



Research Report Topic:

**Stakeholder Management in the Implementation of Community Arts Centres
Policy in South Africa: A Comparative Case Study of Indonsa and Fezile Dabi
CACs.**

Candidate:

Nontutuzelo Consolation Sekhabi

2635118

Supervisor:

Dr. Munyaradzi Chatikobo

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Nontutuzelo Consolation Sekhabi



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Dedication.

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Acronyms:

AIG - Arts Institutional Governance

CAC - Community Arts Centres

CBO - Community-Based Organisations

CSR- Corporate Social Responsibility

DAC- Department of Arts and Culture

DACST - Department of Arts, Culture, Science, and Technology

DDM – District Development Model

DSAC - Department of Sports, Arts and Culture

EPWP- Extended Public Works Programme

FET – Further Education and Training

HOD – Head of Department

HSRC – Human Sciences Research Council

IDP- Integrated Development Planning

IGR Intergovernmental Relations

KZN- Kwa Zulu-Natal

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisations

NYDA - National Youth Development Agency

RDP - Reconstructive and Development Programme

SA - South Africa

TRREE -Training and Resources in Research Ethics and Evaluation

TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Abstract:

This study critically examined the implementation of Community Arts Centres (CACs) policy in South Africa, with a specific focus on stakeholder management. Despite being envisioned as vehicles for cultural participation, community development, and social cohesion, many CACs have struggled to fulfil their mandate due to fragmented governance, poor coordination among stakeholders, and unclear policy translation. Using a qualitative, comparative case study approach, the research focused on two CACs—Indonsa in KwaZulu-Natal and Fezile Dabi in the Free State—selected for their contrasting contexts and administrative arrangements.

Primary data were collected through 21 semi-structured interviews with government officials, CAC managers, staff, users, and community members, supplemented by field observations and document analysis. The study revealed that ineffective intergovernmental relations, limited policy literacy, under-resourced infrastructure, and weak participatory mechanisms hinder policy implementation. Furthermore, the research highlighted the lack of a coherent stakeholder engagement framework and the absence of institutional support for leadership and programme development.

Drawing on stakeholder theory and intergovernmental relations literature, the study concluded that meaningful policy implementation in CACs depends on collaborative governance, clearly defined roles, transparent communication, and community participation. Key recommendations include the development of a national stakeholder management framework, institutionalisation of local advisory forums, capacity-building for CAC leadership, and the alignment of national policy with on-the-ground realities. The study offers insights relevant to policymakers, practitioners, and cultural stakeholders seeking to revitalise CACs as vibrant community assets.

KEYWORDS: Community Arts Centres, Policy Implementation, Stakeholder Management, South Africa, Partnership, Coordination.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context of the Study

Community Arts Centres (CACs) have long been recognised as critical spaces for cultural development, artistic expression, and community empowerment in South Africa. Emerging from grassroots struggles and creative resistance during the apartheid era, CACs transitioned into post-apartheid instruments intended to support democratisation, social cohesion, and local development. As envisioned in the post-1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), CACs were positioned as hubs that would extend access to arts and culture, particularly in historically marginalised communities. Yet, despite their stated importance in policy documents such as the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage and its 2019 revision, the implementation and management of CACs have often been inconsistent and fraught with institutional, political, and structural challenges.

The cultural policy framework of post-apartheid South Africa emphasised decentralised cultural development, envisioning CACs as participatory spaces embedded in their communities. They were to be supported by a coordinated intergovernmental system involving national, provincial, and local spheres of government, in line with the principles of cooperative governance set out in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). However, decades after their formal institutionalisation, CACs remain unevenly supported, and many operate in isolation, underfunded, or in a state of infrastructural decay. This misalignment between policy ambition and implementation reality presents a compelling research problem—one that this study seeks to investigate through the lens of stakeholder management and coordination.

This report focuses on two specific CACs—Indonsa Arts and Craft Centre in KwaZulu-Natal and Fezile Dabi Community Arts Centre in the Free State—to examine the extent to which policy intentions regarding CACs have translated into functional, sustainable practice. These centres were chosen based on their contrasting experiences with policy implementation, governance structures, stakeholder relationships, and community participation. The case studies are analysed comparatively to identify

critical enablers and constraints within the cultural policy ecosystem. The aim is not only to document the challenges but also to contribute to the search for more coherent and effective models of CAC management.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

While the South African government continues to recognise the value of CACs, there remains a persistent implementation gap between policy frameworks and operational realities on the ground. Many centres suffer from poor coordination among key stakeholders, lack of role clarity, insufficient resourcing, and absence of long-term planning. National policies assign responsibility to various governmental spheres and sectors, but these responsibilities are often either misunderstood or poorly executed. Additionally, the intended involvement of local communities and civil society organisations has in many cases, become symbolic rather than substantive. These gaps lead to centres that are underused, poorly maintained, or disconnected from the communities they are meant to serve.

Research conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2006), along with more recent audits by the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC, 2017; 2019), confirm the existence of widespread inconsistency in CAC performance. Some centres are relatively well-managed and functional, while others have ceased to operate altogether. Much of this disparity can be attributed to a lack of coherent stakeholder management strategies. Questions arise about who holds decision-making authority, who is responsible for funding and staffing, how policies are interpreted and localised, and whether community input is genuinely integrated into CAC programming.

