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**The Arts in Development:
An Investigation of the Contribution
of Contemporary Dance
to Development in Urban Fiji**

**A thesis presented
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Philosophy in Development Studies
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the contribution of the arts to development, taking the cultural turn in development as its point of entry. It treads new ground in that the cultural turn, largely, does not examine the specific area of ‘the arts’ as deliberate and heightened expressions of culture (Pérez González, 2008:11). Complementing the cultural turn’s emphasis on agency and multiplicity, the thesis also argues for the location of the arts within the aspiration for choice and freedom (Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1999), and it looks to alternative development for modes of ‘doing’ development. These are models driven by concerns for participation, therefore, recognising agency, diversity, freedom and voice. A model is developed delineating three possible levels of contribution of the arts to development and suggesting that the inherent value of the arts underlies and unlocks the economic and other instrumental values that they also possess (McCarthy *et al*, 2004:37-39).

This research uses a qualitative research methodology. Fieldwork was carried out in Suva, Fiji, with a focus on Vou Dance Company, a part-time, semi-professional dance group. Qualitative methodology was appropriate to the research because it responds to the importance that is placed on the search for values and meanings within the understanding of development as freedom as well as in the cultural turn and alternative development. Three methods of data collection were used. These were observation, participant and key informant interviews, and a participatory dance workshop.

The research findings established a multifaceted definition of development and supported all of the types of contribution of the arts suggested by the model developed in this thesis in attaining development. The members of Vou and other respondents emphasised the importance of choice and perceive themselves as responsible for making choices available to others. A balancing of the economic contribution of the arts against values regarded as ‘inherent’, particularly those relating to preservation of elements of (traditional) culture, alongside the negotiation of hybrid contemporary identities, was consistent across all respondents. An analysis of national, regional and global policy documents revealed alignment of policy at all levels to these twin emphases of economy, and heritage and identity.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	vii
Acronyms and Abbreviations	viii
Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Personal Background and Research Interest	2
Research Aim, Questions and Methodology	4
Background and Context	5
<i>Vou Dance Company</i>	5
<i>The context of Fiji</i>	6
Concepts and Definitions	10
<i>Culture</i>	10
<i>The arts</i>	12
<i>Conceptual tensions</i>	13
Structure of the Thesis	14
Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	16
Concepts of Development	16
<i>Development as progress</i>	17
<i>Challenges to the modernist development paradigm</i>	20
<i>Development as freedom</i>	21
<i>The cultural turn in development</i>	23
<i>Alternative development</i>	24
The Contribution of the Arts to Development	25
<i>Inherent contributions - art as development</i>	28
<i>Economic contributions - art as income generation</i>	31

<i>Instrumental contributions - art for development</i>	32
Arts and Culture Policy	34
Conclusion	39
Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY	40
Research Aim and Questions	40
<i>Aim</i>	40
<i>Research questions</i>	40
Qualitative Enquiry	41
Guiding Principles of the Research	44
<i>Positionality</i>	44
<i>Reflexivity</i>	44
<i>Power</i>	45
<i>Reciprocity</i>	46
The Formal Ethics Process	47
<i>Informed consent</i>	47
<i>Potential harm and confidentiality</i>	48
Methods of Data Collection	49
<i>Observation</i>	50
<i>A dance workshop</i>	53
<i>The workshop process</i>	53
<i>Semi-structured, in-depth interviews</i>	55
<i>Key informant interviews</i>	55
<i>Participant interviews</i>	56
<i>Document analysis</i>	57
Data Analysis	59
Conclusion	59
Chapter 4 FIELDWORK FINDINGS	60
A Definition or Vision of Development	60
<i>Clarification and debriefing</i>	64
Contributions of the Arts to Development	65
<i>The inherent contribution of the arts to development</i>	65

<i>Freedom</i>	66
<i>Inclusion</i>	70
<i>Enriching and giving meaning to lives</i>	72
<i>Assertion and reclamation of identity and heritage</i>	75
<i>Resistance</i>	79
<i>Overview of the inherent contribution of the arts to development</i>	82
<i>The arts in economic development</i>	83
<i>Government policy perspectives</i>	83
<i>Perspectives of government-linked agencies</i>	84
<i>Artist perspectives</i>	85
<i>Instrumental uses of the arts</i>	88
Policy at the National, Regional and Global Levels	93
<i>Policy and the economic contribution of the arts</i>	93
<i>Policy and the assertion and reclamation of identity and heritage</i>	94
<i>Policy on inclusion</i>	96
Conclusion	98
Chapter 5 ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS	99
Sub-question 1: How is ‘development’ understood by a group of urban, semi-professional dancers in Fiji?	100
<i>A definition of development</i>	100
<i>The use of an arts-based method</i>	104
Sub-question 2: In what ways do the arts, in particular contemporary dance, contribute to the achievement of development as conceptualised by this group of urban, semi-professional dancers in Fiji?	107
<i>The inherent value of the arts in development</i>	107
<i>Assertion and reclamation of identity and heritage</i>	108
<i>Enrichment of lives and inclusion</i>	110
<i>Freedom and resistance</i>	111
<i>The arts in economic development</i>	113
<i>Other instrumental uses of the arts</i>	117

Sub-question 3: To what extent do arts and/or culture policy at the Fiji national, Pacific regional and global levels respond to the demands of development as conceptualised by this group of urban, semi-professional dancers in Fiji?	119
Conclusion	123
Chapter 6 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE	125
Implications for Development Policy and Practice	128
<i>Recommendations for further research</i>	129
Conclusion	130
References	131
Appendices	143
<i>Appendix 1</i> Schedules of Interview Questions	143
<i>Appendix 2</i> Information Sheet	150

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	The Culture-Arts Relationship and Tensions	10
Figure 2	Inherent and Instrumental Contributions of the Arts to Development	27
Figure 3	Arts and Culture in Development – Policy Flows and Directions	120

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Methods of Research by Research Sub-Question	49
Table 2	Observation of Vou Dance Company	52
Table 3	Observation of Other Events	52
Table 4	Key Informant Interviews	56
Table 5	Vou Dance Company Interviews	57
Table 6	Documents Analysed	58

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
AFS	American Field Service
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (United States of America)
CPA	Council of Pacific Arts
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
EU	European Union
FAC	Fiji Arts Council
FAVC	Fiji Audio Visual Commission
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (Netherlands)
IGP	Income Generating Project
NAFTA	North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement
NCBBF	National Council for Building a Better Fiji
OCACPS	Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
SAAT	Southern African AIDS Training
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TRIMs	Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures (of the WTO)
TRIPS	Agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (of the WTO)
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USP	University of the South Pacific
WTO	World Trade Organisation
ZWW	Zimbabwe Women Writers