



Networks, knowhow and visibility

- A resume of the evaluation of DaNY Arts

The Danish Evaluation Institute, 2008.

DaNY Arts differs from other Danish cultural exchange projects. As a rule, previous Danish cultural efforts consisted of separate theatre performances, concerts, readings or exhibits linked together by some general event. With DaNY Arts, the Danish Arts Council departed from the idea of arranging common presentations of Danish art and culture. For DaNY Arts, the cornerstone is not the event itself but building up a network among artists. The individual projects were initiated directly by cultural institutions or artists who applied for funding to enter into a collaboration. This means that the focus is on the *process* in the form of collaboration, building networks, and gaining know-how instead of a final artistic product. In addition, DaNY Arts as a project method is characterized by having two application rounds. In the first round, both American and Danish artists apply for funding to establish a partnership and to develop an idea. In the second round, the focus is on the establishment of the partnership itself and executing the idea. Here, too, both Danish and American artists may apply.

This evaluation report focuses on strengths and weaknesses in DaNY Arts as a project method and explores how the project method has helped achieve the goals set for networks, know-how, and visibility.

In relation to the first goal of creating networks, the evaluation report shows that solid networks have been forged between Danish and American artists to such a degree that 85 % of the funding recipients believe that DaNY Arts has to a high degree or to some degree created lasting contacts. In addition, the evaluation report shows that the networks have spread farther than the original partnerships, so that

approximately two-thirds of the funding recipients anticipate that they will initiate projects in New York together with partners other than their original partners or with people outside their partner's network. Finally, the evaluation report also shows that DaNY Arts has resulted in projects outside New York for approximately a third of the funding recipients. Moreover, the project has also strengthened networks at an institutional level between the Danish Arts Council, the Danish Arts Agency and the Consulate General of Denmark in New York City, on one hand, and representatives of cutting-edge cultural institutions and central figures in the New York arts scene through the American Advisory Group (AAG). Furthermore, a goal of DaNY Arts was to help artists acquire a knowledge and skill level to function on the New York arts scene – and this, according to the artists, has been accomplished to a high degree. The most important source for this has been the collaboration with their American partner. That the artists themselves were the initiating factor and had to find their own way in the artistic environment – with respect to contracts for venues and museums, contact with collaborative partners, marketing, fund-raising and much more – has given the funding recipients a solid, operational knowledge about how one navigates in the artistic scene in New York. This is a type of knowledge, tailor-made for the individual artist, would presumably not have been realized if the initiating force had been from a centrally-placed promoter. Finally, the evaluation report also shows that DaNY Arts has given the participants a range of more personal skills in the form of insight into working conditions on the international art stage and, thus, a valuable opportunity to reflect on working conditions in Denmark. In this way, DaNY Arts has also functioned as a form of "artistic continuing education" that also benefits the artists' work on the national stage.

As a third and final goal, a heightened visibility for Danish art in New York and internationally was desired. The evaluation report shows that four out of five funding recipients believe that DaNY Arts to a high degree or to some degree helped increase their visibility in New York. In this way, DaNY Arts has made the individual artist visible on his/her own premises, but by virtue of the DaNY Arts project's overall scope and artistic gravitas this has also meant increased visibility for Denmark as an artistic nation – in particular, because the project method itself has been so innovative(?) that it has increased the profile of the project. In other words, it has been effective to lower the flag and put collaboration with the local arts scene at the centre.

However, the evaluation report also shows that there are areas in the framework and structure that should be attended to if a similar project is to be launched in New York or elsewhere.

First of all, it seems vital that, as under DaNY Arts, ownership of the project is created on the local arts scene through thorough research into interest in the project and by establishing good collaborative relationships with central local figures such as, for example, an advisory body like the AAG.

Second, consideration should be given to whether some aspects of the advice provided to individual funding recipients can be strengthened or centralized, since several funding recipients have noted that a great deal of time was taken from the artistic process by the organization of practical matters such as travel planning, research, fundraising, visa

applications, etc. In addition, individual counselling also led to significant pressure on administrative offices, since it is difficult to assess in advance service level needs and allocation of resources in relation to an unknown number of projects at a particular point in time and without prior knowledge of the nature and size of the projects. Another model might be to strengthen the framework for an exchange of experiences between funding recipients, so they can support each other in connection with this problem, which would at the same time reinforce the network between them.