The underlying problem is therefore not only one of policy implementation but also of governance, accountability, and the effective management of stakeholder relationships. Without clear stakeholder coordination mechanisms and stronger intergovernmental alignment, the sustainability of CACs remains precarious. This study addresses these gaps by investigating how stakeholder engagement has affected policy implementation in two contrasting CACs.

1.3 Research Aim, Objectives and Questions

Aim

The aim of this study is to critically analyse stakeholder management in the implementation of Community Arts Centre policy in South Africa, through a comparative case study of Indonsa and Fezile Dabi Community Arts Centres.

Research Objectives

- To identify the key stakeholders involved in the implementation of CACs.
- To assess the coordination mechanisms used for managing these stakeholders.
- To examine the challenges and successes associated with CAC policy implementation at two sites.
- To explore the impact of intergovernmental relations on the functionality of CACs.
- To recommend strategies for improving stakeholder coordination and policy implementation in CACs.

Research Questions

- What are the key pillars or actions needed to coordinate and manage stakeholders in the implementation of CAC policy?
- Who should coordinate and manage cultural policy implementation for CACs?
- How do current stakeholder relationships support or hinder effective CAC programming and sustainability?

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in two key theoretical lenses: public policy implementation theory and stakeholder theory.

Public policy implementation theory, particularly as formulated by Sabatier (1986) and Van Meter & Van Horn (1975), provides a framework for analysing how government policy is translated into practice. This body of theory distinguishes between top-down and bottom-up implementation approaches, as well as hybrid or integrative models. In

the context of CACs, these theories help examine how national and provincial policies are localised, how implementation is mediated by political, administrative, and social actors, and what institutional factors influence success or failure.

Stakeholder theory, as developed by Freeman (1984, 2010), is used to analyse the relationships between various actors involved in CAC policy implementation. These include national, provincial, and local government officials; centre managers and staff; community members; artists; and private and civil society partners. Stakeholder theory helps explain how the interests, power, and engagement of these actors affect decision-making, resource allocation, and programme success. Supporting concepts from Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) and Bryson (2004) are used to categorise and prioritise stakeholders based on power, legitimacy, and urgency.

Together, these theories provide a robust conceptual lens for interpreting the data, linking practical observations to systemic policy and governance challenges.

1.5 Rationale for the Study

This research is situated at the intersection of cultural policy, community development, and public administration. While previous studies have highlighted the challenges facing CACs, few have critically interrogated the stakeholder relationships that underpin their functionality. This study contributes to the field by offering a grounded, comparative analysis of two CACs, focusing specifically on how stakeholder management affects policy implementation.

The study also draws on the researcher's professional experience in the CAC sector, particularly through involvement in the SA-Flemish Community Arts Centre Project (2003–2008) and subsequent roles in national and provincial cultural policy programmes. This retrospective ethnographic perspective adds richness to the analysis, providing insights into the historical development and evolution of CACs over time. In this way, the study combines scholarly rigour with practical relevance.

Importantly, this research has policy relevance for the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and its provincial counterparts. By identifying concrete gaps and proposing strategies for improved coordination, the study aims to inform ongoing efforts to revitalise CACs and build more resilient cultural infrastructure in South Africa.

1.6 Research Design Overview

This study adopts a qualitative, comparative case study approach, utilising multiple methods including document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and retrospective ethnography. The comparative analysis of Indonsa and Fezile Dabi CACs allows for a nuanced understanding of how policy is differently enacted across contexts, revealing both common challenges and site-specific solutions. Data were analysed thematically, using the coding techniques outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), and interpreted through the theoretical frameworks described above.

1.7 Delimitations and Scope

The study is limited to two case study sites and focuses specifically on stakeholder management in relation to CAC policy implementation. While the findings are not generalisable in the statistical sense, they provide rich, contextual insights that can inform broader policy and practice. The study does not explore other cultural institutions such as museums or libraries, nor does it engage in a longitudinal analysis of CAC development over time.

1.8 Structure of the Report

This research report is structured into six interconnected chapters, each intended to build logically and thematically on the previous one. Together, they offer a comprehensive exploration of the challenges and possibilities surrounding stakeholder management in the implementation of Community Arts Centres (CACs) policy in South Africa.

Chapter 1 lays the foundation by introducing the research topic, framing the problem, and articulating the study's aims and objectives. It outlines the significance of the research and sets the conceptual tone by highlighting the complexities of stakeholder dynamics in cultural policy implementation. The chapter also introduces the rationale behind the comparative case study approach and explains the researcher's positionality, shaped by over two decades of experience in the community arts environment.

Chapter 2 presents the research methodology, detailing the qualitative, interpretive approach adopted for this study. It explains the selection of the two case study sites, Indonsa and Fezile Dabi CACs, and outlines the data collection tools, which included

semi-structured interviews, document reviews, and field observations. The chapter also addresses ethical considerations and acknowledges the limitations inherent in the research design.

Chapter 3 provides a contextual and policy overview, tracing the evolution of Community Arts Centres in post-apartheid South Africa. It examines the institutional frameworks that have guided their development, including the original and Revised White Papers on Arts and Culture, and interrogates the role of stakeholder theory and intergovernmental relations in shaping implementation processes.

