

**IN THE SEARCH OF AUDIENCE:  
Ideas and Practises of Audience Development in the Regional  
Dance Centers in Finland**

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## ABSTRACT

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<b>Abstract</b>	
<p>In this thesis I will examine audience development both in theory and practise from the viewpoint of an arts manager. In my research I concentrate on a very specific section, i.e. audience development in Finnish contemporary dance. To examine this I have interviewed arts managers, i.e. producers or coordinators of the five centers forming the Network of Regional Centers for Dance. These five semi-structured theme interviews form the empirical research material of my study.</p> <p>In the first part of my study I will present different views and approaches to audience development in the light of previous research. I will also discuss areas closely related to audience development such as attendance and marketing. There is no universally accepted definition of audience development but it is generally agreed on that it includes three aspects: artistic, educational and marketing. All through this thesis my approach in understanding audience development includes all three aspects, as well as the thought of audience development including the two major duties of nurturing, both existing and new audiences.</p> <p>The purpose of my study is to find out how audience development is understood in the field of Finnish contemporary dance by arts managers, what the images and practises of it are and what areas are included in it. I also wanted to learn more about the attitudes that prevail towards audience development; whether audience development would be seen as an important area and worth the effort or would it rather be considered as a duty. In addition I wanted to know if practising audience development has effected on the audience either in quality or quantity, or are there some other benefits that might have occurred because of audience development practise.</p> <p>The most important finding of my study is that there are lot of separate activities and projects in the regional dance centers that obviously belong to audience development but detailed plans, strategies and evaluation of the implemented projects are missing. There is a lack of clear strategy with a strategic focus. I believe that by strategy making, focusing and integrating audience development into the organization the regional dance centers would get the most out of their investments and the benefits of audience development would be more visible. This way also their faith in audience development would increase and its position in the organization would strengthen. In order to do that they need to employ the audience champion and have enough funding for the long-term planning.</p> <p>However, the concept of audience development is young in Finland and it has not been funded like e.g. in the UK. Also the network of regional centers for dance is young and it has demanded a lot of resources to find models for operating. Considering this the efforts for audience development in the centers are prominent.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b>	
audience development, contemporary dance, arts marketing, regional dance centers	
<b>Additional information</b>	

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

My first touch with audience development took place in 2002 when I was preparing a report on a development project of the free field of contemporary dance in Finland with *Sanna Rekola* (*A step towards the future - the final report on a development project of the free field of contemporary dance 2003*)<sup>1</sup>. Although the area is only briefly handled in that report, my interest towards it evoked. In that report we wrote:

“The main objectives in audience development are to open up the content of contemporary dance to wider audiences, to enrich the experience of watching, and to increase and to keep the interest of the existing audiences. Audience development can offer people tools and perspectives to interpret the works, increase expertise and open up the art form, sometimes considered difficult, to new audiences. Professionally implemented marketing and audience development can be elements which support each other when increasing audiences for contemporary dance.” (Koskela & Rekola 2003: 46)<sup>2</sup>.

Then, in the spring 2004 *Johanna Laakkonen*, the executive director of the *Finnish Dance Information Centre* at the time, invited me to a working group that was planning an audience development workshop for dance practitioners. In order to know what should be included in that workshop the Finnish Dance Information Centre made an inquiry for the Finnish dance companies and groups. The results of this inquiry are not available for the public but those involved received a memo of it. On the basis of this inquiry it can be said that only a few groups practise audience development regularly.

Audience development has clearly not been in the list of priorities for the practitioners or in Finnish cultural politics. The concept is only now finding its way into arts organizations. Along with the establishment of the regional dance centers in 2004

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<sup>1</sup> *Askel tulevaisuuteen – tanssin vapaan kentän kehittämishankkeen loppuraportti 2003.*

<sup>2</sup> ”Yleisötyön keskeisenä tavoitteena ovat tanssitaiteen sisältöjen avaaminen laajemmalle yleisölle, katsomiskokemusten syventäminen ja esitysten yleisömäärien kasvattaminen ja vakiinnuttaminen. Yleisötyö voi tarjota yleisölle välineitä ja näkökulmia esitysten tulkintaan, lisätä yleisön asiantuntijuutta ja avata joskus vaikeaksi koettua nykytanssia uusille katsojaryhmille. Ammattitaitoisesti toteutettu markkinointi ja yleisötyö voivat olla toisiaan tukevia elementtejä tanssin yleisömäärien kasvattamisessa.”

outreach, participation and developing audiences seem to have become important topics. *Zodiak – Center for New Dance/Regional Dance Centre in Helsinki* employed a person for audience development in 2005, being the first contemporary dance organization to do so.

Several young artists have expressed their worries concerning the lack of audience. Finnish web-magazine for dance *liikekieli.com* (2005) asked in its *Hot potato –column* in November 2005 what would be the most effective way to create more interest towards dance and increase audiences in Finland. Several artists, producers and others interested in the issue participated in the discussion and offered different ways and means for widening the audience pool. Even though it was generally agreed in this discussion that there is no instant way of doing this, the importance of developing audiences was seen important. “Without the visibility of dance there is no audience, without audience there is no financial support from the state and without this financial support there is no work for artists in this country.” (Freundlich & Raekallio 2005)<sup>3</sup>.

## 1.2 Object and Structure of the Study

There is no universally accepted definition of audience development and the opinions of what it might include vary. According to *Debi Hayes* and *Alix Slater* (2002: 2) at present the most widely cited is *Rick Rogers’* definition that recognizes the importance to nurture existing as well as new audiences. Rogers (1998: 7) also stresses the importance of bringing together the artistic, educational and marketing elements of the arts organization to achieve the objectives of audience development. *Heather Maitland* (1997: 5) claims that audience development tends to be initiated by three types of art workers: education workers, artists and marketers, who all share a common belief that audience development is a planned process which enhances and broadens specific individuals’ experiences of the arts. All through this thesis my approach in understanding audience development includes all three aspects, i.e. the artistic, educational and marketing as well as the thought of audience development including the two major duties of nurturing both existing and new audiences.

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<sup>3</sup> ”Ilman tanssitaiteen näkyvyyttä ei ole katsojia, ilman katsojia ei ole valtionapua ja ilman valtionapua ei tässä maassa ole työtä taiteilijoille.”

The two styles of audience development presented by Hayes & Slater (2002) are missionary and mainstream approaches that are both important. Contemporary dance needs the missionary style, i.e. attracting new groups of audiences. However, that is not enough. It might well be that we are not able to get those with indifferent or negative feelings into the audience, not anyway in the short term. This is why the existing audience is very important and mainstream audience development should not be neglected. Organizations in the field must see that the existing audience is looked after so that people keep coming back.

The ultimate motive for audience development as well as the emphasis of it are different in every organization. I look at audience development from the viewpoint of arts manager as concentrating on the development of the arts organization and the art form it represents, unlike art education which concentrates on the recipient and his/her personal development. However, it is essential that audience development refers back to the artistic work and mission of the organization, which should not forget about its core business (Rogers 1998: 7).

Audience development is only one section in the arts management spectrum yet an important one. *Derrick Chong* (2002: 14) argues that all arts organizations need to address three mutually supporting commitments: to excellence and artistic integrity, to accessibility and audience development, and to public accountability and cost effectiveness. This study concentrates on the second commitment, which causes a strong relationship with arts management. In this thesis I will examine audience development both in theory and practice from the viewpoint of an arts manager. In my research I concentrate on a very specific section, i.e. audience development in Finnish contemporary dance. To examine this I have interviewed the arts managers, i.e. producers/coordinators of the five centers forming the *Network of Regional Centers for Dance*.

The empiric part of my study concentrates on the collected data and the analysis of it. In order to accomplish deeper understanding of my research problem I will first discuss the previous theories and research of the subject concentrating on the definition of audience development, clarifying the terminology and discussing the related areas of attendance

and arts marketing (chapter 2). To set a more accurate framework for the empirical part of the study I will also present a brief framework of contemporary dance (chapter 3). This chapter also introduces the Network of Regional Centers for Dance. Chapter four will present previous research of contemporary dance audiences and findings of the Dance Information Centre's inquiry (chapter 4). Chapter five will then present the results of the collected data and chapter six will present the conclusions in which I will discuss the most important findings of the analyzed data in connection with the ideas presented in the theory part. This chapter will also include suggestions for further research on the area.

The purpose of my study is to find out how audience development is understood in the field of Finnish contemporary dance by arts managers, what the images and practises of it are and what areas are included in it. I also wanted to learn more about the attitudes that prevail towards audience development; whether audience development would be seen as an important area and worth the effort or would it rather be considered as a duty that must be done now that the centers exist. In addition I wanted to know if practising audience development has paid off; has it effected on the audience either in quality or in quantity, or are there some other benefits that might have occurred because of audience development practise - has it actually been useful to the organizations.

### **1.3 Research Methodology**

The empirical research material of my study consists of five semi-structured theme interviews with the arts managers that represent the five regional centers for dance. It was a conscious choice for me to select the The Regional Centers for Dance as my study subject. First of all I believe that the centers located in different parts of Finland could offer me an overview of the state of the Finnish audience development work. Other important reason was that audience development is one of the defined tasks that are expected of the centers by the Ministry of Education. This is the first time audience development is mentioned and required from an arts organization in the field of dance by the ministry. Before the subsidy system has not obliged such activities. Even though the regional centers have been operating only for a short period of time I felt this fact was important.

Other possible way of collecting data would have been to interview a few different individual dance companies or collect the data in a form of a questionnaire, which would have been sent out to several different dance companies in Finland. However, since The Dance Information Centre already did this I chose not to repeat it. I also believe that the regional dance centers that have started to operate in 2004 and 2005 are in a key position of setting directions to audience development practices in the country. In addition, interviewing just five people - carefully selected people who have an idea of their region as a whole - I believe I was able to get a wider and deeper look at the issue and was also able to find out information that wouldn't have been there in the form of a questionnaire. By interviewing the regional centers I wished to get a comprehensive view of audience development in the whole country.

The only research I was able to find of this particular area was the inquiry made by the Dance Information Centre. This inquiry did not include a definition of audience development but concentrated on the following areas: the regularity of audience development, its forms and successful models, target groups, initiators and those responsible for it, prerequisites, motives and resources. I felt a need to study the issue in more detail and qualitative research was therefore required.

In qualitative research interview has typically been the main method. The advantage of an interview is that the persons that are planned to be included in the research are usually reached and involved in the research. Also, if necessary, they are to be reached later on for additional information. (Hirsjärvi & al 2005: 194-195). In this research I used semi-structured theme interviews. According to *Hirsjärvi* and *Hurme* (2000) this method is closer to unstructured than structured interview. The idea of semi-structured interview is that the areas and themes of the interview are same for everyone but questions are not tied with certain form or order, nor are they tied with any alternative choices but the interviewees are allowed to use their own words to describe the matter or opinion. Semi-structured interview has some aspects that are determined before hands but not all. (Hirjärvi & Hurme 2000: 47-48).

The interviews were conducted between June and September 2006. All of the interviewees are experienced workers in the contemporary dance sector and they are

now working for the regional dance centers in different parts in Finland. Four of them are “purely” arts managers with no background in artistic work where as one has a double role both in managing and being an artist. The interviewees are: *Helena Jäykkä*, the executive director of Jojo – Oulu Dance Center/ in charge of the financial matters at the Regional Dance Center in Northern Finland, *Vilja Ruokolainen*, producer at the Regional dance center Kuopio, *Katja Kirsi*, officer in audience development at Zodiak Center for New Dance/Regional dance center in Helsinki, *Jaana Lämsä*, the coordinator at the Regional Dance Center of Western Finland and *Anniina Kumpuniemi*, the chairman of the board at the Central Finland Regional Dance Center/choreographer and dancer in Mobita/Dansco dance company. Before the interview the interviewees received a short description of the research area. The questions followed themes that I had defined in advance. The themes in the interviews included:

1. What is audience development?
2. What kind of role does it play in the organization now?
3. Who is in charge of it and how to coordinate the whole region’s projects?
4. Projects and activities in audience development
5. The existing audience base
6. What kind of goals are there in audience development – what could be gained?
7. The new groups/people that could or are wanted to be reached
8. What kind of resources are required in order to practise audience development?
9. Cultural politics and audience development
10. Role of audience development in the future

Some of those themes resemble the questions in the Dance Information Centre inquiry but the difference is that in the face-to-face interviews alternative choices were not offered. Instead the interviewees spoke freely of the subject in hand. Sometimes the discussion moved further from those themes to side paths. I however, mostly allowed this to happen because I believe even those “paths” were actually important for the whole discussion and they helped me to get a better understanding of the framework in which these regional centers practise their audience development. The Dance Information Centre’s inquiry” didn’t include a definition of audience development where as I felt it was the most essential question considering that the field hasn’t had a long tradition in Finland. I needed to understand what my interviewees thought audience development is before we could discuss it any further.

I conducted the interviews face-to-face and recorded them. The language used in the interviews was Finnish because it is the mother tongue of all participants. Later on the recorded material was written down. I have kept the language of the interviewees original because I feel it is important for the readers to hear the interviewees “own voices”. Only some additional, unnecessary words e.g. “you know, like, sort of” etc. are sometimes left off from the quotations I use in this paper. By doing this I wanted to make the language of my interviewees a bit more readable to the readers. I have chosen to present the text quotations both in Finnish and English because I want to offer the Finnish readers the possibility to enjoy the original language of the interviewees. Unfortunately, in the English translations the language is more formal than the Finnish spoken language.

I want to point out that the meaning of my study is not to evaluate or criticize each organizations functioning. Rather I wanted to find out what their understanding of audience development is, what kind of role it plays in the organization and what the practise is like. I also wanted to learn what might be different at each center and are there maybe common views, practises or problems in this field. By mapping out the sector of audience development in this way I wanted to get an overall understanding of the state of audience development in contemporary dance. Even though the main purpose of my study is not to present a complete solution or model for audience development I hope that I can offer some suggestions of how to develop and better manage the sector of audience development.

## **2. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT**

This chapter introduces different audience development definitions and theoretical framework. I will also discuss areas closely attached to audience development. Those are audience, attendance, participation and arts marketing. This framework provides the foundation for the analysis of the empirical part of the study in chapter five. The analysis of the data will be provided in chapter five.

### **2.1 What is Audience Development?**

In Finland audience development is a new, emerging field, and there is hardly any existing literature or researches available of the subject. In order to find some explanations or roots I have to turn to UK where this discipline has existed in some form at least from the year 1945 (Hayes 2003: 28). More strongly the concept started appearing in the UK in the latter half of the 1990's when it according to Hayes and Slater became a mantra of arts and museum practitioners. Audience development has remained a priority for many art organizations since. (Hayes & Slater 2002:1).

As mentioned in the introduction part, there is no commonly agreed definition of audience development. There are, in fact, plenty of definitions and models in which each author presents their own interpretation of the subject. Naturally, these interpretations and views of audience development are somewhat similar. Some of the key ingredients that are included in the majority of descriptions of audience development are educational, marketing and artistic aspects and the important task of developing a relationship with the audience and arts.

Arts Council of England has produced a number of reports of audience development. One of these is arts marketing consultant Heather Maitland's step-by-step guidebook to promote better understanding and practise of audience development. The three aspects (education, marketing, artistic) can be found in Maitland's (1997) report where she states that the three aspects mentioned are all equally valid. She sees that there is a

difference only because artists, education workers and marketers approach the concept of audience development from different directions. Maitland also stresses that audience development is a planned process, which involves building a relationship between an individual and the arts. This task is time consuming and cannot happen by itself. In order to develop these relationships arts and cultural organizations must work for it. Audience development involves breaking down the physical, psychological and social barriers which stop people participating in or attending the arts. (Maitland 1997: 5-6, 9).

Debi Hayes, a researcher and a principal lecturer in arts management at the University of Greenwich, describes audience development as an “amorphous concept that describes a wide range of activities with varied outcomes that are achieved utilising one or a blend set of skill sets.” She sees that audience development is essentially concerned with changing the structure and composition of audiences to achieve democratic participation in the arts and to engender greater levels of trust and commitment (loyalty) among existing and fledging audience groups. (Hayes 2003: 1).

*Nobuko Kawashima* (2002), a researcher at the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies in the UK, states that audience development could be understood as being concerned with broadening the audience base in both quantitative and qualitative terms and enriching the experience of customers. Kawashima also argues that the policy of audience development has been based on the Liberal Humanistic idea of culture for all in contrast to the sociological view that culture in practice is a means for marking and reproducing social distinction. (Kawashima 2002: 3-4).

Rick Rogers (1998) who is the author of another ACE’s report sees audience development as a holistic and integrative activity that requires skills of marketing, education and programming. Audience development aims at achieving a series of short-, medium – and long-term objectives, which increase broaden and enrich the targeted groups. (Rogers 1998: 14). He also points out that for arts organizations it is essential to nurture existing as well as new audiences. “...quantitatively and qualitatively targeting new sectors in innovative ways to broaden the arts audience base, then nurturing new attenders, along with existing audiences, to encourage them to grow with the organization”. (Rogers 1998: 7).

The core of audience development can be thought in those terms presented above but the concept is actually more complex and in practise there seems to be confusion even with the terminology. This is the case at least in the Finnish language. Other similar terms such as audience education and arts education are often used parallel and even synonymously with audience development.