Third, the Danish Arts Council should think about the conditions for granting funds in a similar project. The evaluation report shows that, according to the artists and officials, financial issues have taken up a disproportionate amount of time and effort for the funding recipients, since the vast majority received less than half the support they had requested. In addition, it was difficult to obtain support from American foundations due to pressure on the American foundations and also from Danish foundations because they are used to artists seeking funding to create a product and not for a collaborative process, as was the case here.

Fourth, the length of the overall project should be considered, as well as requirements for the execution of the individual projects. The evaluation report shows that the projects were carried out like "pearls on a necklace" in the spring of 2007 but that, subsequently, there has been a certain quantitative drop-off. This means that some of the projects have actually not yet been held, even though DaNY Arts as a project officially concluded in May 2008. In light of the fact that the volume of the DaNY Arts project has been an important factor for Denmark's visibility as an artistic nation, making the requirements for the holding of the projects more precise should be considered.

Fifth and finally, the evaluation report indicates that there is a need to discuss the concept of follow-up in such network-based projects. In many ways, the project method can be said to have a built-in follow-up because, as the evaluation report shows, the artists have already commenced new projects in New York and in other countries and they have expectations of launching more. However, it is still important to discuss the extent to which these projects should be supported by the Danish Arts Council's funding for international projects. In addition, networks created at an institutional level between members of the AAG and the Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency must also be maintained, since they are, to some degree, the foundation for the projects of the individual artists. Therefore, it is important to explain how the concept of follow-up can be strengthened and made operational.

Generally speaking, DaNY Arts seems to have achieved impressive results with respect to all three goals. At the same time, the artists are clearly split between an appreciation for flexibility and freedom, on one hand, and a desire for tighter control of the projects and closer guidance, on the other. This must be seen in light of the fact that the artists acknowledge it is through the network that they acquired the greatest visibility and know-how, even though it has meant challenging work conditions for some of them.

On the evaluation report

The evaluation report is based on:

- An internal evaluation by the Danish Arts Agency and the Consulate General of Denmark
- A questionnaire answered by all funding recipients
- personal interviews with ten selected project partners
- mini-group interviews with the AAG
- desk research.

It was The Danish Evaluation Institute's (EVA's) job to make its methodological and practical expertise available to carry out the evaluation. On the other hand, it is not within EVA's area of expertise to provide a professional artistic evaluation of the projects under DaNY Arts. Therefore, the evaluation report is focussed solely on the concrete results DaNY Arts fostered and other aspects of the project method and its implementation. I.e., it is not this evaluation's purpose to assess, for example, whether the right applicants received funding or the artistic quality of the activities that resulted from the funding.

The evaluation report is based on the projects that have received funding in the second application round and related projects directly linked to DaNY Arts. Due to a prioritization of resources for evaluation, the evaluation report has been designed in a way so that it does not directly assess the derivative effects of DaNY Arts. For example, we do not ask the artists who received funding exclusively in the first round what they got out of this funding.

In connection with the prioritization of the evaluation design, it was determined not to submit a questionnaire to the American collaborative partners. However, the American collaborative partners were involved in the interviews concerning the five cases, just as the role of the American collaborative partners in the project was discussed in the interviews undertaken by the Consulate General. Data on contact with the Danish Arts Agency and the Consulate General, however, must be interpreted in the light of the fact that the Danish funding recipients alone are involved in the questionnaire.

More detail on the purposes, limitations and basis of the evaluation report may be found in Appendix C.

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The construction of the report

Chapter 2 presents five selected cases whose participants we have interviewed. The purpose is to provide inspiration for other funding recipients in similar projects.

Chapter 3 deals with the project method of DaNY Arts, including the characteristic features of the project method and how it has been implemented in the application process, counselling, exchange of experiences, project execution, and financing.

Chapter 4 focuses on the partnerships and networks that have been created by DaNY Arts, how they were created, and what results can be expected from the networks.

Chapter 5 deals with skills and know-how – among other things, what know-how the artists view as important, and how they have absorbed this know-how.

Chapter 6 has to do with visibility, including what forms of visibility are important for the artists and the extent to which DaNY Arts has taken into account both national visibility and visibility for the individual artists.