Chapter 4 presents the empirical findings of the study. Drawing on rich qualitative data, it foregrounds the voices of stakeholders from both case study sites, organised into key thematic areas such as stakeholder roles, intergovernmental coordination, programme delivery, and community engagement. The chapter also includes a comparative analysis, highlighting the divergent experiences of Indonsa and Fezile Dabi CACs.

Chapter 5 offers a critical interpretation of the findings, linking them back to the theoretical frameworks and literature reviewed in earlier chapters. It explores how the findings deepen our understanding of stakeholder complexity, implementation gaps, and institutional cultures within the South African cultural policy landscape. The chapter also incorporates the researcher's own practitioner reflections to contextualise the findings.

Chapter 6 concludes the report by offering targeted recommendations aimed at improving stakeholder management, enhancing intergovernmental coordination, and revitalising CAC policy implementation. It also reflects on the study's contributions to the field and identifies areas for further research. In doing so, it affirms that the success of CACs lies not merely in infrastructure or funding, but in the ability of institutions and communities to work together through inclusive, transparent, and accountable stakeholder relations.

1.9 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has laid the foundation for the study by establishing the significance of CACs within South Africa's cultural policy landscape and outlining the research

problem, objectives, and theoretical orientation. The challenges of policy implementation and stakeholder coordination have been framed through a dual lens of implementation theory and stakeholder theory. By focusing on two contrasting CACs, the study aims to generate actionable insights for improving cultural policy delivery and community arts development. The next chapter presents the research methodology used to explore these issues in depth.

CHAPTER 2 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PARADIGM

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted to explore stakeholder management in the implementation of the Community Arts Centre (CAC) policy in South Africa. The study is framed within a qualitative interpretivist paradigm and employs a comparative case study design to investigate the operational, cultural, and community impacts of two CACs: Indonsa Arts and Crafts Centre in KwaZulu-Natal and Fezile Dabi Arts and Culture Centre in the Free State. The chapter details the research paradigm, design, data collection and analysis methods, ethical considerations, and the limitations and delimitations of the study.

2.2 Research Paradigm

This research is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, which recognises that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and that reality is subjective, shaped by people's experiences and perceptions (Creswell, 2013). Given the complex, context-specific, and relational nature of stakeholder engagement in CACs, the interpretivist approach was well-suited to capturing diverse perspectives and uncovering nuanced institutional dynamics. It enabled an exploration of the meanings and values attached by various stakeholders to their roles, relationships, and the implementation of policy within the CAC environment.

2.3 Research Design and Methodological Approach

A qualitative comparative case study design was adopted to allow an in-depth, context-sensitive analysis of stakeholder dynamics. Yin (2009) defines case study research as an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are blurred. Comparative case studies, as George and Bennett (2005) argue, offer a means to examine multiple cases, identify similarities and differences, and uncover causal mechanisms. The selected case studies—Indonsa and Fezile Dabi CACs—offered contrasting institutional and governance environments. Their comparison

provided insights into the enabling and constraining factors influencing stakeholder management and policy implementation in community arts contexts.

2.4 Site Selection and Researcher Positionality

The two CACs were selected using purposive sampling, based on their geographical spread, governance structures, and accessibility to data. Indonsa CAC operates in a relatively stable environment, with formalised intergovernmental collaboration, while Fezile Dabi CAC faces precarious conditions, including fragmented relationships and resource constraints. As the researcher, I have been engaged with both centres since 2003 as part of the SA/Flemish Community Arts Centres project. This long-standing professional relationship provided access to historical data, institutional memory, and established stakeholder networks. My familiarity with the sites and their stakeholders enriched the research process and contributed to a deeper understanding of the evolution of CACs in South Africa. This insider perspective, framed as retrospective ethnography, provided an important methodological lens for understanding the historical and policy-driven influences on the current state of CACs (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

2.5 Population and Sampling

The study targeted a population of stakeholders directly involved in or affected by CAC policy implementation. These included national, provincial, and local government officials; CAC management and staff; artists and users of CAC facilities; and members of the local communities. Using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling, 21 participants were identified and selected based on their relevance to the research objectives and their involvement with the selected CACs. Their varied roles provided a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder engagement, intergovernmental coordination, and policy implementation challenges.

2.6 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using four qualitative methods: comparative case studies, document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and retrospective ethnography.

Comparative case studies allowed for an in-depth examination of the differences and similarities between Indonsa and Fezile Dabi CACs, particularly in terms of governance, stakeholder relationships, and resource management. My historical engagement with these centres provided a unique opportunity to combine current data with retrospective insights.

Document analysis was critical for understanding the policy framework and institutional context. Annual reports from local, provincial, and national governments, the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, and CAC-specific planning and governance documents. Critically added to these was the Policy Document for the Development of Community Arts and Culture Centres and Programmes (2013), developed by the Department of Arts and Culture as an operational response to the Revised White Paper. This document provided a crucial analytical lens for understanding state commitments, structural bottlenecks, and institutional expectations around Community Arts Centres (CACs). The Final Report of 1 May 2006, an outcome of the SA-Flemish CAC capacity-building initiative, further offered historic insight into past implementation efforts and highlighted persistent governance and programming gaps that continue to affect CACs like Indonsa and Fezile Dabi. According to Bowen (2009) and Corbin and Strauss (2008), document analysis enhances the validity of qualitative research by providing context-rich, triangulated data that complements interview and observational findings.