Why is audience development important? According to Hayes (2003: 18) audience development is the “life-blood of arts organization”. Arts organizations have different kind of objectives they have to meet such as artistic, financial and social objectives and combinations of those. Audience development is a way of achieving those objectives. (Maitland 1997, Rogers 1998). The driving forces in audience development are complex; moral and philosophical arguments in combination with the market led approach of measuring arts subsidy in economic and social terms (Hayes & Slater 2002: 1). Kawashima (2000: 10) states that the benefits of audience development are supposed to be greater financial security for the arts industry, an increase in artistic opportunities and the improving of social cohesion and individual development and fulfilment.

## **2.2 Clarifying Terms**

Before going any further on describing the dimensions of audience development I feel it is necessary in this study to make an attempt to define concepts arts education (taidekasvatus), audience education (yleisökasvatus) and audience development (yleisötyö, joskus myös yleisön kehittämistyö) and explain the differences but also show the parts where they might overlap.

Education in the arts has a long tradition in the UK. *Paul Owens* (1998) has written a report of arts organizations and education. He claims: “Education in the arts is part of the growing armoury of methods employed to attract and retain audiences, participants and funders.”(Owens 1998: 6). I find this definition applicable to audience development as well. The question is whether all education in the art organizations is actually audience development. How do the aims and motives of audience development and educational activities differ? Owens presents three main tendencies or groups of arguments for education in art organizations: *The Art-Centred Tendency* provides the

existing and potential audiences with the tools to understand appreciate and enjoy the arts. *The People-Centred Tendency* opens up direct experience of the arts. Education acts as a means of personal development through the arts. *The Institution- Centred Tendency* understands education as a tool for achieving certain organizational aims (Owens 1998: 10.) I find that in Owen's research terms education and development overlap in many occasions and these three tendencies could also be seen in the policies or motives of audience development although the Institution-Centred Tendency is the one that most obviously fits in with audience development. The common feature, however, in all three tendencies is their need to engage actively with audiences (Owens 1998: 9).

Kawashima (2002: 10) has described the difference between arts education and audience education: "Arts education may be for the virtue of education, or personal development, to which the arts contribute, whereas Audience Education in contrast has a clearer focus on audience, whether existing or potential, and education is an implicit means for making the arts accessible to audiences.". On the basis of this definition it seems that audience education is included in audience development but arts education is its own individual brand. Rogers (1998: 1) explains that education can work without audience development, but it is hard to imagine real audience development without education. He sees that education is an access for a wide range of groups and individuals and that access can be achieved only if education and marketing join forces effectively.

Heather Maitland (1997: 5) states that of the three types of art workers who carry out audience development education workers focus on the individual and the art form as a whole. The importance relies on the quality of the individual participant's educational experience and the development of their understanding of the arts. This is often seen as "creating the audience of tomorrow".

In practise art organizations may well practise arts education programs inside audience development. In this study education is handled as an implicit means for making the arts accessible to audiences benefiting the organization and the art form. Achieving personal individual development by the arts is another subject and not a major concern in this study. However, audience development in the UK also has features of social inclusion.

*Social inclusion* and *community dance* are also terms that are often used together with audience development. Kawashima (2002) explains that social inclusion or social exclusion is the wider context of audience development. Social exclusion refers to perceived, combined inequalities in income, job opportunities, education and housing. He continues that in recent years the relationship between culture and social exclusion has been furthered in a belief that cultural participation is a means to combat social exclusion. Social inclusion in the arts therefore means to make an effort of including those who have dropped out of society or are in danger to drop out back to society by using art. This can mean arranging different activities or workshops or as Kawashima states, simply widening the access to the arts and museums so that people from a wider variety of backgrounds can enjoy them. Kawashima points out that in the UK it is now the social effects of arts that have a higher profile as a rationale for public support. (Kawashima 2002: 16-17). In Finland the situation is different which is why social inclusion is not included in audience development in this research.

Community dance is a form of dance which believes that everyone has a right to dance and dance belongs to everyone. Its roots are in the UK, where it started to develop in 1970's and has influenced the development of dance and its social status. (Yhteisö tanssii 2006). A good example of a community dance project is one that dancer/choreographer *Sami Saikkonen* carried out in 2006. In this project eight middle-aged men practised and finally performed Saikkonen's choreography *Jailhouse Rock* at the *National Opera House*. The progressing of this project and the final performance was documented by *YLE* in *K-rappu* program. This project drew a lot of publicity and attention and interest towards contemporary dance even by people who weren't familiar with the art form before. At the end this project was excellent audience development work. The three shows were all sold out and probably there were quite a few newcomers in the audience. The National Opera actually participated in lowering the threshold for attending contemporary dance performance. (Tawast 2006).

Community dance is often seen as its own form of dance concentrating on creating possibilities and experiences of dancing for those who have no previous contact with dancing. But as shown above community dance can also be used as a tool for audience development if the project and the product are marketed in a right way. Therefore, it can be considered part of audience development if it fulfils the aspects of widening and

diversifying audiences.

### **2.3. The Four Eras of Audience Development in the UK**

Debi Hayes (2003) sees four eras in audience development in the UK. The first era took place in 1945-1964 when the ultimate motive was moral and geographical equity. Arts Council funded professional artists and focused on the development of infrastructure with the goal of achieving equity across the regions. During that era the emphasis was on developing the infrastructure and touring to increase the value of productions and events in the provinces.

The second era in 1965-1980 drove policy of social equity and cultural democracy. The idea of bringing high art to the masses was fully embraced. During that time a rapid development of the community arts movement in the 1960's emerged and 1970's the promotion of art forms and communities not represented by the dominant culture was on the emphasis. Audiences were placed at the heart of cultural policy.

In the third era in 1980-1997 the motive was economic. During this era the arts organizations were expected to "stand on their own two feet" and funding was cut down. Arts organizations developed a market orientation and the language of business started appearing in policy documents. Sponsors were actively sought and income generation became a priority.

In the difficult climate of the 1980's arts marketers were concerned with capacity building and maximising box office revenues so the ideas presented by influential arts marketer *Keith Diggle* in the UK were captured quickly. Diggle asserts that audience development is a subset of arts marketing and utilizes elements from that field. During this period also different kinds of manuals and guides emphasising a broader approach to audience development using educational tools and programming devices started to appear. During this period audience development moved on to broader approach which included educational tools, programming devices and marketing.

These three eras above are seen as a supply-led period. The shift to demand-led era took place in 1997 and is still going on. The current era emphasises the importance of culture as a tool for achieving social inclusion. (Hayes 2003: 4-7, 28-29). “Over the past ten years there has been a shift in audience development practise away from softer targets towards the more challenging and difficult to engage groups who are often attitudinally hostile – these groups are now pursued with a missionary zeal.” (Hayes & Slater in Hayes 2003: 7).

#### **2.4. Differences in Cultural Politics**

I have to stress the fact that the eras described above characterise the UK situation and that the cultural politics in the UK and Finland are different from each other. In the UK audience development, participation and attendance have been important areas in cultural policy where as in Finland the main instruments of cultural policy have been direct support for the arts, artists and artistic creativity, public ownership and joint financing of cultural and art institutions by the central government and the municipalities. (Compendium 2007).

In the UK the Arts Council England has been involved in a number of audience development programmes. They for example invested 20 million pounds in the New Audiences Programme from 1998 to 2003. During these five years their intention was encouraging as many people as possible to participate in and benefit from the arts in England. ACE also issues publications on audience development and participation. (Compendium 2007).

It has sometimes been criticized that in UK these kinds of special funds can drive arts organisations to plan activities that ought to bring them new audiences in the cost of artistic quality in performances. As Hayes puts it, “In the UK it appears as though social objectives often take precedence over aesthetic considerations, consequently increasing the tension between the dual demands of access and excellence.” (Hayes 2003: 7).

The different cultural policies in Finland and UK have naturally had an effect on the development of audience development and the current situation of it in these countries. The purpose of my study, however, is not to compare or analyze these policies any further.

In Finland audience development is practised in some amount in different companies in the fields of dance and theatre. Traditionally it has been a concern in the museums where the emphasis has clearly been on education. Also in the field of music there have been efforts for audience development, for example through the godchild project, which the *Helsinki City Orchestra* started in 2000. The project means that all children born in 2000 were invited as godchildren for the orchestra and the children and their parents receive concert invitations twice a year. The project will last until these children start school. (Nieminen 2004).

Lately, in the beginning of the new millennium more thought and effort has been put to audience development in Finland. For example, IADE<sup>4</sup> arranges education in the field, there are seminars and discussions and audience development is one of the focus areas of the regional dance centers. I will discuss the regional centers in more details in chapter 3.3.

## **2.5 Different Approaches to Audience Development**

According to Hayes and Slater (2002) and Kawashima (2000) there are different approaches to audience development depending on the aim. Hayes and Slater (2002) present two kinds of approaches: *missionary* and *mainstream audience development*. The first one aims at expanding the volume of the audience pool and adjust the sociodemographic profile by attracting new audiences, the latter one aims at deepening the experience for existing audiences. Hayes and Slater claim that focus is often set on attracting new audiences, not on retention of existing ones. They suppose one reason for that might be that there are funds available for programmes attracting especially new audiences. Another reason could be a fear of gaining an elitist image if the organization would focus primarily on existing audiences. (Hayes & Slater 2002: 4). Nevertheless, Hayes and Slater stress that missionary projects are resource-intensive in terms of time, money and labour force and that much more emphasis should be put on the existing

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<sup>4</sup> Institute for Art, Development and Education  
Art Universities of Finland

audience. They stand for more holistic view of audience development encompassing both mainstream and missionary activities.

Kawashima (2000: 8-11) differentiates between four major aspects in audience development. Those are *Cultural Inclusion, Extended Marketing, Taste Cultivation and Audience Education*. The four types are discussed in terms of target, form and purpose. The first two are concerned with the non-existing audience base whilst the latter two refer to the already existing audiences. Cultural Inclusion, for example, is concerned with social purposes and aims at trying to rectify the under-representation of a particular group by offering them access to culture and together with Extended Marketing they are concerned with the quantitative aspect of arts attendance.

Taste cultivation, however, is not concerned with the composition of the audience and not necessarily even with the quantity of it but it concentrates on offering different products to the same individuals. Also Audience Education targets the existing audience but with the emphasis that stresses to enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the arts of those who are already attending. The goal in this case is not market expansion. As seen above the purposes of audience development vary compared to the aspect in hand. Kawashima (2000: 10) points out that although conceptually these four types have marked differences in practise they are not mutually exclusive.

Rogers (1998) sees audience development as integrated function and suggests a holistic approach with three elements as illustrated in Figure 1. He states that effective audience development must unite programming, educational and marketing elements in order to achieve all of the objectives, which increase, broaden and enrich targeted groups (Rogers 1998: 14).

Hayes and Slater (2002: 5) argue that in reality Rogers' (1998) model rarely involves all three departments. They state that more typically there seems to be projects between marketing/education, programming/education and marketing/programming and have therefore formulated a figure better illustrating the real situation. Figure 2 shows a so called "black hole" which indicates the missing connection or contacts between the three. The "triumvirate" Rogers suggests is more an aspiration than reality.

Hayes and Slater (2002: 5) explain that reasons for this include difficulties in agreeing budgetary contributions to projects, organizational structures and communication channels. Also different philosophical viewpoints and priorities may effect. Rogers, too, sees obstacles in collaboration of the three areas. These three areas, i.e. education, marketing and programming, have their own timescales, pressures, issues and attitudes. Rogers argues that one of the main obstacles is simply time. (Rogers 1998: 11).

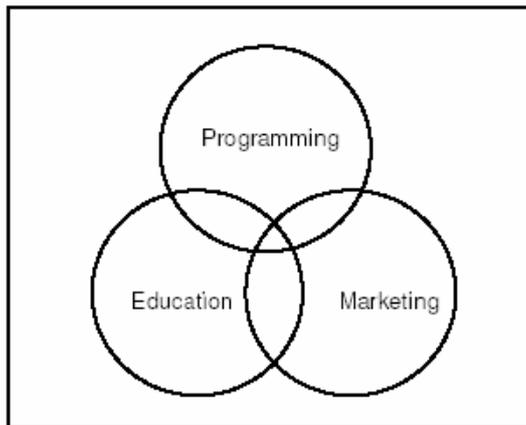


Figure 1.

Model of audience development by Rogers (Rogers 1998)

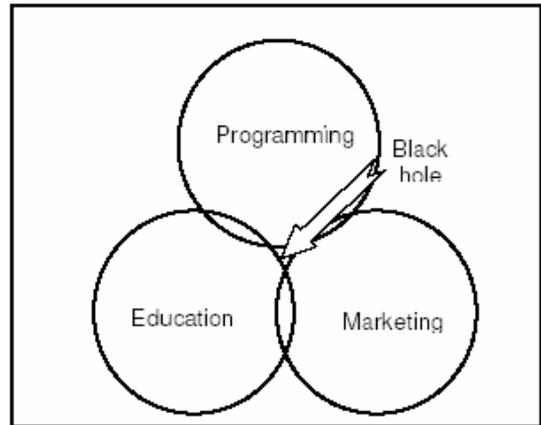


Figure 2.

Model of audience development (Hayes & Slater 2002)

In practise each organization creates its own approaches and emphasis. *Audiences London*, the member of a number of regional audience development agencies around the UK describes audience development: “We take the view that audience development is a process involving many aspects of arts creation and management to break down the barriers preventing people from engaging with the arts. It's a strategic process that can widen the diversity of audiences, increase their size or enhance the nature of their experiences. Effective audience development combines the work of arts marketers, educationalists, managers, planners, programmers and artists – working together to meet and balance artistic, social and financial objectives.” (Audiences London 2006).

## 2.6 Audience

Rogers (1998: 3) states that it is essential for an arts organization to define what it means by its audience. There might be people who are involved in, for example,

educational events but may never get to a performance due to their economic, social or personal circumstances. If audience is defined only by in terms of people who attend the performances and audience development focuses only to that sector its focus becomes too narrow and the organization is ignoring the ones unable to attend.

One definition of the term audience is *Lamos'* (in Hill et al. 2003: 25) view, which sees the audience as “a sounding board for the artistic impulse”. His view states that audience consists simply of those who experience art. This definition excludes the notion of intention. The wider definition includes also those with whom an individual or organizations have some form of communication. For example, this could include all those who support the art form in any way, or those who have an interest in their development. Attenders are obviously the core group but also those with less direct contact with the organization could be included. (Hill & al. 2003: 25).

*Schosser* (in Hill et al. 2003: 27) defines audiences as customers being involved in a transaction with an artist or arts institution. He defines audiences as those with whom the arts organization is trying to exchange something of value. Schosser's definition connects theater and audience, and keeps the movement going in both directions.

It can also be thought that audience consists of primary and secondary audiences. Primary audiences are those who already attend or could attend and secondary audiences are the other stakeholders such as funding bodies. Concept of exchange occurs with the primary audiences but it can also be seen with the secondary audiences. Audience development is necessary if the value between arts organizations and audiences of the exchange processes is wanted to enhance. Audience development is not just increasing the amount of attenders but also increasing the range of audiences. This requires that arts are made more accessible in variety of ways – physically and geographically, but also socially and psychologically. In order to do this, arts organizations need to understand people's relationships with the arts and to identify the range of influences on the decision to participate. By doing this the needs of potential audiences can be identified and techniques designed to help them to get most out of the arts. (Hill et al. 2003: 27).

## 2.7 Audience Groups and Attendance

Audience is naturally not a homogeneously built group of individuals. There are different types of cultural attenders. *Bonita Kolb* (2000) defines these different groups as *Culture consumer*, *Culture fan*, *Culture cultist*, *Culture enthusiast* and *Culture petty producer*. Culture consumer “may be attending for a pleasant evening’s entertainment” where as fans of culture always patronize a certain cultural organization or special performances. Cultists are those who show specific interest to a certain artist in a specific art form. For enthusiasts participation in cultural activities in a certain art form is important part of their lives and their knowledge concerning this art form is wide. Those who reach the level of petty producers are very much involved and even produce or collect art themselves. Kolb points out that most audience members are just culture consumers even though arts organizations would like them to be more than that. (Kolb 2000: 47).

Where Kolb’s division of groups concentrates on the level of involvement, Hayes and Slater (2002) present different kinds of audience groups, which have to do with the loyalty aspect. Those are: *Existing audiences*, *Attenders elsewhere*, *Switchers*, *Intenders*, *Indifferent* and *Hostile*. These groups have different characteristics and profiles but have potential for movement from one category to another. Existing audiences are known to the organization and by analyzing the box office data their patterns of attendance and loyalty can be identified. Attenders elsewhere are those who have never attended organization’s event but are currently attending other arts providers. Switchers are those who attend at a variety of arts events and may have varying degrees of loyalty to a range of organizations. For them it is unlikely that the programme of a single organization could satisfy their needs, so they will search to broaden their range of experiences. Intenders are a heterogeneous group who like the idea of attending but never seem to implement their intentions. The reasons for this group for not attending might have to do with their age, mobility barriers etc. They might, however, continue to experience the arts through outreach projects and retain their attitudinal loyalty. Indifferent are disinterested in the arts. They don’t have desire or opinions towards art. The hostiles resemble the indifferent but they have adopted a strong negative attitude. This may be because of a previous experience or in response to

perceptions and self-image built over time. There is development potential in every group but different strategic approaches are required in each one of them. Each group also includes sub-groups and some of them offer greater potential than others. But this requires further examinations of people's motivations and behavior. (Hayes & Slater 2002: 8-11).