Chapter 7 discusses the overall results from DaNY Arts, how the project should be followed up, and the strengths and weaknesses of the project method.

In the appendices may be found a comprehensive list of recommendations, the Danish Arts Council's project description of DaNY Arts in which the goals for the project are set forth, a review of the evaluation's methodological foundation, and the internal evaluation of the Danish Arts Agency and the Consulate General.

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The overall results

The purpose of this section is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the overall project method, including the project method's applicability for different project types.

Derivative effects of DaNY Arts

What the most important effect of a project such as DaNY Arts is, is an issue that can be debated. Is it the initiation of new artistic activities in New York? Or new activities outside New York? Or is it artistic development that Danish artists can use in Denmark? As already described in table 14, the questionnaire shows that the majority of funding recipients expect that they will launch projects in New York within the next two years – together with their application partner, others from the partner's network, or completely different collaborative partners from New York. Furthermore, table 22 shows that 36 % assess that their participation in DaNY Arts has generated projects outside of the US. This includes, *inter alia*, projects in Copenhagen, Berlin, Finland, Istanbul, Japan, Canada and Switzerland.

Table 22

Has the program in New York generated projects outside the US?

	Number	Percent
Yes	12	36 %
No	21	63 %
Total	33	100 %
In total (N = 33)		

Source: Questionnaire responses from Danish funding recipients in the second round.

The Danish Arts Agency and the Consulate General also estimate that the effect of DaNY Arts will spread far beyond the 42 projects. Although it is difficult to assess what may trigger an engagement in New York, the fact is that, since DaNY Arts, there have been exhibitions of Danish art at MoMA and the Brooklyn Museum and, more recently, a gigantic water installation by Olafur Eliasson – all projects that cannot be traced directly back to DaNY Arts but, nevertheless, most likely came about because of the general increase in attention Danish art has received among art consultants and other movers and shakers in New York.

Derivative effects in the form of new projects are one thing; something else again is the form of artistic continuing education that the project has been for many participants. We have asked the funding recipients about the extent to which their project under DaNY Arts lived up to their initial plans for the project – the majority believe this was the case, as can be seen in table 23.

Table 23**To what degree do you believe that your project has lived up to your initial plans for the project?**

	Number	Percent
To a high degree	17	61 %
To some degree	10	36 %
To a lesser degree	1	4 %
Total	28	100 %
In total (N = 28)		

Source: Questionnaire responses from funding recipients in the second round.

Moreover, table 24 shows that over a third believe that the project was to a high degree better than expected; while over half believe that it was better to some degree. These responses may be interpreted as an indication that the encounter with New York's arts scene has helped develop the Danish artists. Consistent with this, the interviews with the participants in the five cases show that all project participants to a high degree experienced their projects as a success, even when they had to cut back on their projects. Instead, they point out that they learned a lot and, as one of the participants put it, the project helped give them quite a bit of professional self-confidence.

Table 24**To what degree do you believe that the project was better than your initial expectations?**

	Number	Percent
To a high degree	10	36 %
To some degree	15	54 %
To a lesser degree	3	11 %
Total	28	100 %
In total (N = 28)		

Source: Questionnaire responses from funding recipients in the second round.

Moreover, the Consulate General concludes that DaNY Arts has also helped to break down a number of psychological barriers for artists who have not participated in DaNY Arts, because word has spread that it is possible to create networks in New York. This may be seen, among other ways, in the rising number of inquiries the Consulate General has received from Danish artists.

For whom has the project method been most effective?

In the questionnaire, we have consistently looked at whether there was a difference in the participants' assessment of the individual questions depending on their level of experience, the art form they represented, and the extent to which they were independent, a part of an organization, etc. However, there have proved to be surprisingly few differences, which is why it is difficult to ascertain whether the funding method is more effective for certain types of funding recipients than others. The interviews with the three AAG members and the participants

in the five cases indicate, however, that it is significant whether a partnership consists of a group or an institution or of individuals. Moreover, there is a difference as to whether it is a practicing artist who has applied for funding or whether it is a curator or manager. This especially plays a role with respect to the goal of gaining know-how and is dependent on how much know-how the applicant has beforehand. For an individual artist, putting together the project description and other more practical matters take up a relatively large amount of time, which in turn takes time away from the artistic process. By contrast, a curator or an institution inherently represents a source of know-how to which it is crucial for artists to have access. Consistent with this, the Consulate General believes that the most visible effect was created in those cases in which the collaboration had a relation to a cultural institution. Moreover, the opportunities for follow-up are different when the partnership is linked to an existing structure such as, for example, the PEN festival World Voices.