Semi-structured interviews provided first-hand insights into stakeholder perceptions and experiences. Following Neuman (2014) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), five tailored questionnaires were developed for government officials, CAC management, staff, users, and community members. This structure ensured consistent and comparable data collection across the two sites. The interviews enabled exploration of stakeholder roles, programme delivery, governance challenges, and intergovernmental coordination, and were critical for uncovering the subjective dimensions of policy implementation.

Retrospective ethnography was a key method in this research. Drawing on my personal and professional journey in the CAC sector since 1987, I reflected on how past experiences, policies, and institutional changes shaped present realities. My career in performance, arts administration, and policy development—including roles in the North-West Cultural Calabash, the SA/Flemish project, and the National

Department of Arts and Culture—allowed me to provide insider insights and institutional memory. This approach enriched the study by contextualising current stakeholder dynamics within broader historical and policy frameworks (Green, 2000; Portelli, 1991).

2.7 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, a widely recognised method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis followed six phases: familiarisation with data, generation of initial codes, identification of themes, review of themes, definition and naming of themes, and final reporting. The themes identified included stakeholder roles and engagement, intergovernmental coordination, programme delivery, governance challenges, and best practices. Triangulation of data from interviews, document analysis, and field observations enhanced the validity of the findings and ensured a comprehensive understanding of the research questions (Patton, 2015; Guest et al., 2012).

2.8 Trustworthiness and Rigour

To ensure trustworthiness, several strategies were employed. Triangulation across data sources strengthened credibility and internal validity (Denzin, 1970). Member checking was conducted by sharing selected transcripts and summaries with participants to verify the accuracy of recorded data. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process; I continuously reflected on my positionality and potential biases arising from my professional engagement with the CAC sector. Cultural competence and adaptability were also key, given the cultural diversity of the sites, and my familiarity with local languages and customs ensured effective and respectful engagement with participants (Liamputtong, 2010).

2.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were central to this study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand's ethics committee. All participants were provided with information sheets outlining the study's purpose, and informed consent was obtained in writing (Bowen, 2009). Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and personal identifiers were removed from all data. Participation was

voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Given my long-standing professional relationships with many participants, establishing trust was critical. Ethical conduct was maintained by ensuring transparency, respecting cultural differences, and safeguarding the privacy and dignity of all respondents (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001; Stake, 2005).

2.10 Limitations and Delimitations

This study has several limitations. Its reliance on qualitative methods limits the generalisability of findings to a broader population. The data are context-specific and may not represent the diverse experiences of all CACs in South Africa. Additionally, the study's focus on two case sites and a limited sample of participants may have constrained the range of perspectives captured. The interpretive nature of the analysis also introduces potential researcher bias, despite efforts to maintain objectivity.

The delimitations of the study were defined by its focus on CACs in KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State, with an emphasis on stakeholder engagement, governance, and programme delivery. Broader economic and political factors were not examined, and the study did not adopt a longitudinal approach due to resource constraints. These choices allowed for a focused investigation within a manageable scope.

While these limitations and delimitations shape the scope of the research, they also highlight areas for future inquiry. Subsequent studies may expand the geographic range, sample size, and methodological diversity to enhance generalisability and depth.

2.11 Concluding Remarks

This study employed a multi-method qualitative approach to examine stakeholder management in CAC policy implementation. Using comparative case studies (Yin, 2009), document analysis (Bowen, 2009; Corbin & Strauss, 2008), semi-structured interviews (Neuman, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), and retrospective ethnography (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), the research generated rich, context-specific data. Methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1970; Patton, 2015) enhanced the validity and reliability of findings. The integrated approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of the complexities within CACs and their impacts on communities,

offering empirically grounded insights for cultural policy and management in South Africa. The methodological approach was designed to ensure rich, context-sensitive insights into the dynamics of stakeholder coordination in two contrasting CACs.

The next chapter provides a policy and contextual overview that frames the history and evolution of CACs in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXTUAL AND POLICY OVERVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the necessary contextual and policy framework for understanding the implementation of the Community Arts Centre (CAC) policy in South Africa. It not merely as background or literature review, but rather as a desktop and documentary analysis that bridges the theoretical underpinnings of Chapters 1 and 2 with the empirical insights presented in Chapters 4 and 5. It clarifies the rationale behind the establishment of CACs, traces the evolution of relevant cultural policies, outlines the roles of key stakeholders, and reflects on the intergovernmental dynamics influencing implementation. The discussion is guided by public policy implementation theory (Sabatier, 1986; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975), stakeholder theory (Freeman, 2010; Rowley, 1997), and multi-level governance (Hooghe & Marks, 2003), all of which frame the dynamics affecting CACs in post-apartheid South Africa. By situating this study within the socio-political and institutional realities of CACs, this chapter lays a strong foundation for the findings and analysis that follow.

3.2 Historical Background of Community Arts Centres in South Africa

Community Arts Centres in South Africa trace their origins to the country's turbulent socio-political history. During the 1980s, CACs functioned as crucial sites of resistance, consciousness-raising, and cultural assertion. Grassroots artists, civil society activists, and community organisers established informal centres that offered creative outlets for marginalised black communities and played pivotal roles in political mobilisation against apartheid (Gray, 2004). These spaces were often supported by international donors and operated with a sense of cultural urgency.