This kind of grouping can act as a valuable tool for arts managers in planning strategies for audience development activities. It is clear that the groups offering greatest short and medium term potential are existing audiences, attenders elsewhere and switchers. They all have a degree of commitment to the arts. Activities directed to those groups can be described as mainstream audience development that was described in chapter 2.5. Missionary style of audience development then includes the most challenging groups: indifferent and hostiles. Their payback on invested resources will be a long-term, if at all. Hayes and Slater leave the intenders outside from these main categories and explain that they are a fragmented group and difficult to reach because of the nature of structural barriers that exists. However, if the organization has had a previous relationship with them they can offer significant potential. The purpose of these typologies is that art managers could create a strategic focus for each group and plan marketing, education and programming to meet the different qualities each one has. Hayes and Slater stress the importance of finding a balance with the two styles. (Hayes & Slater 2002: 11-14).

Behind attending an arts event there is always a decision making process. According to Hill & al in developing audiences it is important for arts organizations to get an idea not only what the audience consists of but also what kind of process the decision making about attending arts events is. Arts organizations today face competition from a wide range of sources. In decisions making the potential audience member passes through five distinct stages: 1) Problem recognition 2) Information search 3) Evaluation of alternatives 4) Purchase 5) Post-purchase evaluation. (Hill & al. 2003: 28).

According to Hill et al. (2003: 28) in most buying decisions people are influenced by a variety of social, personal and psychological factors which either predispose them towards the art form or serve to alienate them. For arts organizations it is therefore important to understand these factors in order to try and find ways of breaking down the

physical and mental barriers that restrict access to the arts and hinder the development of wide-ranging audiences.

Naturally not all members of an arts audience play the same role in the decision – making process. There are different roles and these roles are collectively known as a decision-making unit. Those roles are: *The initiator*, who first suggests a visit to an event. *The influencer*, whose advice and evaluation of the event carries weight. *The decider* is the one who makes the final choice as where and when to go. *The buyer* performs the actual transaction and *The Attender* experiences the event. Sometimes a person can take all of these roles and be responsible for all the stages of the choice process. Normally, however, a range of people are involved but the influencers are very important. (Hill et al. 2003: 39).

*Alan R. Andreasen* (1991: 3) states: “Individuals do not become members of the audience for the performing arts by chance.” He claims that attendance is the result of a developmental process by which each individual progresses from a lack of interest and involvement through six stages of consistent, the active participation and interest in the performing arts. His model is called the *performing arts adoption process*. The six stages are given labels borrowed directly from the adaptation literature: 1) Disinterest 2) Interest 3) Trial 4) Positive evaluation 5) Adoption 6) Confirmation. Andreasen’s model of adaptation seems quite idealistic and too systematic and simple approach of how people become active participants. As Andreasen points out it is obvious that this model is an idealized progression. In real life people don’t follow the steps neatly from point one to six.

## **2.8 Arts Marketing**

As it is shown that arts marketing and audience development form a close relationship (e.g. Rogers) I have come to a conclusion that arts marketing needs to be taken a closer look in this study. Why do we talk about arts marketing, how does it differ from the general concept of marketing? According to Hill et al (2003) arts marketing differs from business marketing because its commitment and the kind of engagement it seeks with customers. The reason why specific kinds of marketing techniques are required has to

do with the special nature of the arts experience and the centrality of the customer in creating that experience. Particularly special in the arts is the exchange between customer and supplier – the intensely personal nature of this exchange. The perspective of relationship marketing in the 1990's offers a relevant model on which to base marketing thinking in the arts. In the arts it is important to address the issue of forming and nurturing long-term relationships with customers. (Hill et al. 2003: xii-xiii). Relationship marketing simply means a creating long-term relationship with the customer. Over the time the customer's needs and wants change and the organization is challenged to respond to those changes. The goal is to achieve mutual trust and commitment. (Hayes & Slater 2002: 3).

Several arts marketers have included audience development into arts marketing. Already in 1980 *Stephan Langley* (1980: 37) described audience development as being part of the marketing activities. The main concern of this section was according to him the identification of new and potential audiences through the optimum marketing techniques in relation to the artistic product. In the latter half of the 1980's influential arts marketers *Morrison* and *Dalgleish* in the US and *Diggle* in the UK contributed to the origins of audience development as distinctive discipline. Their approach is clearly marketing based but they both distinguished between potential audience groups and their propensity to attend and concentrated their efforts on that target group, i.e. on the people who were already exposed to the arts and had some history of attendance. (Hayes 2003: 6).

*Diggle* comprises audience development as an orientation or emphasis in the practise of arts marketing and utilises elements from that field such as buyer behaviour, segmentation and targeting. (Diggle 1994). *Morrison* and *Dalgleish* introduced *SELL* (strategy to encourage lifelong learning) which aims at creating a love affair between the audience and the artist by using marketing communication activities. (Hayes 2003: 7). Hayes and Slater state that *SELL* was the first attempt to encompass all aspects of promotion, publicity, marketing, public relations, communications and educational programmes. It highlighted the importance of enrichment as a device for retaining and developing audiences. Relationship marketing can be seen as a relative for *SELL* (Hayes & Slater 2002: 3).

SELL was actually a counterblow for *Danny Newman's* concept *DSP* (Dynamic Subscribe Promotion) in the 1980's which concentrated on selling to subscribers persuading people to buy tickets for several events in one go and securing the loyalty of existing attenders (Diggle 1994: 129). Actually, DSP effectively limited the participation of the new possible attenders. For example in US the audience profile remained the same from the 1950's to the 1980's: middle class, highly educated, affluent and in the professions and managerial occupations. (Hayes and Slater 2002: 3).

It is still often thought by arts organizations that marketing is an inappropriate use of money and unnecessary addition to overhead for organizations that already have limited resources. There might also be negative preconception that marketing is both intrusive and manipulative and that using marketing strategy is a sell-out which makes them no better than the profit-making businesses. (Kolb 2000: 68). However, building a long-term relationship between the individual and art seems very rational. *Tony Conway* and *Jeryl Whitelock* present findings of a research, which studied whether successful subsidised arts organizations are more likely to apply a relationship rather than transactional marketing approach. These findings suggest that a link does exist between the building of relationships with internal stakeholders, a strategic focus and theatre success. (Conway & Whitelock 2005).

Chong (2000) argues that audience development has for too long been constrained within the confines of a marketing discourse. He sees that arts marketing has been useful in the areas like attendance stimulation, membership development, fund-raising, crisis management, merchandising, awareness building and business sponsorship but asks: "What about sustainability and the longer term impact on audience development?" (Chong 2000: 14). These are important issues and I think recently audience development has established itself as its own brand and not only a section of marketing albeit the benefits of the collaboration of the two are recognized.

Rogers (1998: 1) claims that marketing could, in fact, be a shared responsibility in an arts organization. In his report he quotes an arts marketer who considers combining education and marketing within a single audience development department. Rogers strongly believes that working collaboratively, education and marketing can enhance the

vital activity of audience development, work effectively and promote the task of audience development which is to sustain and expand existing and regular audiences, create new attenders and enhance their enjoyment.

It seems that today in the UK the close connection and the benefits between marketing and audience development have been utilized. A good example of this is a network of 17 regional audience development agencies. They are funded partly by the Arts Council and some of them have existed over ten years, some have been established only recently. The network describes itself as: “the only professional association dedicated to collaborative audience development and marketing.” (Network home 2007).

I will now move on to the themes which I feel are also important in the context of my thesis. Contemporary dance practise, previous audience research and the results of the Dance Information Centre’s audience development inquiry provide important framework for better understanding the analysis part (chapter 5).

### 3. CONTEMPORARY DANCE FRAMEWORK

This chapter introduces the contemporary dance field and provides the reader with background information of the field. The emphasis is on the network of regional centers for dance since it is the most important sector in my study considering that the centers are the object of the empirical part of my study in the field of audience development.

#### 3.1 From Modern to Contemporary

The influences of modern dance or “free dance” as it was called in Finland at that time, came from Germany where many Finnish dancers studied and worked in the 1920’s and 1930’s. Up to the 1940’s also several dance schools were founded. After the Second World War, the free dance connection with Germany shrank, and the entire genre acquired an amateurish stigma.

A new beginning for “free dance” or modern dance as it was called in 1960-1970, happened in the 1960’s when Finnish dance gained influences from American modern dance and jazz dance. The most dynamic representative of modern dance was *Riitta Vainio*, who had studied dance in the USA. An interesting point is that while Finnish Ballet was oriented strongly towards the East, modern dance oriented itself towards the West.

Modern dance started to professionalize in the 1970’s. This was the time for the first professional companies outside the Finnish National Ballet. The most important was *Raatikko Dance Theatre* (founded in 1972) with a choreographer *Marjo Kuusela*. Efforts were made to find new audiences, and productions toured all over Finland. (Laakkonen & Suhonen 2002).

In the 1980s there were two significant changes. The vocational education in dance was launched and the *Theatre Academy* started to give university level education in dance in 1983. Soon after that *Kuopio conservatoire* started giving lower education in dance. This was the beginning for the rapid growth in vocational dance education. The other

important change was the founding of *The National Council for Dance* in 1983, which meant that dance finally gained an official foothold in the State arts administration (Opetusministeriö 1999: 4). This was essential both for the development of the status and for the subsidies granted by the Council.

In the 1980's the term modern dance was increasingly being replaced by contemporary dance. The figurehead of that period was without doubt *Jorma Uotinen*. He was the director of the *Helsinki City Theatre Dance Company* from 1982 to 1991. The company had consolidated its position in the 1970s, and it is still the only Finnish dance company in a professional drama theatre. (Laakkonen & Suhonen 2002).

In the 1990's the position of contemporary dance became stronger. The amount of premiers increased, as did the interest towards Finnish contemporary dance in the international market. Also the economic status of dance improved when the first six dance companies were awarded permanent state subsidies under the new *Theatre and Orchestra Act* that came into force in 1993 (Laakkonen & Suhonen 2002).

As I see it in the new millennium the two significant changes in the infrastructure of contemporary dance are the founding of the network of regional centers for dance and the strong input for the export of contemporary dance. Also in the managerial sense the dance field is professionalizing. By this I mean the emerging and increasing use of professional arts managers in the field. The Dance Producers association (Tanssin tuottajat ry) founded in 2004 has 26 members who all make their living by working in different dance companies or organizations (Tanssin tuottajat 2007).

### **3.2 The Current Situation**

In 2006 there are 43 dance companies in Finland. This figure includes the big organizations; the National Ballet and the City Theatre, the eleven dance theatres and production centres within the Theatre and Orchestra Act receiving permanent state subsidies<sup>5</sup> and the 30 independent dance companies receiving discretionary subsidies. In addition there are several independent choreographers in the field. (Finnish Dance in

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<sup>5</sup> Dance Theatre Eri, Dance Theatre Hurjaruuth, Jojo-Oulu Dance Center, Dance Theatre MD, Dance Theatre Minimi, Dance Theatre Raatikko, Folk Dance Theatre Rimpparemmi, Dance Theatre Rollo, The AB Dance Company, Tero Saarinen Company, Zodiak-Center for New Dance

Focus 2006). It is hard to estimate the exact number of those working in the field of dance professionally. In June 2004 the number of members (dancers, choreographers, teachers and students) in the Finnish Union of Dance Artists was 630 (Finnish Dance Information Centre 2006). In addition parts of the dancers are members of the Finnish Union of Musicians and Finnish Union of Actors and some work outside the unions. Considering this I estimate that there are approximately 1000 dance artists in Finland.

The artists act in all the areas mentioned above. Most of the artists work in short term employment relationships that last from 1-3 months and a large part of them in the "free field" – either in groups or as individuals. The degree of unemployment is quite high. In the year 2000 it was 34 percent while the average unemployment degree in Finland was approximately ten percent. (Koskela & Rekola 2003: 5). Dance artists form the youngest art field and there are also more women working in the sector than any other art sector. In the field of dance 88 % are women and only 12 % men. Those who practise dance for living are 36 years old in average. (Rensujeff 2003).

There are also several festivals in the field. The most important ones are the *Kuopio Dance festival*, *Fullmoon Dance Festival* in Pyhäjärvi and *Moving in November* in Helsinki. In addition there are several smaller festivals and events all over the country. Important organizations in the field are the previously mentioned Finnish Union of Dance Artists and Finnish Dance Information Centre. The regional dance centers will be discussed as follows.

The government subsidises the eleven dance theatres that are within the Theatre and Orchestra Act. The companies and artists outside the Theatre and Orchestra Act receive discretionary subsidies. The Arts Council of Finland allocates subsidies for the promotion of dance art. In 2006 the amount was 644 000 euros and was divided as follows:

Subsidies of the 11 companies within the Theatre and Orchestra Act.	432 000 euros
Productions and performances	172 000 euros
Promotion of dance culture	40 000 euros

(source: Arts Council 2007)

### 3.3 Network of Regional Centers for Dance in Finland

A national network of Regional Centers for Dance in Finland is very young. The establishment of the centers took place in two stages by a working group set by the Ministry of Education. In the first stage in 2004 three regional centers were appointed by the Minister of Culture. Those first centers were *Regional Dance Center in Northern Finland*, *Regional Dance Center Kuopio* in the east and *Zodiak – The Center for New Dance* in the south. Furthermore, this network of three was supplemented with two new regional centers in the early 2005: *Regional Dance Center of Western Finland* and *Central Finland Regional Dance Center*. The regional centers are operating independently, but still in co-operation with various sources. They will also select those operation forms which they consider to provide the best support for their set goals. (Network of Regional Centers for Dance 2006.)

In the selecting process the Ministry of Education considered important that these centers are located in towns that already have other dance activities. The selection criteria included also already existing field-related activities, expressive and high-standard professionalism and sufficiently comprehensive activities nationally. (Network... 2006). Important factor was also that the applicant already had some kind of basic infrastructure. That is the facilities, staff, funding, audience base and amateur activities. In addition it was expected that the region should feel positively about the center. Emphasis was put to the fact that the network should spread nationwide. (Opetusministeriö 2005).

The rationale of the establishment of this network is more equal access to cultural services and cooperation, which will also support content development in the dance field. Also the increase of the working possibilities in the field of dance and the improvement of cooperation locally, regionally, nationally and internationally are the objectives set for the centers. (Opetusministeriö 2005). *The main objectives of the centers are the improvement of the employment for the artists in their own artistic field and the arrangement of professional performances* (Network... 2006). That in other words is improvement and support of professionalism.

Also offering co-productions and touring- and visiting productions, artist-in-residence programs and networking nationally and internationally are objectives for the centers. In addition there are several activities that have to do with the strengths each center has. Among the list of activities expected from the regional centers is also audience development. (Opetusministeriö 2004: 23-24).

The objectives have been defined even in quantity. Year 2005 the goal set for the regional centers together was to produce about 330 different working opportunities and increase the number of performances by 250. The existing centers are hoped to commit this network to the end of 2009. (Opetusministeriö 2005). According to the statistics collected by the Finnish Dance Information Centre the regional centres in 2005 were involved in a total of 230 performances, which received a total of 24 279 spectators (Finnish Dance Information Centre 2006).

The funding of this national network is granted by The Ministry of Education until 2009, when the activities of this launching period will be estimated both in quantity and quality. The funding of the regional centers consists of three different sources; state support, regional and local level support and the profit gained from the activities of the centers. The state support may cover maximum of 50 % of the costs approved in the development plan. (Network...2006). Minister of Culture granted total of 450 000 euros for the five centers in 2005 (Opetusministeriö 2005).

The policy behind the founding of the regional centers is in line with the government's program and policy for improving and developing services regionally. The Ministry for Internal Affairs coordinates a development program "Aluekeskusohjelmatyö"<sup>6</sup> in about 30 regions. Culture is seen as having a central role in attracting people to the region, improving the image of the region, creating attractive atmosphere and new industry for the region and helping the development of the environment for its inhabitants. For dance this program has set an objective to develop regional centers for dance. (Opetusministeriö 2004: 12).

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<sup>6</sup> Regional Centre program

Regional development has clearly been one of the emphasis areas in politics generally. The Finnish strategy for developing regions 2013 (Suomen aluekehittämissstrategia 2013) states that the development of the weakest areas can be strengthened only by versatile and effective regional policy. In cultural policy this has to do above all with the wider understanding of culture as social, regional and local resource. (Opetusministeriö 2004: 11-12).

This emphasis of regional development shows also in the operating and economic plans of the Ministry of Education for the years 2005-2008. Ministry's long-term plan takes account the *Government decision-in-principle on arts and artist policy* and aims at implementing those plans especially for improving the artists' acting conditions and the accessibility of art and cultural services. (Opetusministeriö 2004: 13.) The Government decision-in-principle on arts and artist policy states that the aim set by the Government for the arts and artist policy programme is to promote creative activities (Opetusministeriö 2003: 6).