Strengths and weaknesses

The artists were asked in the questionnaire to assess what, on the whole, has been good about the funding method and what could be better. The artists' assessment of the good features of the project method fall within these four general themes:

- An opportunity to work directly with local artists in New York without necessarily involving an arts institution as a collaborative partner
- Funding for artistic development without a forced focus on a product, which therefore creates space for different forms of artistic production
- A focus on network-creating cooperation and dialogue between artists and art workers, instead of promoting a national agenda, and a focus on working from the bottom up
- Division into two application rounds with an initial idea development phase with financial support and follow-up.

Among the aspects that the funding recipients would like to see improved, the following areas were mentioned:

- Larger funding amounts
- Better communication with the Danish Arts Agency and the Consulate General of Denmark, including more general information meetings and a better website
- Help with marketing and financing in the form of updated press lists, foundation lists, etc.
- Clearer rules for the receipt and use of funding.

Comments in the questionnaires indicate that, generally speaking, the funding recipients have been very enthusiastic about the flexibility and freedom embedded in a method that focuses on the process rather than the product. As the comments show, it is crucial for a positive experience of participation in DaNY Arts that the artists have had an opportunity to work with other artists and to work from the bottom up – so that non-established artists are allowed to lead the way for more established artists. The artists appreciate that they are not required to

produce a national branding project but, instead, can focus on their own artistic process. However, there are a number of comments stressing that this has been a challenge, and several would like to see more support initiatives at a centralized level – from the Danish Arts Agency and the Consulate General – in the form of informational meetings, a homepage, the exchange of experiences, common marketing, etc.

Table 25 shows that the majority of the funding recipients have used 0-10 % of their work time on finances. Artistic development and growth fill surprisingly little in relation to the more practical matters connected with the planning of an international art project. Thus, only 15 % have stated that they spent between 11-20 %, and 12 % have stated that they spent between 21-30 % of their time on artistic development and growth. This indicates that a lot of time is spent on practical measures necessary to create the best possible framework for collaborative artistic projects and to ensure that it gets out to the right people. In line with recommendations 5 and 7, it is thus important to inform the artists about the typical workload that will be a part of a project of this type.

Table 25
How would you assess the overall allocation of your work time on the project in terms of the categories below?

		Financial matters	Establishment of a partnership	Artistic development and growth	Practical matters, for example, visa, travel, etc.	Marketing, communication etc
0-10 %	Number	9	8	2	17	12
	Percent	27	24	6	52	36
11- 20 %	Number	6	7	5	7	9
	Percent	18	21	15	21	27
21-30 %	Number	6	6	4	0	2
	Percent	18	18	12	0	6
More than 30 %	Number	4	4	14	0	1
	Percent	12	12	42	0	3
In total (N = 33)						

Source: Questionnaire responses from funding recipients in the second round.

In the assessment of the DaNY Arts funding method, one may wonder whether the allocation of time should look different. However, this turns to a high degree on what is desirable for the individual artist to get from working in New York. If it is assumed that the artist gets the most out of becoming acquainted with the conditions for acting independently on the arts scene in New York, both the questionnaire and the case interviews show that the funding method has been highly effective. On the other hand, there is a risk that potentially good projects are lost along with way, because they encounter too many practical obstacles – the delays several projects experienced indicate that this could be the case. This broaches a central problem in relation to the funding method and the experiences that the artists, the AAG and the Consulate General have had. Wherein lies the greatest value: in the success of the individual project or in DaNY Arts’ overall success? Should the emphasis be on the process or the product? This evaluation report cannot provide an answer to that question, but the documentation from the questionnaire and the

case interviews indicates that changes can be made in things such as counselling, the sharing of experiences, and financing, if there is a desire for the balance between process, learning and product to be different. There is clearly a split between valuing flexibility and freedom, on one hand, and the desire for more central control, on the other – particularly because, the artists have achieved the greatest visibility and know-how through the network, even though it has been a huge challenge at times. Interestingly, table 26 shows that the vast majority of the funding recipients would like to participate in a similar project if they had the opportunity, while a very small proportion would only participate on different premises.