Post-1994, the democratic government recognised the potential of CACs for redressing inequalities, fostering nation-building, and expanding access to the arts. Under the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST), the government committed to establishing 42 new CACs in previously disadvantaged communities between 1996 and 2000, financed through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (DAC, 2013). This initiative marked a formal transition from informal cultural activism to structured institutional support, signifying CACs as vehicles for transformation, skills development, and community upliftment.

For example, the Indonsa Arts and Crafts Centre in Ulundi, KwaZulu-Natal, was established in 2002 under the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). With funding and oversight from the Zululand District Municipality and governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture, Indonsa represents one of the few CACs with a clearly articulated business plan and strategic alignment. Its objectives include skills training in fashion design, visual arts, music, and more recently, culinary arts — all targeted at youth, women, people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups. These features illustrate how a CAC can be positioned as a hub for holistic community development when supported by clear governance and collaborative funding models.

Another notable example of this evolution is the Fezile Dabi Community Arts Centre in Sasolburg, Free State. Established in 1999, the Centre emerged from the Zamdela Performing Arts Project (ZAPAP), a community-led initiative that began in 1994. With roots in township performance and local cultural mobilisation, ZAPAP grew into the Zamdela Performing Arts Centre (ZAPAC), eventually becoming Fezile Dabi CAC through formal support from the provincial Department of Sport, Recreation and Culture. Its original vision — to promote a non-racial, democratic cultural space through dance, theatre, and music — reflects the transformative ethos of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).

However, the implementation of these centres encountered numerous challenges. Many were poorly resourced, inadequately staffed, and misaligned with local needs. Furthermore, the ambitious scope of the CAC rollout was not matched by institutional capacity or long-term planning. Despite the commitment to transformation, CACs continued to operate within fragmented governance structures, with unclear mandates across the three spheres of government (Hagg, 2010; Nawa, 2012). This tension between visionary policy and practical implementation remains a defining feature of CACs today.

3.3 Policy Instruments and Frameworks

Cultural policy in post-apartheid South Africa was anchored by the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996), which articulated a vision of democratic access, equity, and cultural expression. It positioned CACs as central to community development, envisaging them as inclusive platforms for education, production, and

participation. Building on this foundation, the Revised White Paper (2018/19) reaffirmed the role of CACs while stressing the need for stronger governance, funding models, and stakeholder alignment (DSAC, 2019).

These policy documents are rooted in the values of the Freedom Charter (1955), which declared that “the doors of learning and culture shall be opened,” promoting the cultural enrichment of all South Africans. They are also aligned with constitutional provisions—specifically Sections 16 and 30 of the South African Constitution (1996)—which guarantee freedom of artistic creativity and participation in cultural life.

In addition, the Culture Promotion Act 35 of 1983 remains in force, mandating the development, preservation, and promotion of culture. However, its pre-democratic origins render it outdated in many respects, particularly concerning community-driven and developmental approaches to cultural governance.

The 2013 CAC Policy Document outlines a clear governance and operational framework for CACs, identifying the roles of national, provincial, and local governments. It recognises that while arts and culture is constitutionally a national and provincial competence, service delivery depends heavily on local government integration. However, the same document notes that local municipalities, particularly outside metro areas, often lack the resources, staffing, and mandate to manage these centres effectively. This disjuncture between policy design and practical delivery was also flagged in the 2006 Final Report, which found that many centres were poorly maintained, lacked programming vision, and suffered from a lack of formalised partnerships with government or community actors. Unfortunately, this draft policy was never officially adopted. This policy vacuum has led to uneven implementation and a lack of strategic coordination across provinces and municipalities (DSAC, 2018).

3.4 Institutional Framework and Intergovernmental Dynamics

The governance of CACs is shaped by South Africa’s three-tier system of government. According to the Constitution (1996), arts and culture fall under concurrent national and provincial jurisdiction. In practice, however, the division of roles is uneven and often poorly coordinated.

National government, through DSAC, is responsible for policy formulation, national strategy, and partial programme funding. However, its role in directly supporting CACs is limited by capacity and distance.

Provincial departments are expected to implement policies, monitor centres, and provide funding. Yet, as seen in the Fezile Dabi case, their reach is often constrained by resource limitations and geographic distance.

Municipalities are meant to provide infrastructure, services, and some staffing. In well-functioning models like Indonsa, this arrangement is formalised through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). In other cases, such as Fezile Dabi, the municipality is largely absent.

This complex interplay between the spheres of government results in fragmented accountability and duplicated efforts. Hooghe and Marks (2003) highlight that effective multi-level governance requires both vertical alignment and horizontal collaboration. In South Africa, however, political turnover, inconsistent prioritisation of culture, and weak institutional memory often disrupt coordination.

3.5 Stakeholders in the Community Arts Centre Environment

3.5.1 State Actors

The role of state actors is central but inconsistent. National, provincial, and local governments all influence CAC operations, but their involvement varies significantly. Where clear frameworks exist, such as through MoUs or integrated planning (e.g., District Development Model), CACs benefit from sustained support. However, political changes often destabilise these arrangements.