In this kind of climate it was not strange that the regional centers for dance were established. Before that, however, a committee was established to explore ways to create regional dance centres and submit relevant proposals to the Ministry of Education. The core objectives of the regional centers are described in the committee's report as follows: "To promote the accessibility of and equal access to art and cultural services and to strengthen structures in the dance sector. Everyone should be able to enjoy quality art and cultural services, irrespectively of their place of residence and financial standing." The committee also considered important to improve employment in the field and strengthen structures in the dance field outside the capital city area. (Opetusministeriö 2004).

In its report the committee states that by increasing the number of dance performances in different parts of the country will create more varied and better programmes and thereby increase dance publics (Opetusministeriö 2004: 9). This statement seems a bit too optimistic. The fact is that audience numbers won't automatically grow as the amount of high quality performances increases. It might affect those who already attend but it doesn't necessarily attract new ones. Audience development activities are definitely needed in order to make people aware of the new possibilities in the region.

The regional centers for dance are now facing a challenge of how to engage the local people in their activities. They are in a key position of lowering the threshold of the art of dance and bring it closer to the local people. This is exactly what some of them are already doing. I will discuss more about this issue in the analysis part (chapter 5).

I see that in the field of audience development these centers play significant roles. Yet, it is audience development itself to regionally develop the accessibility of contemporary dance and to spread the art form which has been very Helsinki centred all over the country. Year 2003 more than half of all dance artists lived in the capital area, one third lived in Southern Finland excluding the capital area and not even one fifth lived outside the Southern Finland. The fact that dance artists are centred to the Southern part of the country has to do with the working possibilities. In order to develop the regions it is essential to create conditions where the artists could be employed also outside the capital region and southern part of the country. (Rensujeff 2003). The regional centers are responding to this need.

## **4. CONTEMPORARY DANCE AUDIENCE AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH IN FINLAND**

This chapter discusses the contemporary dance audiences in the light of previous research. It also introduces an inquiry of audience development conducted by the Finnish Dance Information Centre.

### **4.1 Contemporary Dance Audience in Finland**

I have experienced a contemporary dance performance with only three people in the audience but also a performance with full audience of hundreds of spectators. Even though the figures have increased if we compare year 2000 and 2005 the amount of performances and spectators is still low compared to theatres (see tables 1 and 2). The explanation is partly the fact that contemporary dance is a young art form where as theatre has long traditions in this country.

During the year 2005 a total of 3,6 million people visited theatres in Finland. Considering that there are only five million inhabitants in the country, the number is significant. However, performances of spoken theatre account for 82 % of these visits where as dance theatres attracted only 12 % of all the visitors. This figure includes also the National Ballet. (Finnish theatre in figures 2006: 5 ).

In 2005 there were 19 100 performances given in professional theatres in Finland. Of these, 16 600 were spoken theatre performances, 2 400 dance performances and 271 operas. These figures include all theatres which receive government funding in accordance with the Theatre and Orchestra Act, as well as those theatre and dance groups that are outside the Act, the National Theatre and the National Opera, summer theatres and local opera projects. (Finnish theatre in figures 2006: 4).

There is not much research available of the Finnish contemporary dance audience. Since 1997 The Finnish Dance Information Centre has published statistics that concern professional Finnish dance performances and first premieres along with their ticket sales and aggregate attendance (Finnish Dance Information Centre 2006). Table 1 indicates the numbers of theatres, performances and sold tickets in dance. Table 2 indicates the same information in spoken theatre. Even though the amount of theatres is almost the same in both genres (42 in dance and 48 in theatre) the amount of performances and sold tickets in dance theatres is significantly lower than those figures in the spoken theatre.

**Table 1: Number of dance performances and spectators.**

Includes the big theatres, dance theatres subsidized by law, independent dance groups and the works of independent choreographers which are handled as one group. The 2005 statistics include for the very first time the new regional dance centres.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of theatres/companies*)</b>	<b>Number of performances</b>	<b>Sold tickets</b>
<b>2005</b>	42	2 366	417 742
<b>2004</b>	42	2 236	387 806
	41	2 278	406 817
<b>2002</b>	30	1 973	362 289
<b>2001</b>	31	2 093	399 633
<b>2000</b>	32	2 481	394 205

(source: Finnish Dance Information Centre 2006.)

**Table 2: Number of theatre performances and spectators.**

National Opera and dance theatres are not included.

<b>Year (season)</b>	<b>Number of theatres/companies*)</b>	<b>Number of performances</b>	<b>Sold tickets</b>
<b>2004/05</b>	48	11 373	2 065 595
<b>2003/04</b>	48	11 583	2 036 530
<b>2002/03</b>	48	11 562	2 200 073
<b>2001/02</b>	48	11 844	2 196 393
<b>2000/01</b>	49	11 840	2 279 978
<b>1999/00</b>	49	11 880	2 094 639

(source: Finnish Theatre Information Centre 2006.)

The first survey of contemporary dance audiences was conducted by *Timo Cantell* in 2003. The research is based on the festival *Dance Arena 2000*. The aim of the festival

was to highlight the current state of contemporary dance in Finland, enhance its image, market it abroad and widen the audience base of dance performances in general. (Cantell 2003: 83-84).

Cantell (2003) found out that in terms of demographics there are no remarkable differences between dance audiences and other arts events and performances audiences. The attenders are well educated, either students or working in middle-class occupations, female dominated, city dwellers. High level of education is the most significant demographic feature. In the survey 44 percent of the audience had an academic background and the significant proportion of visitors was still studying at various universities. People with a lower socio-economic position, and especially working-class people, were underrepresented. Pensioners represent only a small part of the audience, since dance performances attract a relatively young population. Almost two thirds were under 40 years of age. The majority of arts audiences in Finland comprise of women and also in this festival 70 per cent of the audience members were women. The audience mainly came from the Helsinki region, only one tenth travelled from outside the region and foreign visitors were only a few. (Cantell 2003: 83-84)

Approximately half of the audience claimed they have a close relationship to dance. One tenth is professional dancers or dance teachers, four percent study dance full-time and five percent have a dance-related job. A quarter of the visitors have dance as a hobby and 12 percent have danced earlier as a hobby. (Cantell 2003: 85). This finding differs from the views my interviewees have of those having dance as a hobby. My interviewees state that this group is very hard to get into the audience. I will discuss this issue more in the analysis part (chapter 5).

Almost one quarter of the audience had seen at least six dance performances during the past twelve months so they can be characterised as heavy users of dance performances. Twelve percent had attended more than ten productions. About a half had seen 1-5 performances. Newcomers are represented by one quarter so the festival managed to attract new audiences as it had originally set out to do. (Cantell 2003: 85).

Cantell points out that the study confirms most of the earlier assumptions concerning dance audiences in term of demographics such as age, gender and education. It also

gives background information for the dance field when assessing the means of widening audiences in contemporary dance. (Cantell 2003: 85).

#### **4.2 Previous Research of Audience Development in Finland**

The only available research or rather an inquiry of audience development is one conducted by the Finnish Dance Information Centre in 2004. The results of this inquiry are unpublished but those involved received a memo of the results. I will present the outcomes of the inquiry on the basis of that memo.

Different dance groups were sent a questionnaire about audience development fall 2003. More specifically that included groups inside the Theatre and Orchestra Act - ten in 2003 - and those operating in the free field - in 2003 the number was 26 (Finnish Dance in Focus 2003). According to the Dance Information Centre even though only 14 groups responded most of the groups that are involved with audience development issues replied. However, the low amount of returned questionnaires tells something about the appreciation and importance of audience development in the beginning of the new millennium.

The questionnaire did not include a definition of audience development. This was a conscious choice made by the Information Centre. They wanted to maintain the interpretation of the term open and the definition coming from the groups. By doing so they thought they could have as versatile interpretation as possible. On the other hand, because the lacking definition, they might have lost some answers. For some groups it really can be unsure what is meant by audience development and what kind of activities can be included in it.

The results of this inquiry indicate that audience development has been practised on regularly basis in seven groups, occasionally in five and not at all in three groups. The responsible person for those activities has been mainly the choreographer, sometimes also the producer or the dancers. The initiative for audience development came mostly from the producer or choreographer. The target groups were children at kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, students at high-schools, dance students, pensioners, specific target groups such as the personnel of a sponsoring firm. The aims of audience

development in short were to increase accessibility and marketing, to educate, to increase interaction and communication, to increase the assessment of contemporary dance, to improve the activities of one's own group and motivate artists, and to offer physical experiences to people.

The forms of audience development were discussions after performances, introduction of the coming performance before it, workshops for targeted groups, performances for targeted groups and other forms such as info packages for school children, open doors for rehearsals, discussions with the artists and some special events. Eight groups were willing to share their experiences and ideas of succeeded audience development projects. Those were, for example, different targeted workshops, "sightseeing" in theatres and getting to know the backstage, teaching some of the movement material of the performance, godmother projects, discussions and introductions of the artist and works. According to the respondents part of a successful audience development is also to gain publicity, visibility and positive attitude. In addition it was seen important that relationships to media are cherished.

The prerequisites for audience development to succeed are according to this inquiry: Commitment to the project, professional skills and experience, careful planning, resources financially and time-wise. On the other hand, lack of financial and human resources, lack of time and appropriate space, lack of knowledge and experience, lack of interest and willingness of the artists were the main reasons that prevented audience development from happening.

It was mostly agreed on that audience development activities are needed because the audience has welcomed these projects with gratitude. Some suggested that audience development should be built into the operating principles of the companies. There is willingness but the lack of resources often prevents the good intentions. (Finnish Dance Information Centre 2004).

## **5. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGIONAL DANCE CENTERS**

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of my empirical data. In my study I wanted to find out how audience development is understood in the field of Finnish contemporary dance by arts managers. To do this I chose to interview the producers/coordinators at the recently established regional centers for dance. I was also curious to know what the images and practises of audience development are like and what kinds of attitudes exist towards audience development. In addition I wanted to know if practising audience development has benefited these organizations – has it been worthwhile. The results are divided into different themes, which resemble the themes presented in chapter 1.3. There are six major themes, which are each analysed. Some of the themes have also sub themes.

The first theme will concentrate on the understanding of audience development by my interviewees. I then move on to the prerequisites that audience development requires in an organization. After that I will discuss the roles and responsibilities in audience development in an organization and the collaboration of the different duties or areas in favour of audience development. I will then present the various activities the centers have in the field of audience development and will also touch the subject of participants and the evaluation of the implemented projects. The fifth theme will discuss the approach or style the organization favours in its audience development. Finally, the last theme presents my interviewees' thoughts about the future.

Before going on describing and analysing the data according to the themes I have to stress that each region really has a specific way of functioning and also a way of their own in practising audience development. This has to do with the fact that their operations are built on the functions that already existed in the regions. As mentioned before, of all the centers Zodiak is the only one who has employed a person for this field. This makes its position a little bit unique. Despite their very young age and the fact that it takes time to get the core activities functioning, i.e., the improvement of the employment for the artists in their own artistic field and the arrangement of professional

performances, audience development seems to be considered as a very important section among the various duties regional centers have.

As I pointed out in the Research Methodology Chapter (1.3) my interviewees are experienced workers in the contemporary dance sector. At present they are involved with the regional centers for dance: *Helena Jäykkä*, the executive director of Jojo – Oulu Dance Center/ in charge of the financial matters at the Regional Dance Center in Northern Finland, *Vilja Ruokolainen*, producer at the Regional Dance center Kuopio, *Katja Kirsi*, officer in audience development at Zodiak - Center for New Dance/Regional Dance Center in Helsinki, *Jaana Lämsä*, the coordinator at the Regional Dance Center of Western Finland and *Anniina Kumpuniemi*, the chairman of the board at the Central Finland Regional Dance Center/choreographer and dancer in Mobita-Dansco dance company. In the following text I will refer to my interviewees by their first names. After the quotations I will use their initials.

## **5.1 What is understood by Audience Development?**

When analysing the data it is most natural to start from the content or the definition of audience development because this particular theme sets frames to the rest of the analysis. Under this topic I will discuss the relationship my interviewees have with audience development, their understanding of its content and their understanding of the term.

Among my interviewees audience development is generally understood as a wide concept including various activities. It is seen diversified in nature including many different ways and methods to increase knowledge of the art form and making it more familiar to people. Everyone mentioned education as a part of audience development but it was seen only as a part of the entity.

“Well, audience development is easily attached to audience education, as if they sort of went hand-in-hand. It is kind of a trinity, not just audience education together with marketing but also interaction between the artists and the audience, which has been the kind of thing that I have tried to put forward at Zodiak.”(K.K.)

”No yleisötyö on helposti aina liitetty tähän yleisökasvatukseen, et kyllä ne niinku ajattelussa kulkee

jotenkin läheisesti käsi kädessä. Et se on vähän niinku semmonen kolmiyhteys et yleisökasvatusta sitten myös markkinointia mutta sitten myös sellaista vuorovaikutusta taiteilijoiden ja yleisön välillä, joka on ollut semmonen, mitä mä oon halunnut ajaa Zodiakissa eteenpäin.” (K.K.)

Clearly all my interviewees see audience development as a versatile area, which in addition to education includes aspects of interaction, communication, information, artistic creativity and marketing. Also community dance and promotional aspects were mentioned. Audience development was also understood widely in a sense, which includes both “mainstream” and “missionary” styles that Hayes and Slater (2002) describe as two styles of audience development; nurturing both new and existing audiences.

Audience development is easily understood only as different actions and projects. Hayes (2003: 14) states that often arts organizations have a transactional view of audience development. Also my interviewees had a range of different activities that I will describe in more detail later on. Alongside with the educational activities my interviewees feel that it is also important to offer also new kinds of activities that offer genuine interaction and generate new forms of activities.

Audience development can also be looked at from a wider perspective and not just as separate actions.

“By and large that you will get more information about the dance field and all the things it can mean. Just that in itself, I think, opens it up without needing to explain the separate works.” (V.R.)

”Ylipäänsä se, että saa enemmän tietoa siitä kuinka moninainen se on se kenttä ja mitä kaikkea se voi tarkoittaa. Ni jo pelkästään se mun mielestä niinku avaa sitä ilman, että niitä yksittäisiä töitä tarvii selittää.” (V.R.)

Another kind of approach is the one Jaana offers. She sees that because of the tradition of audience development is new in this country, we Finns are now in the starting phase. There is not enough knowledge of the area which is why in their region they have chosen an exploratory approach on the subject and have started off by thinking what audience development is and what it could be. Since the beginning they have been in contact with the artists about those questions hoping to find some answers and evoke discussion. To further this they arranged a seminar “Towards new audiences”.<sup>7</sup> Jaana sees that audience development is closely connected with the regional centers core functions.

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<sup>7</sup> ”Kohti uusia yleisöjä” –seminar was arranged in Turku in October 2006.

“But the idea is the availability, making dance more within reach, .....that is the basic duty of the regional centers. In other words, it is audience development. (Laughs)” (J.L.)

”Mut idea on siis tanssin saatavuuden, saavutettavuuden lisääminen, sehän on aluekeskuksen perustehtävä. Se on niin, yleisötyö toisin sanoen. (Nauraa.)” (J.L.)

## Terminology

As presented in chapter two the terminology is not clear. The settled Finnish translation for audience development is “yleisötyö” (audience work), which doesn’t necessarily have the same meaning as the English term audience development. Some talk about audience development, some use the term audience education, some even use art education but it is not really clear what is meant by each - are they all actually referring to the same thing. Basically all centers talk about audience development, only Zodiak uses the term audience work.<sup>8</sup> However, when listening to my interviewees I noticed that in their speech all of the terms above were used but not in a systematic way.

“Because it really isn’t obviously clear what we are talking about and we already had the term audience education, which was used in the beginning and I expressed my opinion that I would much prefer to talk about audience development when we talk about it in the regional dance center...somebody else told me that when they thought about audience work, they started wondering about what it actually meant, so I asked if audience education would be a more familiar term and she said no, it would be awful and she would not be interested at all if there had stood that audience education...” (J.L.)

”Koska sehän ei todellakaan ole mitenkään itsestään selvää mistä puhutaan, ja meillähän oli yleisökasvatus oli se termi, mikä alussa aika paljon pyöri ja mä pistin siihen sitte oman mielipiteeni, et mä kyl todella haluaisin puhua yleisötyöstä kun puhutaan täällä ja ollaan tanssin aluekeskuksessa. ...joku toinen sano mulle sit ihan hyvin, ku se mietti sitä yleisötyötä, et mikä toi yleisötyö oikeen on, ni mä kysyin, että onks toi yleisökasvatus sitten tutumpi termi, ni joo se on kauhee, et ei hän olis ollenkaan kiinnostunut jos olis lukenut että yleisökasvatusta... (J.L.)

Katja faced the difficulties with the terminology when she started her new job as the person employed for audience development and she had to decide what her title would be. First it was thought that she would be called a curator. This title was, however, abandoned later on because it had a strong reference to education. “Yleisötyöntekijä” (audience worker) seemed to be the most suitable title.

These views of my interviewees on audience development resemble the ones presented earlier in this study (chapter 2). Hayes (2003: 2) sees audience development as an as “amorphous concept” including wide range of activities. Maitland (1997: 5) describes

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<sup>8</sup> In Finnish, however, the term is “yleisötyö”.

these various activities as “a planned processes which involves building a relationship between an individual and the arts”. Maitland (1997) and Rogers (1998) both speak of the three aspects involved. Both agree on the education and marketing. Rogers adds programming where Maitland speaks of the artistic aspect.

