programme's concern to build on exchange, develop and upgrade the current status of the Outreach Programme on the local dance scene. Ideally the Programme should be accessible to as many young people and children as possible from all walks of life. However, due to financial constraints this has not been achieved to the maximum. Dance is the tool being used to develop creativity, physical fitness, mind therapy and socializing among children as well as to encourage the youth to take dance as a career through enrolling with the Dance Trust of Zimbabwe's Dance Foundation Courses (Rudzi Runouya Programme). The Programme seeks to build self-confidence, discipline and power of expression as well as to develop spiritual healing for the underprivileged that are isolated in our society. Children with special needs are given the opportunity to express their plight through medium of dance which is the communication tool for the Programme. The dance classes will then culminate into the Outreach Festival, usually used as a platform to showcase the work been done through out the year. This contributes to growth of self esteem, team spirit and the participants gain the experience of working with others that may have little means of communication.

IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

The heads of institutions that cater for the physically and mentally challenged children complete a questionnaire at the end of every year. The results showed that:

- The children have benefited from the Programme, their minds and bodies have been exercised through the classes, they have become mentally alert, physically fit and agile.
- The participants have enjoyed creating their own dances.
- Most institutions / schools would like their pupils to receive more than one class every week.
- The children, who participate in dance classes, develop team spirit
- Discipline is developed through dance classes
- Children with learning difficulties have managed to learn through dance
- School holiday community workshops have taken youth off the street to join the dance classes
- To date the institutions and schools currently benefiting from the Programme enjoyed their participation at the Outreach Dance Festival

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strength	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
Managing to work with the people who are the most neglected in the society	Lack of resources and weak support from the authorities at schools and institutions	Invitations to showcase what the Outreach is doing with children by different organisations in the same sector i.e. Special Olympics	Dissemination of stigma and discrimination to those from the special needs
Give hope to those children from the street and provide adequate education through Edudance	Manpower is currently minimal due to teachers leaving for greener pastures and the Dance Training programme not having been operational for some time. Therefore there have not been more graduates to be taken into the Outreach programme as teachers.	One of the mentally challenged was invited to China for sports as well as to showcase their dancing skills	Government policies and the central bank of Zimbabwe policies of barring Donor funding to those in need due political reasons
Identification of street children, encourage and find suitable institutions that can accommodate them	Reductions of centres where the teachers conduct classes owing to unavailability of funding.	Recognition of the Programme by civic organisations e.g. Vivanetwork Zimbabwe	Poor cooperation by the heads of schools and institutions

number of the beneficiaries is maintained and programme efficiently.

- Improve the management and administration skills of the Outreach teachers.
- Expand the number of teaching venues to all the provinces of Zimbabwe and include high school children..
- Increase number of dance workshops in community centres during school holidays.
- Improve Programme teaching staff through short courses and workshops. Send two teachers to "Moving Into Dance", Johannesburg, South Africa to Participate in a three month EDUDANCE Course. The graduates of this course will be equipped to use Educational dancing to aid the teaching of various subjects at schools. This course benefits students with learning difficulties.

PURPOSE

- 1) Working within a wider cultural framework by networking with other artistic organizations that are involved in the community work.
- 2) Provide training for youths, which will equip them to enter the Dance. Foundation Course, should such youth wish to make their careers in the field of dance.
- 3) Continue development of teachers through courses.
- 4) Addressing the humanitarian issues being faced by those from the Special Needs, AIDS orphans and the underprivileged in the society through the medium of dance.

OUTPUTS

There are no similar projects in Zimbabwe specifically targeting underprivileged children and those from the special needs. This Programme directly benefits some of the most deprived members of Zimbabwean society – children afflicted with poverty, disability and AIDS, loss of parents and those living in the streets also have an opportunity to forget about their problems.

OUTREACH DANCE FESTIVAL

When funds are available the Outreach Programme stages an annual dance festival that gives a platform to the students to perform on a stage in front of an audience. The festival is greatly enjoyed by the participants as they have a target to work towards every year. The Programme was unable to stage this festival in 2009 owing to the fact that most schools were not operating due to the teachers being on strike. The objective is to make the festival a well-organised and professional event for the disadvantaged and the special needs children, and inceptively show what they learnt throughout the year. This event is also used as the tool to evaluate the impact of the Programme.



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Hereunder find listed the centres, organisations and schools where the Outreach Programme is teaching dance.

Special Needs Centres

- Emerald Hill School for the Deaf-children with hearing problem
- Jairos Jiri (Southerton)-physically challenged children
- St Giles School-physically challenged, blinds and deaf children
- St Catherine's School ómentally challenged children
- Tinokwirira School- mentally challenged children
- Batsirai School- mentally challenged children
- Ruvimbo School- mentally challenged children
- Tynwald Psychiatric Unit- mentally ill patients
- Lørche Zimbabwe-special needs
- Sharon Cohen ó special needs


Children's Homes/Orphanages

- SOS children's village Harare ó orphans
- Mavambo
- Harare Children's Home- orphans
- Chinyaradzo Children's Home
- Vivanetwork outreach programme in Hatcliffe
- *SOS children's outreach programme in Budiro, Glen Noah and GlenView
- "Streets Ahead" community group -street children

Schools in high-density suburbs

- Nhamburiko primary óspecial class
- Chikurubi primary school
- GlenView no 8 primary school

To date the Programme is reaching out to an average of 720 children and youths in the great Harare and expansion to other towns is restricted by lack of funds. The Dance Therapy Programme was used at the Harare General Hospital psychiatric Unit and has helped the outpatients to gain their mental and physical well being, to heal the emotional pain of the patients and enable them to realise stress and tension through movement. These classes have been stopped owing to shortage of funding.



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- **Co-ordinator**
- **Associate Coordinator**
- **Administrator**
- **Accountant**
- **6 Teachers**

Technical Assistance

- Dance workshops ó Educational Dance workshops etc.
- Capacity building workshops and dance techniques studies for teachers.
- Dance classes for maintenance of the technique for the teachers.
- Performance and workshops for children.

Conclusion

The Outreach Programme is a project worthy of support, especially at the present time, when people are experiencing extreme stress and hardship in their lives. There is a need to break the obstacle between those who are able bodied and those with special needs. That is the reason why the Outreach Programme took the initiative of breaking the barrier and uniting people from all walks of life. The Programme is educating those with learning difficulties through the (edudance) educational dancing components, linking the most vulnerable people in our society by means of dance classes, workshops and shows, and giving foundation-based classes to the youth, who might have a desire to take up dance as a career and enrol with the Dance Foundation Course. If the Outreach Programme, has sufficient funding, a number of youths can be taken off the streets and start something meaningful. Criminal activities and drug abuse in the society can be reduced by providing the youth with something to focus upon. To date the Outreach Programme has identified potential talented youths that after receiving training in dance, have gained employment locally, regionally and internationally. Their lives have been transformed and they are now role models to the young, who are still growing in the field of Arts.