In Indonsa, government actors work collaboratively, with the provincial department funding programmes and the municipality funding staff. In contrast, Fezile Dabi operates without local government support, and provincial involvement is limited to oversight. This asymmetry underscores the need for policy clarity and formalised cooperation mechanisms (Sabatier, 1986).

3.5.2 Artists and Arts Organisations

Artists are at the heart of CACs as both beneficiaries and drivers. They engage with centres to access training, performance spaces, and opportunities for income

generation. In Indonsa, artists are well integrated into planning and programme delivery. In Fezile Dabi, however, artists express frustration with the lack of support, limited resources, and politicisation of access. These challenges reflect what Freeman (1984) described as stakeholder power imbalances, where those most affected often have the least influence over decisions.

Arts organisations also provide capacity-building, advocacy, and professional networks. Yet, many remain underfunded and marginalised, especially in rural areas. Their participation is essential for cultural sustainability but is often neglected in formal policy implementation.

3.5.3 Civil Society and Community-Based Organisations

Civil society groups—including community development organisations, schools, and informal networks—offer invaluable support to CACs. In some cases, like Fezile Dabi, elderly women involved in the Community Work Programme have assumed roles in maintaining the centre through vegetable gardens and security watch. These grassroots engagements highlight the enduring relevance of CACs as social anchors, even in the absence of government coordination.

However, civil society input is seldom formally recognised. As Putnam (2000) notes, social capital generated by community networks can strengthen governance if it is leveraged meaningfully. CACs present an opportunity to institutionalise this engagement through advisory boards, community forums, or user councils—structures largely absent in current practice.

3.5.4 International Community

South Africa's CAC landscape has also been shaped by international partnerships. The South African-Flemish Community Arts Centre Project (2003–2009) was a pivotal intervention that invested in capacity-building, training, and institutional strengthening in selected CACs, including Indonsa and Fezile Dabi. This partnership introduced a structured project management ethos and embedded international best practices.

However, dependency on foreign funding presents sustainability risks. As Throsby (2001) and Appadurai (1996) caution, international support must empower local institutions rather than impose external agendas. In many centres, the withdrawal of donor funding led to stagnation or regression, especially where domestic support mechanisms were absent.

3.5.5 Private Sector

The corporate sector has played a sporadic role in supporting CACs. Some companies have funded events or provided equipment, especially when incentivised through corporate social responsibility (CSR) frameworks. In Fezile Dabi, the withdrawal of support from Sasol due to political instability illustrates the fragile nature of these partnerships. Throsby (2001) and DiMaggio & Powell (1983) suggest that while private sector involvement can fill funding gaps, it must be guided by long-term developmental goals, not short-term branding interests.

3.6 Comparative Policy Context: Indonsa vs Fezile Dabi CACs

The comparative analysis of Indonsa (KwaZulu-Natal) and Fezile Dabi (Free State) demonstrates how policy implementation varies across provinces and localities. Indonsa benefits from:

- Stable intergovernmental relations formalised through MoUs
- Clearly defined stakeholder roles
- Ongoing partnerships with the National Arts Council and NYDA
- Functioning infrastructure and active community programming
- Fezile Dabi, by contrast, suffers from:
 - Disengaged local government and limited provincial oversight
 - Resource shortages, unfilled posts, and infrastructural neglect
 - Politicised artist relationships and weak strategic direction
 - Absence of participatory planning mechanisms

These differences point to the critical importance of contextual responsiveness, structured stakeholder coordination, and adaptive policy implementation mechanisms. The findings align with implementation theory, which emphasises that clear policy is not sufficient; execution is contingent on local capacity, alignment, and sustained leadership (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a contextualised understanding of the development, governance, and policy landscape of Community Arts Centres in South Africa. It has shown that while CACs are deeply embedded in national cultural policy frameworks

and carry significant developmental potential, their actual implementation is uneven and often undermined by weak intergovernmental coordination, unclear mandates, and fragmented stakeholder relationships.

Drawing from public policy and stakeholder theories, the chapter has highlighted the necessity of integrated planning, formalised roles, and inclusive governance structures. As the next chapter presents findings from fieldwork at Indonsa and Fezile Dabi, this contextual analysis will serve as the lens through which the complexities of policy execution and stakeholder engagement are critically examined.

CHAPTER 4 - PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings from the comparative case study of two Community Arts Centres (CACs) in South Africa—Indonsa CAC in KwaZulu-Natal and Fezile Dabi CAC in the Free State. Drawing from semi-structured interviews, retrospective ethnography, site observations, and document analysis, the findings are thematically organised and interpreted through public policy implementation theory (Sabatier, 1986; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975), stakeholder theory (Freeman, 2010), and intergovernmental relations frameworks (Ostrom, 1971; O'Toole, 1997). The aim is to explore how stakeholder roles, institutional relationships, and contextual dynamics influence the implementation of CAC policy.

Each section juxtaposes experiences from both centres to highlight contrasts in policy awareness, stakeholder coordination, conflict resolution, and community participation. This thematic analysis provides empirical answers to the primary and secondary research questions by showing how cultural policy is translated into practice across different settings and under varying institutional capacities. The findings build on and validate key insights from the literature, revealing areas where implementation succeeds and where it is undermined by structural, political, or interpersonal barriers.