"It is both PR work with kind of looking for audiences as well as informing, all in one parcel. It is a sort of a starting point. Like the motto we've had for a long time now "you can't avoid dance."(V.R.)

"Se on sekä PR työtä että niinku yleisön hakemista sekä tiedottamista, kaikki samassa paketissa. Se on jotenkin semmonen ihan niinku lähtökohta. Että se on ollu mottona jo pitkään että "et voi välttyä tanssilta". (V.R.)

My interviewees all recognize the central competencies of audience development. In practise though, the scope of audience development is more complex. Hayes (2003: 8) claims that all departments in the art organization have a role in audience development. These include in addition to developing, education and marketing, the box office, front of house, catering and retail since according to Hayes they all contribute to building the relationship and augmenting the visitor's experience.

## **5.2. Prerequisites**

There are certain prerequisites for audience development. First of all there should be an understanding of why audience development is important for the organization, in other words what their motives are for it. Secondly, there should be knowledge based on research of the existing audiences and the population of the region. Thirdly, based on this knowledge there should be a plan of what the organization wants to achieve by audience development and a strategy of how to implement these plans. Then of course there should be enough resources for the work. (Maitland 1997, Rogers 1998, Hayes 2003).

### **Motives and objectives**

Motives and objectives of audience development are linked to the content of audience development because in order to practise audience development the organization has to be able to answer the why-question; why audience development? What is it that they

wish to achieve? How conscious in terms of strategy is the audience development practise among my interviewees?

As discussed in chapter two, arts organizations have different kinds of objectives they have to meet such as artistic, financial and social and combinations of those. Kawashima (2000) defines four distinctive aspects that are financial, artistic, social and educational. In every organization these objectives are emphasized differently. Audience development is the means to achieve the set objectives (Maitland 1997; Rogers 1998). For Jaana audience development is one of the top reasons why the centers exist in the first place:

"...in fact, audience development is the reason why the centers exist, in my opinion, so that we can get audiences for the artists to get work and so on. Of course it goes in a circle. In order to need dance works we need audiences, audiences needing danceworks, creating more audiences and on and on... We need each other" (J.L.)

"...tää yleisötyö on nimenomaan kyl se, minkä takia ne (siis aluekeskukset) on – mun mielestä. Siis että saadaan yleisöä, jotta taiteilijoilla on työtä ja niin pois päin. Sehän on sykli. Jotta tarvitaan tanssiteoksia, tarvitaan yleisöä, tarvitaan yleisöä – mistä saadaan yleisöä dadadada... Tarvitaan toinen toisiamme." (J.L.)

My interviewees have all included audience development in the operating plan of the regional center, which means there is some kind of plan for it. However, detailed plan or strategy alone for audience development seems to be missing. All the centers seem to share the same problem: long-term and really planned audience development has not took place yet because there have been so many things in setting up the general management of the center.

They, however, have lots of objectives they wish to meet. One to start with is the fact that performing arts simply need audience.

"This is performing arts so it somehow.... simply belongs to the concept. If I am not getting philosophical here, it's like any performing art, the performance has been made, in a way, to be seen by others. And as a matter of fact...It's a different thing to be performing to two people from performing to two hundred. Like, well, as an art form that's what it's like" (K.K.)

"Tää on esittävä taiteen muoto ni se jotenki... ihan siis yksinkertaisesti kuuluu siihen konseptiin myös. Jos ei lähetä yhtään filosofiseksi, että kyllä se niinku ihan mikä vaan esittävä taide on tehty silleen, et se on toisen katsen kohteena se esitys. Ni se on ihan myös se konkreettinen asia että... Se on eri asia esiintyä kahdelle ihmiselle kuin kahdelle sadalle. Et ihan niinku taidemuotona se on tämmönen." (K.K.)

From the producing point of view the centers also wish to reach taxpayers and offer

them some kind of benefits through the art of dance because that is what the Ministry measures and the financial support and possibilities for staying active depend a lot on the subsidies. However, also own income is important. Financial aspect was mentioned as a motive one cannot neglect, because it defines the conditions for an arts organization to operate. In other words audience development's impact of attracting full houses and that way bring in more income so that the organization can survive better and provide work for the artists.

“Of course box office income is needed so that we can be here... if there is an institution it has some duties in order to be publicly supported. We produce a service with a price.” (A.K.)

”Että totta kai täytyy olla lipputuloja ja tuloja, jotta niinku voidaan olla tässä... jos on instituutio ni sillä on semmoset velvotteet jotta voidaan olla julkisen avustuksen piirissä. Et me tuotetaan palvelua jolla on hinta.” (A.K.)

However, emphasizing the financial aspect too much can also cause some oppression. Anniina felt it sometimes irritating that everything is measured in the form of figures and market expansion. In today's world the economic growth seems to be rated high. This way of thinking is influencing also the arts organizations. Anniina admits that income is naturally important but she also wishes to bring in other aspects - more humanity and soft values.

“...to have a more humanistic culture somehow...I would stand for cultural values and I would like to promote, so that...Well, sort of at the basic level, so the humanistic values can be advanced, so it's somehow meaningful, at least in the nearest areas. (A.K.)

...et semmosen humanimman kulttuurin jotenkin... kulttuuriarvojen kannalla olisin itse ja sellasia haluaisin jotenkin edistää jotta ei niinku... No - mut että sitten niinku pienellä ruohonjuuritasolla et voi niitä humaaneja arvoja edistää, ni se on jotenkin merkittävää ainakin siinä lähiympäristössä. (A.K.)

Other motives mentioned were: contemporary dance needs to be made more familiar to ordinary people by taking it where people are:

“... In other words, the aim is always that we, in a way, force people to watch somewhere in their daily grind or we will force them to run into the dancing at some point.” (V.R.)

”..Elikkä pyritään aina kuitenkin mieluummin niin päin että me mennään niinku ja pakotetaan ihmiset katsomaan siellä jossain arkipäivässä tai pakotetaan ne törmäämään siihen tanssiin jossain kohtaa.”(V.R.)

Audience development increases artists' employment in a sense that it offers additional work for the artist, and the thought that regional centers are the body to spread dance

culture and knowledge of dance widely. They have the responsibility to foster contemporary dance in the region.

“It has been a moral starting point that a regional center could be a place which offers dance culture widely....” (A.K.)

”Et se on ollu niinku tämmönen moraalinen lähtökohta et jotenkin aluekekus vois olla tämmönen taho joka virittää tätä tanssikulttuuria niinku laajasti. Me ollaan haluttu panostaa siihen....” (A.K.)

One of the motives for audience development was also the thought that art has absolute value in it. I think anyone working in the art sector has to believe this in order to work for it.

“At least I believe that...people would be happier if they... or it would be good if people watched more contemporary dance and a larger proportion of them were able to enjoy this art form. I do believe in it's own merit.” (H.J.)

”Ainakin mulla on usko siihen että... et ihmiset olisivat niinkun onnellisempia jos he... tai että se olis hyvä, että ihmiset katsoisi enemmän nykytanssia, et suurempi osa vois nauttia siitä taiteenlajista. Et mä uskon, että se on itseisarvo, semmonen juttu.” (H.J.)

However, today the absolute value seems no longer be enough. More and more important seems to be the financial value or some other value art can produce to the society. ”Right or wrong, you make it better with the money holders when you talk in numbers.”<sup>9</sup> (Luukka 2006). Still, arts practitioners should be those who further audience interest, understanding and appreciation of an art form. This according to *John Pick* and *Malcolm Anderton* will create the “aesthetic contract” between the artist and audience and the management of this relationship should be a key preoccupation of arts managers. (Pick & Anderton 1996).

## Resources

Practising audience development requires different resources. In the Dance Information Centre’s inquiry of 2004 only seven groups out of fourteen admitted they practise audience development on regularly bases. In that inquiry the resources that prevented audience development from happening were the lack of financial and human resources, time and appropriate space, knowledge and experience, interest and willingness of the

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<sup>9</sup> ”Oikein tai väärin, kassanvartijoiden kanssa selviää paremmin, kun puhuu numeroilla.”

artists. Since the establishment of the regional centers for dance there are now organizations in the field that are committed to audience development and practise it according to their operating plan. Most of my interviewees agree that the resources they already have are enough to do something.

Cultural politics is in a central role in shaping the status of audience development. The difference in cultural politics in UK and Finland is significant regarding audience development and participation. As stated in chapter two the Arts Council England has been involved in a number of audience development programmes and invested millions of pounds in activities increasing participation in the arts. In addition there is a lot of support available for audience development such as the network of 17 regional audience development agencies. In Finland the tradition has been different and the subsidy system has not obliged arts organizations to increase participation or building audiences. As mentioned before, the creation of the regional networks for dance was the first time dance organizations faced expectations for such activities from the state level. Surprisingly, my interviewees are quite satisfied with the current subsidy system but wish that in addition there would be specific subsidies for the development of audience development and for different projects in the area.

"...let's say that what we already have is enough to get started. Maybe the long-term planning and giving time and thought for it has been lacking. But this...it all depends on putting some thought into this and by doing that we can improve things even with our current resources."(H.J.)

".. sanotaanko, että kyllä sillä mitä meillä jo on pääsee ihan hyvin. Että nyt ehkä semmonen pitkäjänteinen suunnittelu ja siihen asiaan aikaa ja ajatusta laittaminen, niin sitä ei oo niin kauheesti ollu. Mutta tää.. et se on niin siitä kiinni, et me pystytään varmaan näilläkin resursseilla saamaan parempaa aikaan kun me vaan pistetään se ajatus." (H.J.)

Important resources for audience development according to my interviewees can be divided in three groups: human, financial and time. Human resources include a skilled, enthusiastic person in charge of audience development (fulltime), the willingness of the artists and the ability to connect with the participants. It was emphasized by all of my interviewees that the people involved in the audience development projects, i.e. from the organization's side and the participants, need to have the verve for it.

Here the division between Zodiak and the others is significant in a sense that all the other centers mention a "dream" of the situation where they could have an officer just for audience development. At Zodiak this "dream" has come true. However, I have to

mention that Katja's job was part-time during the first year and according to her was not quite enough. Because she is also involved with the actual "field-work" meaning teaching, lecturing, leading workshops at schools etc. she felt there wasn't quite enough time to prepare the new projects.

The board usually defines the budget for audience development in the centers. In some cases also the regional arts councils have allocated funding for especially the school projects. One center mentioned that in some cases also money from the marketing budget can be used for audience development activities. With this basic funding the organizations can operate and do something but if they want to develop their audience development more funding is needed. Here the human resources and the financial ones are tied together since it requires money to hire an employer for audience development.

At Zodiak financial resources have been invested to hire audience development officer. For Katja the budget situation was however unclear in the beginning. She didn't know how much money could be used for audience development projects.

"We have, you know, been searching for direction to go to. How much do we really want or can afford to invest. So they are really value questions. Are we going to invest into a work of art or...well, audience development is not exactly bringing us profits but likely to bring losses." (K.K.)

"Tääl oli semmosta tiedätkö suunnan etsimistä, et kuinka paljon siihen oikeesti halutaan sitte satsata ja kuinka paljon on varaa satsata. Et ne on kauheen arvokysymyksiä, että tota annetaanko se raha johonki taideteoksen tekemiseen, vai niinku sitte...eihän tää yleisötyö sillä tavalla tuota, et kyllä se enemmän niinku tappiota tuottaa että..." (K.K.)

In the background is the situation familiar to all of the centers. That is the dilemma of how much financial resources they actually are willing to "sacrifice" over the performances. Here we are touching the value questions: should the scarce financial resources that dance still enjoys rather be put to producing of performances and cherishing the artistic quality than to activities that don't make instant profit - rather vice versa if talking about the missionary audience development projects. The regional centers are expected to invest in audience development - but how much, is another question.

"We have so little money that we want to put it into the most essential thing which is to produce art works. This way we can employ people to fulfil their function as professional artists, but now I am thinking that when the producing structure has been strengthened and there is also more staff and the fact that we have invest money to do audience development, so that makes you... some kind of

financial guidance and ministry's guidelines influences and that has sort of made us regional centers to cooperate and gather at the same table." (H.J.)

"Pienet on ne rahat, ni sitä tietysti aina haluaa satsata ne siihen ydin asiaan eli teosten tuottamiseen. Sitä kautta taiteilijoiden työllistämiseen juuri siinä mikä on heidän ydintehtävä, mut sitä mä aattelen, et nyt näitä tuotantorakenteita on vahvistettu ja muutenkin henkilökuntaa taloissa ja se et meillä laitetaan tehtäväksi et näillä rahoilla täytyy tehdä yleisötyötä ni se pistää...jonkinlainen talousohjaus ja se ministeriön ohjaus niin se vaikuttaa, joka on esim. niin sanotusti vähän pakottanut meidän aluekeskukset keskenään tekemään työtäkin ja tulemaan saman pöydän ääreen." (H.J.)

Sometimes it seems a bit crazy to put resources to a lecture that five people are interested in. But one must think these as long-term activities. As discussed earlier the building of new audiences is a time- and money-consuming process (Hayes and Slater 2002).

"If I am thinking of the lectures we arrange and some 7 or 5 people from outside attend it makes you wonder if it makes any sense. As it would cost us 500-700 euros to arrange the event it certainly doesn't make sense. But if you think of it as a long-term activity, say in 10 years time - five years would not be long enough - and you actively search for...you would create a network of a basic audience. I think this would be worth investing in and you could use a few thousand euros per annum for it to be worthwhile in the long run." (A.K.)

"Sillä lailla jos miettii just tällaisia luentoja joita järjestää ja sit sinne tulee 7tai 5 ulkopuolista ihmistä, niin siinä kohdin totta kai miettii, että onks tässä mitään järkeä. Ja vaikka se kustantais meille nyt 500-600 euroa sen kyseisen tilaisuuden järjestäminen, niin eihän siin oo mitään järkeä siinä mielessä. Mut se, että et jos ajattelee sen semmosena pitkäjänteisenä jatkumona vaikka 10 vuoden päähän - viiskin vuotta on aika vähän - ja tavallaan etsii aktiivisesti sitä... niin kun verkostoituu niihin ihmisiin jotka olis sellasta pohjayleisöä, niin mun mielestä se on semmonen mihin kannattaa panostaa ja siihen voi vuosittain käyttää muutamia tuhansia euroja uskoen siihen, että se on pitkällä jäniteellä kannattavaa. (A.K.)

## Previous research and the existing audience

Maitland (1997: 13) claims that often organizations plan audience development events that appeal to them and only afterwards look around for participants for these projects. She states that ideally the section of community the organization wants to work with, i.e. targeted groups should be identified first. Then create or choose the event, which is most likely to interest, that particular group. If there already is a planned project or event the organization should find those target groups whose needs and interests match the benefits the event/project has to offer. In order to choose the target groups the organization must know what their existing audience and the local population are like.

Because audience development is such a young discipline in Finland, the regional

centers seemed to have spent time and effort at first clearing out what audience development actually is; what it means and how it would best serve the people in the region; both artists and audiences. No systematic ways of collecting information of the existing audience or local population occurred in any of the centers. Four centers had done some kind of research, one had not. In places where research was conducted the results were never analyzed or if analyzed they were not utilized for audience development activities.

“...obviously then, back in -99 (before the era of regional centers) an audience questionnaire was made but I don't know how...I have never seen it in our files or wherever it might be but I have heard that one was made.” (H.J.)

”...ilmeisesti silloin joskus -99 (siis ennen alukeskus aikaa) tai näissä main on tehty joku yleisökysely ja tuota mä en tiedä et kuinka... Mä en itse asiassa sitä ole koskaan nähnyt siellä niinku meidän arkistossa, että missä se on, mutta olen kuullut että semmoinen on tehty.” (H.J.)

Katja pointed out that the implemented audience research has not been very systematic and has been conducted only during some special events such as festivals. Those researches didn't offer any new information but rather repeated the already known facts: audience consists mainly of young women with high education. These results caused a feeling that the audience base ought to be widened to every direction.

Even though there is no systematic research, each center claims they have a good sense of what their audiences are like. This has to do with the fact that often the audiences are small and most of the audience members are familiar to each other.

“The dance audience consists of the core activists, who are dances themselves, teachers of dance and their close circle of friends. So it is a really small audience and often you are sitting there at the performance with everyone you know.” (V.R.)

Tanssiyleisössä käy hirveen paljon – siellä käy mejän aktiivit, jotka on itse tanssijoita, tanssinopettajia ja sitte heidän niinku tämmönen lähipiirinsä. Se on tietysti hirveen suurilta osin... Et hirveen pienihän meil on tanssiyleisö et ihan siis todella pieni, että välillä sitä istuu kaikkien tuttujensa kanssa siellä näytöksessä. (V.R.)

To give some example of the size of the audience Anniina mentions that with the marginal or experimental works they are happy if they have 50 people in the audience. If they have close to 100 people in the audience they are very satisfied.

It seems that the core audience consists of those who are in the field themselves or have some other close personal connection to dance. People outside this inner circle attend

dance performances only occasionally drawn by a certain name or type of performance (e.g. performances for the whole family). Naturally different programs draw in different people and if the organization wants to widen its audience base this needs to be taken account. In places where there is variety in the program also the audience is more diverse.