Table 26
If you had the opportunity, would you participate in a similar project again?

	Number	Percent
Yes	24	86 %
Yes, under different premises	4	14 %
No	0	0 %
Total	28	100 %

In total (N = 28)

Source: Questionnaire responses from funding recipients in the second round.

Follow-up

According to the Danish Arts Agency and the Consulate General of Denmark, the most important task in the coming years is to support Danish artists and cultural institutions in maintaining the local professional networks that have arisen under DaNY Arts. This applies both to networks between the respective artists and art institutions in New York and networks created at an institutional level between the Danish Arts Council and the NYFA and members of the AAG. In many ways, the project method may be said to have a built-in follow-up, since the evaluation report shows that the artists have already initiated new projects in New York and elsewhere and that they have expectations of initiating more. However, it is still important to discuss the extent to which these projects are to be supported by funds from the Danish Arts Council. On the whole, there seems to be a need to discuss what the object of a follow-up should be when projects become more network-based, since a follow-up in these instances would be far more comprehensive.

Recommendations on follow-up for similar projects:

- The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should discuss the concepts of follow-up and the maintenance of networks and what is needed to make these concepts operative.

Overall recommendations

Recommendations for the organization of similar projects:

- 1 The Danish Arts Council should maintain the organization with an operational steering committee and a strong local collaborative partner that can, especially in the selection process, contribute insight into the local arts scene.
- 2 The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should discuss options for following-up on the collaboration created with the AAG and the NYFA.

Recommendations on the application process for similar projects:

- 3 The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should develop the model further with an initial application round and augment counselling for artists in the research phase
- 4 The Danish Arts Council should continue working on application opportunities for representatives from both countries in similar exchange projects since this helps increase the anchoring in the recipient country.

Recommendations for project management of similar projects:

- 5 The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should clarify expectations for how much guidance a project can expect and establish an expected service level in the Danish Arts Agency and the Consulate General
- 6 The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should consider whether more cross-disciplinary activities should be initiated to promote an exchange of experiences between funding recipients – for example, more common introductory orientation meetings.
- 7 The Danish Arts Agency should ensure that there is accord between the established service level and the resources allocated for the Danish Arts Agency and the Consulate General.
- 8 The Danish Arts Agency should ensure that there are clearly designated contact persons and that funding recipients have been introduced to various counselling opportunities, including the relevant representatives abroad.

Recommendations on the execution of similar projects:

- 9 The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should consider whether there should be more explicit requirements for the execution of the projects, so they can better exploit being a part of the overall project and thereby achieve a “pearls on a necklace” effect.

Recommendations for financing similar projects:

- 10 The Danish Arts Council should put together a funding strategy that assesses the expediency of how the money is to be distributed in relation to the number of projects, the amount of funding, and the range of different categories of funding recipients in light of the purpose of the project

11 The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should ensure that there are clearly defined rules for obtaining financing, including prospects for co-financing

12 The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should consider pre-informing foundations and other alternative financing channels or, alternatively, developing an application on behalf of the Danish Arts Council for the overall project.

Recommendations on partnerships and networks in similar projects:

13 The Danish Arts Council should insist that the artists themselves establish partnerships, since a considerable amount of learning is connected to that process.

Recommendations on know-how and skills for similar projects:

14 The Danish Arts Council should ensure that the project material clearly states what assistance artists may expect with respect to the implementation of their project

15 The Danish Arts Council may advantageously make use of comprehensive initiatives to obtain funding for the development of individual artists' skills in specific areas such as, for example, financing, visa applications, etc.

Recommendations for the Danish Arts Council on visibility in similar projects:

16 The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should continue to allow the individual artist freedom to work on visibility with respect to his/her own project

17 The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should make clear what the individual recipient can expect in terms of centralized measures to promote visibility.

Recommendations on follow-up for similar projects:

18 The Danish Arts Council and the Danish Arts Agency should discuss the concepts of follow-up and maintenance of networks and what is needed to make these concepts operative.

Colophon:

'Networks, knowhow and visibility'
Consists of excerpts from the report

'Netværk, knowhow og synlighed'
ISBN (www) 978-87-7958-483-9

Translation from Danish by Russel Dees

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