4.2 Overview of Respondent Categories and Data Collection

Participants were drawn from five stakeholder categories: (1) government officials from national, provincial, and municipal levels, (2) CAC management, (3) centre staff, (4) users, including artists and creatives, and (5) members of the general public residing near the centres. In total, 21 semi-structured interviews were conducted, supported by field observations and internal centre documentation. The use of multiple data sources ensured triangulation and enhanced the reliability of the findings (Denzin, 1970; Bowen, 2009).

Interviews were tailored to each group to elicit perspectives on stakeholder roles, coordination mechanisms, policy awareness, programme delivery, and challenges. The inclusion of retrospective ethnography added richness to the data, with the

researcher's long-standing relationship with the CAC sector providing historical and institutional insight.

4.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Government Officials

At Indonsa CAC, the roles and responsibilities of government officials were well-defined and structured through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the KwaZulu-Natal provincial Department of Arts and Culture and the Zululand District Municipality. This agreement allocated the responsibilities of programme funding to the province and staffing and operational support to the municipality. Officials described a functional working relationship where monthly reports and planning meetings were adhered to, and communication was both formalised and responsive.

In contrast, at Fezile Dabi CAC, while the provincial department oversaw programming and provided funding, there was no involvement from the local municipality. Government officials at the Provincial level cited political turnover, budget redirection, and staffing constraints as major hindrances. Posts remained unfilled despite being funded, and municipal support for basic utilities and maintenance was withdrawn due to political changes. This resulted in infrastructure decline, for example, blocked toilets, broken windows, and erratic water supply, seriously affecting centre staff morale and frequency of usability of the centre as a facility.

These findings underscore Van Meter and Van Horn's (1975) assertion that successful policy implementation depends on well-aligned institutional relationships. Where coordination fails, as in Fezile Dabi, implementation gaps become pronounced, particularly in the absence of formal accountability mechanisms. Fezile Dabi CAC occupies a site of significant historical importance in the evolution of township-based arts in the Free State and once earned recognition through national platforms like *Shell Road to Fame* and the *FNB Dance Umbrella*. Its reconstitution as ZAPAC, and later as the Fezile Dabi CAC, marked a peak in local cultural development, offering training programmes, annual performances, and international collaborations. Despite these achievements, the centre's institutional strength has eroded over time due to leadership turnover, declining infrastructure, and the disappearance of its original community-led ethos. Many respondents reflected a sense of loss, pointing to a once-thriving space that has become disconnected from its roots.

4.4 Awareness and Implementation of CAC Policy

Policy awareness varied across the two centres. At Indonsa, officials and managers demonstrated a working knowledge of the Draft CAC Policy, recognising its relevance in defining the roles of stakeholders. Several officials had been involved in its early development during the SA-Flemish project era, which enhanced institutional memory. This familiarity enabled more strategic implementation of programmes and stakeholder engagement.

At Fezile Dabi, however, there was limited awareness or use of the policy, particularly among centre management and centre staff. While some historical knowledge existed among former practitioners, the current leadership lacked insight or clarity on the policy's provisions. Consequently, programming was reactive, often in response to arts practitioners' complaints, rather than guided by a long-term vision. This reflects Fischer's (2006) concern that without political will and policy literacy, policy instruments remain ineffective.

This discrepancy aligns with Sabatier's (1986) view that the beliefs and capacity of implementers are critical to policy outcomes. Where policy is neither adopted nor operationalised, as is more apparent in Fezile Dabi, the implementation remains fragmented.

4.5 Intergovernmental Relations and Collaboration

The District Development Model (DDM) was cited at Indonsa CAC as a valuable mechanism for aligning cultural programming with district development priorities. The model enabled coordinated planning, shared accountability, and responsiveness to local needs. Interviewees noted that DDM helped reduce role ambiguity and formalise partnerships.

At Fezile Dabi, intergovernmental relations were either weak or absent. Provincial representatives highlighted logistical challenges, given that their offices were located about 330km away. Local municipality officials had distanced themselves entirely, citing political differences and administrative shifts. This isolation left the centre

dependent on minimal provincial support, with no formal platforms for joint planning or service delivery.

This contrast illustrates Ostrom's (1971) theory of polycentric governance, where multiple centres of decision-making can coexist effectively only when there is cooperation. The absence of horizontal and vertical integration at Fezile Dabi is indicative of what Hjern (1982) and Porter (1981) warn against: fragmentation and diffusion of responsibility in multi-level governance.

4.6 Stakeholder Identification, Roles and Relationships

Both centres identified a similar range of stakeholders: DSAC (national and provincial), municipalities, local artists, staff, community members, oversight bodies, and in some cases, private sponsors.

At Indonsa, stakeholder relationships were strengthened by open communication, well-attended meetings, and a high level of transparency regarding programme and administration funding. An agency of the DSAC, the National Arts Council helpdesk operating from the centre attracted artists from beyond Zululand and enabled access to external funding opportunities. The centre manager described a collaborative environment where no stakeholder assumed superiority, aligning with Freeman's (2010) ideal of equitable stakeholder engagement.