"...we have a variety of styles, in addition of contemporary dance which has the main emphasis, we also have these other productions. They all have their own audience, so when a concert evening or dance gala is produced for a large stage at the theatre and something good is performed of each style, then it is possible to have full audiences consisting of people favouring each style. So there will be many kinds of audiences... for dance." (H.J.)

"... meil on tää monilajisuus, et sen lisäksi et meil on nykytanssia, jolla on tietenkkin se pääpaino, ni meil on sitten paljon näitä muitakin tuotantoja. Niis on sit aina oma yleisönsä, niin sit kun sä teet semmosen konsertti-illan, jonkun tanssin gaalan suurelle näyttämölle teatterille ja laitat sinne kaikista lajeista jotakin hyvää esille, niin sä saat kaikkien näiden eri lajien ihmiset täyttämään sen salin. Et siel on niinku monenlaisia yleisöjä... silleen tanssille." ( H.J.)

It must be the lack of resources (financial, human and time) and the regional centers' short history of existence why research is neglected. Nevertheless, it seems that those scarce resources are wasted without proper planning and background information. Recognizing the different audience groups (Hayes and Slater 2002) that were introduced in chapter two and their qualities and really target the right actions to the right groups would bring the most out of the inputs. However, for the year 2007 the centers are planning an emphasis for audience development which means they will have more cooperation between each other and also internationally. They have also discussed of a possibility to make use of certain packages someone has already created. Katja's experience as an audience development officer is naturally important for all. It seems that in the future there will be more cooperation between the centers in the field of audience development and then also the results of implemented surveys and researches could be shared and utilized in all centers.

### **5.3. Roles, Responsibilities and Collaboration**

Rogers (1998) suggests that audience development could be a shared responsibility in an organization. As Maitland (1997) points out typically the groups to share the duties in audience development include marketers, educators and artists. In the Finnish regional centers for dance the ones who share the responsibilities are the

producers/coordinators or audience development officer (only in Zodiak), the board, and the artists. They are responsible for planning, organizing and implementing audience development. In their operating plans the centers have different things for audience development. Some list specific actions or forms such as arranging meetings, discussions, educational activities and different projects. Others take a wider perspective.

As pointed out previously, audience development doesn't have a detailed plan or strategy of its own in the regional centers yet. This has to do with the fact that the centers are young and they have been using a lot of their energy during the first year to set up the center and create the standard of activities. Once this phase is over and the actions have stabilized it is time for more specific actions. I believe, however, that each center does audience development also just by existing and running its functions in its region.

In every center there is a strong aspiration to include audience development activities in all bigger works or co-productions during the term. The basic structure for dividing the duties is: The board or the artistic committee is responsible for the planning and the use of money. Implementing is taken care of by the coordinator together with the artists. Sometimes, if an artist has background in audience development or education, the initiative can also come from that direction. For example, Jaana strongly believes in motivating the artists to do the job and letting them create ideas. This brings up an issue of whose responsibility audience development is. Is it something that can be expected from the artist?

"This is a question of many different aspects such as artistic image, artistic identity and the purpose of art so...is it really the artist's job on the whole one could ask. Yes, we can ask that. I also ask the question and it is worthwhile to juggle the questions to find out what audience development is. (J.L.)

"Tähän liittyy kauheesti erilaisia taiteilijakuvaan, taiteilijaidentiteettiin ja taiteen tehtävään liittyviä kysymyksiä että... et onks se sit taiteilijan tehtävä yleensä, tämmönen voidaan kysyä. Niin voidaankin kysyä. Mäkin kysyn sitä mut just näistä on niinku hyvä pallotella, että mikä se yleisötyö on." (J.L.)

Jaana adds that audience development is always a recommendation, not a must and the center offers resources for the artists to implement the projects. Another question is how the artists feel about such work. In every region most of them have been willing to the

projects.

"At least everybody has agreed on when I have asked them. I have no idea how willingly. However, one choreographer admitted feeling nervous showing half rehearsed work for a class full of school children as it was the first time she showed unfinished work to the public and... But she didn't mind doing it, she took it as a challenge and I think it was a very positive experience to be repeated." (V.R.)

"Ainakin kaikki on suostunut kun mä oon kysynyt. En tiedä sit kuinka mielellään tai ei. Tokihan joku sitten sano, kun oli se tilanne, et siel oli yks koululuokka katsomassa niitä harjoituksia, ni yks koreografi sano kyllä, että häntä vähän jännittää, et tää on ensimmäinen kerta kun hän avaa keskeneräisen teoksen yleisölle ja tota.... Mutta hänkin teki sen kyllä mielellään, otti sen omana haasteenaan kans ja mä luulen et se oli hirveen, tai siis et se oli hirveen positiivinen kokemus, et se varmastikin jatkuu." (V.R.)

The situation is a little bit different is in the South where Katja works as an audience development officer. This gives this center a special role in the field of audience development compared to the others where the coordinator or producer has also all the other responsibilities of the center in her shoulders. When Katja started in August 2005 she was given the chance to plan audience development for Zodiak; the objectives and modes of actions.

"...it started off, what I think was a great situation, that I was given time to sort of...so that the first requirement was not to do audience development projects for all our performances but I was given time to think what audience development could be and what it is that is wanted. What had been done previously was quite random and was depending on individual artists and what ever they wanted to do. And sometimes there were long breaks, it was not methodical. But I don't mean that I have created anything just by myself. Of course I started off by... looking around and getting to know what had been done previously, but in contemporary dance there is no ready made model..." (K.K.)

"...se läks liikkeelle siitä, mikä siis mun mielestä oli hieno tilanne, että mulle annettiin aikaa niinku... et niinku ensimmäisenä ei ollu, et tee hirveen monta yleisötyöprojektiä kaikkiin meidän esityksiin, vaan sai käyttää aikaa siihen, et sai miettiä mitä se vois olla ja mitä niinku halutaan. Se mitä tääl oli tehty aikasemmin oli aika niinku satunnaisia ja yksittäisistä taitelijoista, et kuka oli niinku mitäkin halunnut tehdä. Ja saatto olla pitkiä taukoja, et ei ollu semmosta suunnitelmallista. Mut emmä nyt tarkota, et mä oon tänne mitään yksin luonu, et totta kai mä lähin kauheesti liikkeelle siitä... katsomaan niinku ympärille ja tutustumaan mitä on tehty, mut ei täällä kuitenkaan nykytanssissa semmosta mitään sillee valmista mallia ollu olemassa..." (K.K.)

In practise Katja discusses with the artists and asks if they are willing to cooperate and if so, how much time could be used. She also has to consider what the financial situation is like – how much money can be used for a project and could there be any extra funding sources. After planning the rules and timetables Katja starts offering it to the different groups she thinks could be interested in the project. The process usually works so that the project is planned first and the participants are looked for later. This is in contrast with Maitland's (1997: 13) ideal model where the target group is defined

first and the activity is created to match with the interests of that group. However, both models work as long as there is a match between the needs and interests of the participants and the benefits the project can offer.

### Sharing responsibilities

Rogers (1998) states that running an arts organization successfully includes two key areas: education and marketing. He believes that working collaboratively these two areas can benefit the activity of audience development. There are, however, some common assumptions of marketing being a short-term activity and aiming at attracting the largest audience possible for every event. It is often seen as an activity of its own having no connections to education or other audience development activity. Rogers points out that it is a mistake to see education and marketing as having entirely separate, rather than complementary aspirations. (Rogers 1998: 3).

My interviewees acknowledged that marketing is one aspect of audience development but in practise it seems to be more like a loose element, which is used to promote or advertise the workshops, seminars and other audience development activities. Marketing is seen as its own yet important field concentrating on selling but genuine collaboration in Roger's meaning didn't seem to take place.

Partly this has to do with the fact that the regional centers are small in size and in human resources. None of them, for example, have a marketing department or even a separate person in charge of just marketing and the financial resources for marketing are often scarce. The reality is that there are only 1-3 permanent employees who usually take care of more than just one area. Collaboration between the different fields is therefore difficult. Also, at Zodiak where Katja works for audience development, collaboration between different sectors has not occurred yet.

“Partly I have worked from home which has had an effect of me being a lonely rider with the job. But... maybe we have the situation that everyone has their hands full with their own jobs. This is where we have something to develop, so that we could sort of unite...” (K.K.)

”Osittainhan mä oon myös tehny tätä etätöyönä. Mikä kyl on vaikuttanu siihen, et mä oon ollu aika lonely rider tän homman kanssa. Mutt että tota... ehkä tääl on vähän se tilanne, et jokaiselle on oma työkenttä niin täysi niistä omista hommistaan, et vähän siinä on meillä vielä kehittämisen

varaa, et voitais niinku yhdistää....” (K.K.)

According to Rogers (1998) effective audience development involves bringing together the artistic, educational and marketing elements of the arts organizations to achieve a series of short -, medium- and long-term objectives which increase, broaden and enrich targeted groups. What in practise could this collaboration mean? Rogers (1998) gives very practical examples. He encourages people to sit on each others’ meetings and define what type of support each can give to the other. There can be exchange of tools and expertise to achieve particular aims. It is important that this cooperation benefits the organization overall. Rogers suggests that this is best done in the context of organization having an agreed written audience development strategy based on collaboration between programming, education and marketing. (Rogers 1998: 12-13).

This strategy of audience development should also include a part where writing about dance aimed for audiences is drawn attention to. If we agree on that audience development is an amorphous concept that includes various activities (Hayes: 2003) and that there should be collaboration between different sectors (Maitland, 1997; Rogers, 1998) then also the way dance is presented in a written form should be a concern of audience development. This is important especially when approaching new audiences. Journalist *Hanna Tohtua* (2006) wrote: ”First of all something must be done to the texts of the program leaflets. You can come out in sweat reading them. What should one think about a work that is described as follows: ‘being outside of the edge of the surface of one’s outside inner center, the examining of its movement and the filling of its space with relationships.’ What! Shall I get the Dictionary of Academic Art and start translating?”.<sup>10</sup> The quotation is appropriate and true. Often the texts only confuse people instead of increasing understanding or providing tools to better understand the performance. As Helena puts it:

“Audience friendly program leaflets are the best audience development.” (H.J.)

”Yleisöystävällisemmät käsiohjelmat, parasta yleisötyötä.” (H.J.)

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<sup>10</sup>” ”Ensin pitää kuitenkin tehdä jotain tanssiteosten esittelyteksteille. Niitä lukiessa tulee hiki. Mitä pitäisi ajatella teoksesta, jonka kuvataan käsittelevän ”itsen sisäisen ulkopuolella olevaa rajapintaa, sen liikkeellistä tutkimista ja tilan täyttämistä suhteilla.” Että mitä! Haenko abstraktin akateemisen taiteen sanaston ja ryhdyn käänköspuuhiiin.”

All of my interviewees agreed that this is an area that needs to be developed but they also acknowledged that they are simply lacking time to concentrate on this area. Here too, the problem is that the amount of staff is low. Another difficulty is the fact that artists don't necessarily want their texts to be changed. One solution is that a clear difference is made in the marketing text, information text and the text in the program. Also, different target groups require different kinds of texts. I see that in terms of audience development writing about dance is clearly a shared responsibility. Plans should be made for the style of writing and to whom it is aimed for and when and where the texts should be available. This is one area that expertise and tools from different fields can be utilized.

Once again we have to remember that the regional centers have only been operating for a short time (started in 2004 and 2005) and it requires time before these kinds of collaborative models are born. I believe in the future collaboration of the sectors will increase and find its forms. Before that the number of staff members need to grow and the work of the person in charge of audience development need to be opened up for the rest of the staff members.

"Audience development needs to be opened up for all, because it is not clear to them... my job is not very visible to them. So documenting the work is also... not a prerequisite but something that is good to be aware of." (K.K.)

"Se vaatii jotenkin myös ehkä sen yleisötyön tietkö aukasemista kaikille, koska ei se oo heillekään... ei heille tuu kauheesti näkyville tästä mun työstä. Et se on kans semmonen e.. ei edellytys mut hyvä niinku huomioda jotenkin sen työn dokumentoiminen." (K.K.)

Considering the fact that the resources are often insufficient in every sector, it would probably be wise to combine the human and financial resources and to develop projects which combine elements from the different sectors.

#### **5.4 Audience Development Activities, Participants and Evaluation**

As Hayes (2003: 14) pointed out most organizations have a transactional view of audience development. This chapter introduces the various projects and methods of the regional dance centers in audience development. Also participants and evaluation of the implemented projects is discussed.

## Common forms of audience development

There are certain forms that can be considered common and already familiar to people. These according to my interviewees include the discussions before and after the performances, open rehearsals and different kind of workshops, lectures, seminars and panel discussions.

According to my interviewees discussions after performances are the easiest activity to arrange. Discussions are conducted mainly by the choreographer but sometimes also by the coordinator. Sometimes also the dancers or other members of the working groups such as light, sound or costume designers are involved in the discussions. The audience seems to be more familiar with the discussions afterwards than pre-performance activities.

“Discussions after performances are more familiar to people but the pre-stuff... it happened once that not one person showed up although we had kind of a famous guest there.”(K.K.)

“Yleisökeskustelut on niinku tutumpia sit esityksen jälkeen, mut sit tämmöset pre jutut nii- ni , meillä kävi myös niin ettei tullu yhen yhtä ihmistä paikalle, vaikka oli ihan nimekäs tyyppi paikalla.” (K.K.)

Although discussions after performances are settled forms of audience development sometimes they might have felt a bit artificial.

"Well maybe sometimes the discussions after performances have seemed a little artificial... it depends on the artists how willing they are to open up their own works... And on the other hand people can be sort of....someone starts to ask but the discussion never really takes off." (H.J.)

”No ehkä joskus on ollut tämmöset niinku yleisökeskustelut esityksen jälkeen ni on voinu tuntua pikkasen päälleliimatulta...sekin riippuu taitelijoista et miten ne halukkaita avaamaan sitä omaa työtään... Sitten taas ihmiset voi olla vähän sillä tavalla no... et joku aloittaa sen kyselyn mut se ei lähde sillä tavalla se juttu siitä etenemään kauheen niinku hyvin.” (H.J.)

Workshops are seen as a common form of practising audience development but there are many variations and possibilities of them. The mentioned target groups for workshops were kindergarten children, school children, and dance schools’ pupils, students at university and vocational schools, and senior citizens. Workshops can mean either experiencing the art form by doing it, i.e. dancing, or educational situation. In this context they refer to the first one.

Workshops for schools seemed to be a very important educational form of audience development for all centers. They can offer deep experiences for the participants. This was the case in a workshop where school children practised and performed a piece of a certain choreography.

"They were quite unbelievable. I have never seen young men with such an intensive way of watching when they were watching Syli (name of the performance) when they realize that afterwards we will be on stage ourselves. When they were watching I thought this is unbelievable (whispers). So when you have tried this kind of experiential method personally, you look at the art work and the working of the professionals in a different way." (H.J.)

"Ne oli aivan uskomattomia. Mä en oo koskaan nähnyt niin intensiivistä katsojuutta sen ikäisissä nuorissa miehissä kun ne katsoi sitä Syliä (esityksen nimi) kun ne tietää, että tän jälkeen me mennään itse tonne. Ku ne katsoo silleen, ni mä ajattelin, et tää on ihan uskomatonta (kuiskaa). Eli kyllä semmonen oma elämyksellinen tekeminen kun on kokeillut sitä, et mitä se on olla tuolla, ni se kun sä katsot sitten ihan eri silmällä sitä työtä ja kuinka noi työskentelee noi ammatilaiset tuolla." (H.J.)

There is a strong impact of experiencing the art by doing it and the results can really change the relationship with the art form. A similar kind of project was also one in which pupils from a dance school (those having dance as a hobby) created together with the choreographer their own short versions of the actual choreography. This kind of activity requires lot of work from the choreographer's side and is therefore a form that not very many artists are willing to implement. For marketing purposes this kind of workshop would be most beneficial before the premiere and that is naturally the time when the choreographer is very busy.

"This was a pretty good concept but it requires a lot from the choreographer because not many feel like doing it in a rehearsal period just before getting ready for their own premiere, so that's a bit problematic...  
...very few want this and I understand. There is not enough time and energy and one cannot concentrate." (K.K.)

"Tää oli aika toimiva konsepti mut vaatii paljon sitte koreografilta koska kauheen moni ei jaksa revetä siinä harjoituskaudella just ennen ku pitää valmistua oma teos, ni se on vähä niinku semmonen ongelmallinen...  
...että tosi harva haluaa, ja ymmärrän kyllä. Ei niinku riitä aika ja energia ja ei pysty keskittymään." (K.K.)

Often the school-workshops are entirely arranged by the producer, coordinator or group of artists. Katja expressed her aims of involving the teachers at schools more. By doing this, the projects could be tied to the schools' everyday activities and there could be more of those or the workshops could be longer in duration.

It is interesting that the workshops were intended mainly to school children, which mean the age group up from seven years old. Only two centers mentioned the kindergartens. The reason for that might be that often little children are seen very challenging and the practitioners might feel that they are lacking skills in confronting that age group. In Turku region, however, there are plans to arrange activities for younger children as well.

" We have had all kinds of plans, for example in style of the ABC of dance for three years olds...like what would dance analysis be for the 3-year olds. It is interesting to think what could be included in it..." (J.L.)

"Meil on ollu kaikenlaisii suunnitelmii kaikista justiinsa niinku tanssin ABC joillekin 3-vuotiaille tyyliin... tämmösistä niinkun et mitä olis tanssianalyysi 3-vuotiaille. Et nää on tämmösii mielenkiintosii asioita ruveta miettimään, että mitä se pitäis sisällään..." (J.L.)

Most of the workshops are educational in nature and represent the missionary approach introduced by Hayes and Slater (2002). With all the audience development projects, also in the case of workshops, the art organizations persuade people to experience an art form maybe for the first time and then often never get in touch with them again. Maitland (1997: 6) sees that this kind of poor practise happens because the staff in the organization does not work together. She suggests that when one part of the organization (e.g. audience development officer) makes contact with people, another part (e.g. marketer) can pick up the relationship to follow it through.

It is important both in workshops and other kind of activities that there is an aspiration for continuity. Building the relationship between the individual and the art form is essential in audience development. This is best achieved by long-term projects. As Hayes and Slater (2002) state these projects often are time and money –consuming and there is no instant payback. Still, they are important for arts organizations because e.g. workshops for schools can, for the majority, be the only situations where contemporary dance is introduced to them. It is probable that without these workshops the children would never get involved with it. Will those children find their way to the audience when they grow older remains to be seen. Referring to Maitland (1997: 6, 11, 34) arts organizations can foster the process of becoming an attender by continuing the relationship. As said, the results will show only in the long run, if ever. This is a risk the art organizations have to take.

## Innovative approaches and regional specialities

All centers are very innovative in developing new concepts. Some of those new approaches have to do with the different features each region has. Also the local population is different in different parts of Finland. These features were taken account in the following example.

The area around Oulu is traditionally considered as a religious area. There are strong religious groups that consider dance as sinful activity. The regional center produced a piece called "The 40 Days" which handles the 40 days that Christ spent in the desert. They cooperated with the local parish and the priest who gave theological advice for this work was also present in the discussions they had for the audience after performances. They felt this was a really successful model and the first time the regional center thought about a specific target group and made efforts of opening dance up for them.

"Traditionally dance being very physical it is in contrast to the spiritual and religious movements especially in the Northern Finland where dance has been considered sinful. We wanted to open up this issue and I think they were really successful events...So here we have... the first project where we have thought of a certain work for a certain group of people and planned the audience development event." (H.J.)

"Eli kun on perinteisesti tää tanssin ruumiillisuus ja sitten taas se, varsinkin Pohjoisessa, jossa on erilaisia herätysliikkeitä, joissa tanssi on ollut hyvin syntistä touhua, niin haluttiin vähän avata tätä juttua ja musta ne oli tosi onnistuneita tilaisuuksia...Että tässä on myöskin sitä... että tässä on ensimmäinen semmonen, et on pyritty hakemaan tämmösen niin kun tietylle teokselle, et on ajateltu et niillä voi olla vastaavuutta tiettyyn ihmisten ryhmään, tiettyyn kohderyhmään ja sitten suunniteltu sinne sitä yleisötyöjuttua." (H.J.)

Also in other centers there were innovative approaches and projects which tie the art form to the local people and have a strong connection to the region. For example, in Kuopio there has been a clear tendency to make dance part of the community. Their motto "You cannot avoid dance" ("Et voi välttyä tanssilta") describes their attitude towards audience development very well and the so called library-car project where two dancers and one actor toured with the library car and improvised scenes of the books that people borrowed represents their thinking very well:

"... they sort of improvised scenes of the books on the request of the borrowers, in other words books were borrowed and then they danced...I mean an actor would read and the dancers would improvise on the text. And this is... I think this library car thing compares well with the regional center's functioning. That's exactly what we should be on principal, that really going there and

making a use of larger areas and working at the grass roots level. This is where we could combine it all. There was a performance at every stop of the library car." (V.R.)

"... ne niinku esitti improvisaatiota niistä teoksista mitä ne lainaajat pyysi, elikkä kun ne lainaajat lainas teoksia sitte nää tanssi... tai näyttelijä luki siitä ja sit nää tanssijat teki improvisaatiotota siihen. Ja se on semmonen.... mun mielestä se kirjastoautotoiminta vertautuu kauheen hyvin siihen aluekeskustoimintaan. Et se on just sitä mitä meidänkin pitäs periaatteessa olla, että ihan oikeasti jotenki se jalkautuminen ja suuremman alueen hyödyttäminen ja ruohonjuuritason työ. Niin siinä tavallaan pystyttiin sitten yhistämään se. Et se esiinty jokaisella pysäkillä, mitä oli siinä kirjastoauton varrella." (V.R.)

This project combined many elements: It was promotional for the entire art form, got publicity, and was different and interesting but also touched individuals at a personal level.

It is not always easy to see what forms are the ones that attract people or what kinds of forms should be created. It is a matter of exploring, evaluating and rethinking. My interviewees feel that a successful project benefits the artists, participants and the organization. A successful audience development project creates an atmosphere where contemporary dance steps out from the margin and becomes more visible. Also, if a project succeeds to cause a deep experience in the participants it has been worthwhile. Successful ones are also the projects that end up being part of a bigger entity and not just loose happenings here and there.

There weren't too many examples of the unsuccessful projects among my interviewees. A problem mentioned by all is the lack of participants in certain projects. Often the problem is not the content or quality of the activity. Vice versa, they can be interesting and brilliant. It is often the marketing and information that fail.

"But I see it as a problem of marketing and resources rather than anything else. And this is why I cannot... well I guess I can say that audience development is not succesfull when the audience doesn't turn up. Undoubtly (laughs)." (A.K.)

"Mut lähinnä mä nään sen semmosena markkinoinnin ja voimavarojen ongelmana kuin sen itse asian. Et sen takia en voi sa..tai no niin voi sanoa tietysti et yleisötyö on epäonnistunut silloin kun yleisö ei tuu paikalle, niin onhan se niin, väistämättä (nauraa)." (A.K.).

"No one comes only for discussion and stuff but you have to sort of... you have to already have the audience." (V.R.)

"Ei sinne kukaan tuu vaan sen takia et siel on sitte sitä keskustelua ja muuta, että sitte pitää jo ikäänkun...sit pitäs olla jo se yleisö." (V.R.)

Here Vilja refers to the fact that nobody comes to the discussion for discussions sake or

if they do, they are already regular attenders; at least fans (Kolb: 2000) of the art form. Dancer/choreographer *Jyrki Haapala* (2006) made a similar notice in his article where he criticised the regional centers and their audience development work. He states: "Very few ordinary person will come to a lecture where dancers are pondering what is it that is difficult in understanding contemporary dance."<sup>11</sup> He is after activities where the audience is confronted in their own everyday surroundings. "Audience development needs to be directed outwards - the audience must be met in their own everyday surroundings."<sup>12</sup>

### Participants and evaluation

One area of discussion in the interviews was the participants in the audience development projects. Is there interest towards these activities? And if so, how do the participants feel about them? Katja pointed out that it has been surprisingly hard to find participants. It takes effort and time to reach the possible groups and get them to participate in the planned activities. However, after the contacts are made the situation becomes easier. Also, people are now starting to become aware of the fact that Zodiak does such work.

"It has been a surprise for me. I was much more idealistic when I started; I thought that people would be excited to be offered such fine stuff. But it has taken enormous part of my working hours."(K.K.)

"Se onkin ollut yllätys, et olin paljo niinku idealisempi ku lähdin, aattelin et ihmiset on innoissaan, et ku tällasia hienoja juttuja heille tarjotaan. Ni siis siihen menee valtavasti työaika." (K.K.)

The participation depends on a project. Like performances, some audience development events draw in more people than others. Jaana claimed that, for example, discussions after performances don't cause that much interest. Vilja suggests that in order to really reach more people it is best to take the art form to them.

"Of course you will get much more audience and publicity with the events like the library car thing or something....That you go and do your thing where the public is and not vice versa."(V.R.)

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<sup>11</sup> "Harva peruskansalainen osaa hakeutua luennolle, jossa tanssijat pohdiskelevat, mikä nykytanssin ymmärtämisessä on vaikeaa."

<sup>12</sup>"Yleisötyössä toiminta on suunnattava ulospäin – yleisö on tavoitettava omassa arkipäivän ympäristössään."

”Tietysti paljon enemmän yleisöä ja julkisuutta saa just semmosilla tempauksilla niinku ku se kirjastoautoasia tai joku tämmönen että... Että mennään tavallaan tekemään se asia sinne, missä se yleisö on, eikä niinku toisinpäin.” (V.R.)

I wanted to know if there had been any monitoring about how the groups that have participated in audience development activities have experienced them. None of the centers has practised any systematic monitoring or evaluation of the reception of these projects, but each has received oral feedback from the people involved.

“... we have not been researching how the target groups have responded. We only have the heard and seen feedback and on the bases of that I can say that there is an enormous need for it.”(J.L.)

”...et meillä ei oo ollu vielä minkäänlaista tutkimusta, että miten nää kohderyhmät on ottanut sen. Et se vaan palaute minkä nyt on kuullu, että miten on oltu läsnä ja miten on nähty, ni kyl sille on ihan hirveesti tarvetta.” (J.L.)

Helena estimates that the degree of satisfaction for the experienced activity would be around eight (if the scale is from 4-10) because some of the events have not been thought through and are maybe not professional enough. An important question is: Are people in fact coming back?

“...the question is, when audience development is in action, would people really come back, would their experience inspire them to find their way back again. It would also be meaningful for the practitioners to having been able to inspire someone enough...to be wanting to come back.” (K.K.)

“... just se kysymys, et ku tehdään yleisötyötä, et palaako ne ihmiset oikeesti sinne, saako ne sieltä oikeesti sellasia kokemuksia että ne löytää tiensä uudestaan. Ja kyllä se ainakin tekis myös toimijoille mielekkääks sen työn, jos saat innostettua jonkun niin paljon et se.. se siellä uudestaankin... niinku uudestaankin tulee katsomaan.” (K.K.)

Maitland (1997: 37) points out that very little information is available about successful audience development projects. However, monitoring and evaluation of the implemented processes are extremely important for the organization. By doing this you will get evidence on which to base future decisions (Hadley 2001: 25). Maitland (1997: 37-38) suggests that the immediate aftermath of the projects should be evaluated and the medium and long-term effects on the target group's arts attendance should be worked out. One way of finding out how participants feel is to interview them shortly after the event or have them fill in questionnaires. About the attendance box-office's computer systems can be valuable.

## 5.5 Missionary or Mainstream Approach

"We are not doing it just for ourselves. As I see it we are doing it for everyone and we ought to help them find their way to the seats in the audience and give them tools to get more out of art which will perhaps bring them back again to have new experiences." (H.J.)

"Eihän me sitä vaan omalle kentälle tehdä sitä työtä. Me mun mielestä tehdään sitä kaikille ihmisille ja meidän pitäis auttaa heitä sinne löytämään penkkeihin istumaan ja antaa heille välineitä, joilla he voi saada leveämmästi irti siitä taiteesta ja joka tuo heidät sitten ehkä uudestaan hakemaan uusia kokemuksia."(H.J.)

When talking about audience development it is often very natural to think of it in terms of attracting new groups to the audience and by doing this widen the composition of audience. Also Hayes and Slater (2002) claim that focus is often set on attracting new audiences, not on retention of existing ones. There should be a more holistic view of audience development encompassing both mainstream and missionary activities. What is the situation like in the regional centers?

All of my interviewees agree that there are different groups that need to be treated differently. Those groups mentioned are different age groups, lifestyles and people having different cultural capital. Groupings, however, have not been taken to the level of Hayes' and Slater's (2002) typologies presented in chapter 2.7. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that there are people who have different attitudes towards contemporary dance. Some of them even possess strong negative feelings. This is the group that Hayes and Slater call "the hostiles".

"The art form is so unknown for many people even off-putting for some, so it is not that it would be... the challenge for us is to make it neutral not to put people off. " (J.L.)

"Se taidemuoto on niin tuntematon, se on jopa luotaan työntävä aika usealle, et se ei oo pelkästään et se olis.. se siinä meil on haasteena mun mielestä et olis pelkästään neutraali, vaan se on jollekin niinku luotaantyöntävä." (J.L.)

To my interviewees it is important to target new audiences but equally important is the existing audience. It was well perceived that the strategies and methods of reaching entirely new audiences have to be different from the ones that concentrate on keeping the existing ones. It was also mentioned that both long-term and short-term projects are needed. In planning the activities it is also useful to think what kind of people a particular work could attract to find the match between the interests of the participants and the benefits the event can offer (Maitland 1997: 13). Also within the region the

purpose is to bring activities to different parts of the region and not only around the city/town where the center is physically located. With the existing audience the main priority is in trying to enrich their experiences by offering them, for example, lectures, seminars and special member events.

The importance of the first experience was seen significant among my interviewees. It might be crucial if it is bad – the potential audience member might be lost forever. Tohtua (2006) wrote: "Dance is often considered poorly known and a wrongly understood sector of art maintaining low audience numbers year after year. Those prejudiced sceptics should be attracted to the audience but how? What if the sceptic sees a work that s/he hates and won't ever come back?"<sup>13</sup>

That's why the first experience matters. But how much should the organization think of the audience in programming? An important issue is the freedom to create art for art's sake. A situation where the organization would start to plan their programme in order to please and attract as many attenders as possible and a choreographer would create a work in order to target a certain group feels strange to my interviewees. Here it is important to remember that the activities the organization practices must be in line with its mission. Yet, in real life it is a fact that not all works are suitable for someone attending contemporary dance performance for the first time.

" it is sort of true that dance is, well – I don't have any facts but just being around people shows that it is quite unknown art form to quite a few people and.... people have strong emotional bias. And I have been thinking that what's next, what kind of work it should be that I could offer as the first experience...

... it cannot be general starting point that in order to get audiences for dance choreographers start to think, kind of brand the art, so that this and this is for this age group etc. and now we make the watching experience a bit easier by doing this and that. I don't think this produces good art. It is one of the purposes of audience development that one acts as an interpreter in between but in real life it really matters what the first experience is. So when I am planning the projects I sort of think about who to offer them." (K.K.)

"Kyllä se on totta, et tanssi on kuitenkin, no – mul ei oo mitään tutkimustietoa tästä mutta siis ku vain on tuolla ihmisten parissa ni kyllähän se aika monelle aika tuntematon taidemuoto on ja tota..... paljon semmosia vahvoja jotenkin kauheen tunnepitoisia ennakkoasenteita ihmisillä. Ja tätä oon just miettiny et mitä sitte, et minkälainen on se teos, mikä pitäis niinku tarjota oikeesti ensikokemukseksi...

...ei se yleisenä lähtökohtana saa olla semmonen, että jotta saadaan yleisöä tanssille koreografitt ryhtyy miettimään, et niinku brändäämään sitä, et tää on tän ja tän ikäselle ja nyt helpotetaan katsomiskokemusta sillä ja tällä. Et mä en oikeen usko, et sillä syntyy hyvää taidetta. Et sehän se

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<sup>13</sup> "Meillä tanssi on huonosti tunnettu ja väärin ymmärretty taiteenlaji, jonka katsojamäärät pysyvät vuodesta toiseen matalina. Ennakkoluuloiset katsojat olisi saatava houkuteltua katsomoon, miten? Entä jos epäilijä näkee yhden tanssiteoksen, jota vihaa, eikä tule takaisin?"

yks yleisötyön tarkoitus on just toimia sinä tulkkina välissä, mutta sit taas niinku käytännön arkielämässä ni kyllä sillä on väliä, mikä se ensimmäinen kokemus myös on, että kyllä mä vähän niinku mietin noita projekteja suunnitellessani, et kelle niitä tarjoaa.” (K.K.)

If the first experience has been successful the “newcomer” might consider attending again and then maybe eventually become a regular attender. What can the organization do to advance this process? Hayes & Slater (2002: 5) talk about equipping the new audiences with the skills and confidence to become independent attenders and then incorporating them into the mainstream.

"The kind of increasing consciousness we are promoting and stuff. Messages and methods on different levels with which we try to influence groups on various levels. But I don't believe in...I don't have the enthusiasm; somehow I even hate this kind of selling you know... I believe there should be a natural meeting point. I don't want anyone in the audience so that yes, I succeeded, and then this fellow will never come back." (H.J.)

“Just se semmonen tietoisuuden lisääminen mitä me tehdään ja tällä tavalla. Eri tasoisia viestejä ja eri tasoisia menetelmiä, joilla pyritään vaikuttaman näihin eri etäisyydellä oleviin ryhmiin. Mut että mä en usko sellaseen niinku... ei mul oo mitään intoo, jotenki mä inhoan jopa semmosta myymistä tietkö tämmöstä... mä uskon niinku sellaseen et yritetään löytää luontainen yhtymäkohta. Mä en halua ketään istumaan sillä tavalla et, jes mä onnistuin, ja sit kavari ei tuu koskaan enää takasin.” (H.J.)

The last thing Helena mentions is what Hayes and Slater (2002: 5) call the “hit and run strategy”. In the short-term this kind of method may bring in cash but will be doomed as a long-term strategy.

It ought to be considered carefully into which groups to invest. As Hayes and Slater (2002) point out the missionary projects are often expensive and absorb tremendous time of the staff if they are to be well executed. They suggest that arts providers should undertake rigorous cost benefit analysis to establish the viability of these projects and their fit with long-term strategic direction. They also point out that since arts practitioners are usually over stretched, it is unlikely that they can nurture the existing audience if they are constantly using a lot of their time and energy to deliver projects to new target groups. (Hayes & Slater 2002: 5).

Even though all my interviewees do projects for new target groups the practise has taught that maybe there are certain groups that are not worth “dragging” into the audience. Jaana points out that for most people contemporary dance is not at the top of the important things in their lives so the need has to be created. The reality is that even some of the performances (popular names etc.) would bring in a lot of people, more

experimental marginal works are hard to market. It needs to be accepted that there are only a small group who are interested in those. As it was pointed out in chapter two (2.7), most audience members are culture consumers even though arts providers would like them to be at least fans not to mention enthusiasts or cultists. (Kolb 2000: 47).

I asked my interviewees which new audience groups they would like to reach. Those mentioned were: those attending theatre or concerts, those interested in other contemporary arts events (i.e. attenders elsewhere), students (other than the dance students), and those having dance as a hobby. One wish was also to reach certain corporations that would subscribe for bigger groups at least once a year.

An interesting phenomenon is the absence of the pupils of dance schools in the audience. This seems to be a problem throughout the country.

"Those who have dance as a hobby are a lost cause; we have already given up on them as they never come to see anything at all." (V.R.)

"Tanssinharrastajat on jo menetettyä kamaa, et me on jo annettu periks, että ne ei kuitenkaan tuu mitään koskaan katsomaan." (V.R.)

Vilja supposes that the reason might be that there is oversupply of happenings and activities already and people's lives are just too busy. Anniina offers another explanation to why the majority of those having dance as a hobby (3000-4000 alone in Tampere region) don't attend to performances. The reason could be the supremacy of ballet in dance training that has occurred for a long time and is only now changing.

"... if a dance school will see a performance they will go to the Opera to see a classical ballet or to Tampere house to see a Christmas ballet performed by the Ballet of Riga... it must be the classical ba...contemporary dance is such a new phenomenon somehow." (A.K.)

"... et jos tanssikoulut käy kattomassa tanssia ni ne lähtee oopperaan kattoon sen baletin tai Tampere taloon joulubaletin Riikan baletin vierailun että... se on joku semmonen et klassinen ba... nykytanssi on niin nuorta jotenkin ilmiönä." (A.K.)

Methods or strategies for reaching the mentioned new groups were not discussed in detail. It was only mentioned that the approach for each group needs to be tailored for them.

## 5.6 The Vision of Audience Development

In the interviews I asked my interviewees to present their visions of the future of audience development in their organizations. The common feature of those visions is that they are quite reasonable. No one expects sudden changes or miracles either in quality or in quantity. The progress concerning the composition of audiences is rather going to happen gradually, step by step. In the long run some basic tool or set of tools could be developed in the centers and then shared between other practitioners.

“Gosh – small steps at the time, so that I don’t have a vision that this will become something that covers everything... But I don’t want to predict any sort of megatrends . I want to keep my feet in the ground and move forward step by step and see what is going to happen.” (K.K.)

”Hui - hui hui hui, eiku siis näin pienin askelin kerrallaan, et ei mul oo niinku sellasta visioo että tällänen kaiken kattava toiminta tästä tulee... Mutta tota mä en kyl nyt lähtis visioimaan mitään sellasia megatrendejä mihin tää johtaa, et jotenkin mul on kyl vähä semmonen jalat maassa, et askel kerrallaan ja katotaan.” (K.K.)

It is acknowledged that research is needed. According to my interviewees it should be combined with the experiences that have been gained through the practise and on that bases then plan strategies. Some visions are very concrete such as a wish to have a working pair consisting of an artist and an officer for audience development in few years time, when also the standard of activity would be ready and resources could really be invested for audience development.

An important future achievement is also the fact that more people in the region would become aware of the existence of the center.

”There could be a lot of people living here, who are not aware that the Regional Dance Center of Kuopio exists. People who haven’t been to a single dance performance during their lives or so...” (V.R.)

“Täällä voi asua ja edelleenkin asuu hirveesti ihmisiä, jotka ei tiedä, että Tanssin aluekeskus Kuopio on olemassa, jotka ei oo välttämättä käyny yhdessä ainoossa tanssiesityksessä koko elämänsä aikana tai näin...” (V.R.)

Anniina is the only one who gives any figures in her vision. In the Central Finland Regional Dance Center they want to see dance in some form in every community within 10 years and audiences increasing by 100 people per performance in 10-15 years time. They also want to see dance included in the school curriculum at least in their region.

At the regional dance centers the future of audience development looks good. The most

important prerequisite - the motivated staff that recognizes the importance of developing audiences - exists. After the starting period it will take couple of years to stabilize the operations at the centers. Once this is over, I believe there will be more planning, strategy-making and sustainability in audience development. Helena summarizes the vision:

” I think that in all the centers once they have passed the starting period people clearly see that the need exists. It will also start to... tools are being searched and found. What is also nice is that there will be sharing of the good models or stuff, you can borrow them, hopefully buy them from each other. And there will also be long-term planning, starting to be part of the production and performance activities. It will also be included in the yearly plans. And of course when there will be more, experience increases, there will be research and... we can pay visits abroad within the issue and invite guests like we have done already, it is so...it will develop as part of the centers functions. I think this is what is going to happen from the practitioners’ point of view, that is. And I think if there is such a capable group of people doing it who are willing to learn and share the effect will start to show.” (H.J.)

”Mä luulen nyt että kaikissa näissä keskuksissa kun ne on päässeet pikkasen jaloilleen ja käynnistysvaiheesta pikkasen eteenpäin pari vuotta niin ihan selkeästi kaikki näkee sen tarpeen mikä siihen on. Alkaa löytyä myöskin... haetaan välineitä ja niitä alkaa löytyä. Sit se on kiva et niitä myöskin jaetaan toisten kanssa niitä hyväksi havaittuja juttuja, niin niistä kuulee, niitä voi lainata, toivottavasti ostaa toisilta. Ja tuota siihen tulee pitkäjännitteisempää suunnittelua, se alkaa olla niinkun osana tuotanto – ja esitystoiminnan, se rupee kulkemaan siellä niinkun samalla tavalla vuosisuunnitelmassa mukana ja olla siellä. Ja tietenkin sitten kun sitä tehdään enemmän, karttuu kokemusta, saadaan tutkittua tietoa ja tuota... voidaan käydä niinkun senkin asian puitteissa ulkomailla tai kutsua niin kun on ollukin näitä vieraita, että se on semmonen.. kehittyy osana sitä toimintaa. Mä luulen et näin tulee käymään siis toimijoiden puolelta. Ja mä luulen että se varmaan jos sitä tällöinen näinkin osaava porukka, joka on valmis oppimaan uutta ja jakamaan tekee, niin se varmaan myös se vaikutus rupee näkymään.” (H.J.)

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The starting point of my study was an interest towards an area in arts management – audience development - that I thought would somehow be neglected in Finland, at least in the field of contemporary dance. In my study I therefore wanted to find out how audience development is understood in the field of Finnish contemporary dance by arts managers and what the images and practises of it really are. In addition I was curious to know what kinds of attitudes prevail towards audience development and if practising audience development has been worthwhile to the organizations. To find out these issues I studied previous researches and articles of audience development and areas related to it. For the empirical part I conducted five theme interviews of the producers/coordinators of the regional centers for dance. I then analysed these interviews and reflected the findings with the ideas presented in the theory part of my study.

The pressure for regional centers especially in the field of audience development is high. Haapala (2006) points out that the establishment of the five centers is extremely important. He wishes that they will develop into practitioners who will offer alternatives to the Helsinki-centred dance productions. He compares the situation with France where it is not unusual that in the theatre of a small village there are 300-400 spectators. Considering this he stresses that in order to increase audiences regionally and nationally, effective and high-quality audience development is essential to the regional centres.

The most important finding of my study is that there are lot of separate activities and projects in the regional dance centers that obviously belong to audience development but detailed plans, strategies and evaluation of the implemented projects are missing. There are a lot of innovative, ingenious events and projects but it seems that behind them there is no long-term plan nor research or analysis on which the strategies could be based. Therefore it often seems unclear what the organization wants to achieve by a certain project.

Maitland (1997: 13) states that the selection of the target groups of audience development should be based on the knowledge of the existing audience and the local population. This should be the starting point. Then, after the organization has selected the groups they want to work with, the strategies to target these groups should be created or the event chosen for these groups. After the implemented projects it is essential to evaluate them. Monitoring and evaluation are important because there is no other way of knowing whether the project should be implemented again or is there probably something in it that doesn't work and should be changed.

When targeting new audience groups the organizations should also look after their existing audiences and plan different kinds of activities for them in order to secure that people keep coming back. The "hit and run strategy" (Hayes & Slater 2002: 5) is not worthwhile in the long run but the centers should rather cherish the relationship they have managed to create between an individual and the art form, i.e. cherish the aesthetic contract which Pick and Anderton (1996) see as a key preoccupation of arts managers.

Another important finding is the short tradition of audience development and lack of resources which prevent the collaboration of the three areas; education, marketing and programming. Rogers (1998: 7) sees audience development as integrated function and suggests a holistic approach with the three elements in order to achieve a series of short-, medium- and long-term objectives, which increase, broaden and enrich targeted groups. The importance and complexity of audience development is well internalized in the regional centers but a general problem is that there is not enough staff to concentrate on a sustainable and collaborative work in the sector. In most of the centres there are basically only one to two persons in charge of all the operations. This means that there are no specific people for marketing, PR, audience development and programming. That's why for example Rogers' (1998) suggestion of truly collaborating with all three sectors is hard in practise. As pointed out previously, Zodiak has invested on the employment of audience development officer but this hasn't changed the fact that audience development is still an isolated area in the organization and not collaborating with the other sectors. I believe, however, that in time this situation will improve.

The third important finding is the fact that even though a lot of thought is put into audience development and there are some really interesting events the work doesn't

necessarily show up to the potential audience. It can be because of the lacking resources but I think it also tells something of the priorities. At some centres audience development is well integrated into the activities of the centre but it is still not given specific separate status. For example, it was surprising to notice that out of the five centres, only two (Helsinki and Western Finland) mention audience development in their web pages<sup>14</sup>. In Finland audience development doesn't have a long tradition, which is why most people are unaware of it. If an art organization really would want to invest in audience development it should open up the area and make it more visible.

However, when analyzing and presenting the results of the interviews I have to stress the fact that the centers have just recently started operating and their functioning is not stabilized yet. They are now setting and adjusting their practises and models of operating. When there aren't enough resources things need to be prioritised. As my interviewees acknowledged, audience development could not have been the first thing in their first year of operating.

I now move back to the most important finding of the study in which I state that detailed plans, strategies and evaluation of the implemented projects are missing and I want to add that the biggest problem in the audience development of the centers is, however, *lack of clear strategy with a strategic focus*. There are transactions but what really is wanted to achieve by them needs to be clarified so that resources are not wasted. "A strategy is required to avoid the dissipation of effort and resources so often characterized of the shot-gun approach." (Hayes & Slater 2002: 11). By shot-gun approach they mean the kind of approach where a wide variety of groups are involved but through short-term projects and with limited follow-up or evaluation. (Hayes & Slater 2002: 5). Balanced audience development strategy includes a balance between acquisition of new audiences and the retention and nurturing of existing audiences (Hayes 2003: 19) with anticipated returns occurring in the short (up to one year)-, medium (1-3 years)-, and long-term ( up to 5 years) time-scales (Hayes & Slater 2002: 11).

Setting the style of approach, i.e. strategic focus for different groups it is meaningful to use the typologies of Hayes & Slater (2002) which are: Existing audiences, Attenders

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<sup>14</sup> At Zodiak it is called audience work.

elsewhere, Switchers, Intenders, Indifferent and Hostile. The strategic focus for the existing audience is *enrichment*, for attenders elsewhere it is *poaching*, for switchers the focus is *enticement*, for intenders *reactivation* and for hostile *engagement*. Mainstream objectives can be implemented in the short to medium term and are usually low risk. They can also bring income which can be invested, for example, in missionary audience development activities which are high-risk activities. The worst possible scenario for an organization is that those activities fail and at the same time succeed to alienate existing audiences because missionary style audience development is resource intensive and easily undermines the organization's *raison d'être*. (Hayes & Slater 2002: 16).

The board or executive team of an organization naturally defines the goals and objectives of the organization. Audience relationships should be integral to this process. Hayes (2003) suggests that an organization should include an *audience champion* in its executive team. This person would have the responsibility for the management of the aesthetic contract and planning and coordinating audience development holistically to deliver a sustainable and long-term commitment to audiences and also to achieve the outcomes expected by the organization. (Hayes 2003: 18).

I believe that by strategy making, focusing and integrating audience development into the organization the regional dance centers would get the most out of their investments and the benefits of audience development would be more visible. This way also their faith in audience development would increase and its position in the organization would strengthen. In order to do that they need to employ the audience champion and have enough funding for the long-term planning.

The concept of audience development is young in Finland and hasn't been the emphasis area in cultural politics which means that the area is not funded like, for example, in the UK. Considering this I can do nothing but to wonder how much all of these centers have already put effort into developing audiences. The regional dance centers have a clear will and aspiration for audience development and I believe in few years this area is going to develop strongly. It is a job of a long-term and I hope the people involved with it have strength enough to carry on.

My study of audience development is only the starting point and I hope it will generate new studies of the area in Finland. In my study I could have included more discussion of the different cultural politics that influence audience development and compare the situation between more than just two countries. I could have also included discussion of audience development practise in different art forms in Finland. However, these areas are so extensive that it would have been impossible to handle them in a master's thesis. In the future studies those areas are interesting objects to study. It would also be interesting to study the existing audiences of contemporary dance qualitatively and also those who for some reason are not currently attending. In addition it would be interesting to study the attitudes towards contemporary dance to find out what is preventing people from attending. In five years it would be extremely interesting to study audience development in the regional dance centers again and to study a certain audience development project from the starting point to the end including evaluation of the project.

The behaviour and loyalty of audiences is not studied very widely. Hayes and Slater (2002 : 16) state that in the UK there is a lack of detailed research in the arts sector about the behavioural and attitudinal loyalty of attending audiences beyond an organizational level. According to them a bigger picture needs to be painted to better understand audience participation across art forms. They state that additional qualitative and quantitative research is needed to more fully understand individual motivations and behaviour of typological groups over time. In Finland where this area is not studied widely it might be beneficial to start with individual art forms before concentrating on a research across the art forms. For example, for the regional dance centers it might be beneficial to combine resources and work on collaborative audience research projects to provide important knowledge for understanding the behaviour of their audiences.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **The Network of Regional Centers for Dance as described on their web pages:**

<http://www.tanssinaluekeskukset.fi/english.html> (accessed 1.3.2007)

#### **Regional Dance Center in Northern Finland**

Regional Dance Center in Northern Finland consists of four professional northern members: JoJo – Oulu Dance Centre from Oulu, Folk Ensemble Rimpparemmi from Rovaniemi, Routa from Kajaani and Pyhäsalmen Tanssi ry from Pyhäjärvi. Dance Center operates in whole Northern Finland from Pyhäjärvi upwards. Performing areas are also Northern Norway, Northern Sweden and Northern Russia.

[www.pohjoinentanssinaluekeskus.fi](http://www.pohjoinentanssinaluekeskus.fi)

#### **Regional Dance Center of Eastern Finland**

Regional dance center Kuopio operates in Eastern Finland area. Its main aims are to promote the equal availability and reachability of dance, to increase the job opportunities of professional dancers, teachers and choreographers, to give information about dance and dance happenings, to increase co-operation and support professionalism and to find new audiences for dance. Regional dance center Kuopio organizes dance performances, supports productions, helps and instructs professionals of dance and markets dance.

[www.tanssinaluekeskuskuopio.fi](http://www.tanssinaluekeskuskuopio.fi)

#### **Central Finland Regional Dance Center**

Central Finland Regional Dance Center is an association for dance professionals. It was founded in 2004 to improve the working possibilities and the general status of dance and dance professionals. The society organizes various happenings for both professionals and the public such as: training classes, colleague meetings and workshop training, lecture series, seminars and conversations. In addition, guest performances are organized in co-operation with Dance Theatre MD and the Hällä Stage.

[www.pirkanmaantanssinkekus.fi](http://www.pirkanmaantanssinkekus.fi)

#### **The Regional Dance Centre of Western Finland**

The Regional Dance Centre of Western Finland is a resource and cooperation centre for dance, whose aim is to further the status of dancing as an art form, particularly in the regions of Southwest Finland and Satakunta. The main tasks undertaken by the centre are helping to produce dance pieces, providing information and working with the audience. The focus is on improving working conditions for freelance dance artists.

[www.l-tanssi.fi](http://www.l-tanssi.fi)

#### **Zodiak – Center for New Dance**

Zodiak – Center for New Dance functions as the regional center for dance in Helsinki. Zodiak is a production, performance and event venue of contemporary dance which provides a joint platform for Finnish independent dance groups and artists. Zodiak's artistic activities and profile is decided upon by an artistic board and a governing board consisting of dance artists. Zodiak is supported by the Finnish Ministry of Education and the City of Helsinki.

[www.zodiak.fi](http://www.zodiak.fi)