At Fezile Dabi, the stakeholder map was thinner and less engaged. While the artists were seen as central, they had limited influence due to constrained resources. The centre manager reported having little authority, with most decisions made at the provincial level. Political instability had also led to infighting among artists, with divisions mirroring local political factions. Sasol, a former private sponsor, had also withdrawn whatever previous support, citing safety concerns after threats of sabotage. This erosion of trust and disengagement aligns with Mitchell, Agle and Wood's (1997) view that stakeholders with low legitimacy and urgency are often marginalised, even when they are highly interested.

4.7 Stakeholder Engagement Strategies and Community Participation

At Indonsa, engagement strategies were integrated into municipal development processes. The centre participated in IDP forums, submitted performance reports, and held regular community meetings. Youth outreach, training workshops, and school-based engagements ensured visibility and relevance. Stakeholder forums allowed for feedback, with several programme improvements—such as the inclusion of Amapiano in the Umbele Wethu Festival—attributed to community input.

At Fezile Dabi, engagement was sporadic and mostly reactive. Tutors conducted school visits on an ad hoc basis, and some users had not been consulted in years. The centre attempted occasional outreach to its vast service area, comprising 13 towns, but lacked the resources and transport capacity to implement any of the ambitions. A standout example of informal participation was the elderly women from the Community Work Programme who planted and maintained vegetable gardens on-site. Their presence helped improve security and created a functional space amid neglect, illustrating the potential of grassroots involvement even in the absence of formal mechanisms.

Using Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation, Indonsa reflects partnership and delegated power, whereas Fezile Dabi remains closer to tokenism. As Bourne (2009) suggests, effective engagement requires both inclusivity and consistency traits that were evident only at Indonsa.

4.8 Conflict Resolution and Decision-Making

Conflict at Indonsa was rare and managed proactively. Artists and staff described open forums and complaint mechanisms that enabled early resolution. Budget transparency, artist forums, and access to the centre manager facilitated trust. Decision-making followed participatory models, with input from artists, users, and community leaders.

At Fezile Dabi, conflict was more frequent and divisive. Political tensions among local artists resulted in cliques aligned to specific factions. The withdrawal of Sasol's support

following threats highlighted how fragile the operating environment had become. Decision-making remained top-down and was not widely communicated to users or staff. Attempts by the manager to re-engage the municipality were snubbed, and political dynamics appeared to override developmental concerns.

These dynamics illustrate Rowe and Frewer's (2000) distinction between passive consultation and active participation. Indonsa leaned towards a collaborative model, while Fezile Dabi was closer to administrative insulation, leading to stagnation.

4.9 Summary of Key Findings

- Strong intergovernmental coordination (as in Indonsa) enhances CAC performance, enabling joint planning, accountability, and functional delivery.
- Policy awareness and operationalisation remain inconsistent, limiting strategic programming and accountability.
- Political interference and leadership turnover negatively affect continuity, particularly in Fezile Dabi.
- Transparent stakeholder engagement fosters community ownership, while the lack thereof leads to marginalisation.
- Civil society and informal actors often fill operational gaps, especially when formal governance fails.
- Resource disparities and governance capacity significantly affect programme delivery and sustainability.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter analysed empirical data from Indonsa and Fezile Dabi Community Arts Centres to illustrate the practical realities of stakeholder management and cultural policy implementation in South Africa. The findings show that strong institutional frameworks, proactive stakeholder engagement, and intergovernmental alignment are vital for the success of CACs. Conversely, policy ambiguity, weak coordination, and political volatility pose significant risks to their sustainability. Drawing on stakeholder theory and public policy implementation literature, the chapter underscores the need for a hybrid, participatory model that integrates central guidance with local agency.

These findings form the empirical foundation for the next chapter, which synthesises the results and proposes recommendations for strengthening cultural policy implementation and stakeholder coordination in South Africa's CAC landscape.

CHAPTER 5 – OUTLINING AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introducing the Evidence

This chapter applies Sabatier (1986, 2007) and Van Meter & Van Horn (1975) frameworks on policy implementation, along with Freeman (2010) on stakeholder management and Hagg (2003, 2010) on Community Arts Centres (CACs) in South Africa. In this chapter, we explore the core findings (evidence) of the research, delving into the complexities and challenges that shape the implementation of policies in South Africa's Community Arts Centres (CACs). Drawing upon interviews, case studies, and theoretical frameworks, this analysis examines how various factors such as coordination, governance, power dynamics, and stakeholder engagement influence the effectiveness of policy execution in this sector. Through this exploration, the chapter highlights and uncovers key insights into the successes and barriers encountered by CACs, shedding light on the gaps between policy intentions and on-the-ground realities. By integrating theoretical perspectives from scholars like Sabatier (1986), Van Meter & Van Horn (1975), Freeman (2010), and Hagg (2003), this chapter provides both a theoretical and practical lens through which to understand the dynamics at play in the policy environment of CACs.

The analysis is structured around nine key themes, each representing a vital aspect of CAC policy implementation. These themes have been selected based on their relevance to the research questions and their impact on the broader goals of cultural participation, sustainability, and community development within the arts. The findings are presented not only through an analysis of the data but also by incorporating real-world perspectives from the stakeholders involved in the operations and governance of CACs. These stakeholders' voices provide a nuanced view of the challenges they face, offering invaluable insights into how policies are received and implemented within their unique local contexts. The chapter thus aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice, while also suggesting potential pathways for future improvements in the policy landscape for community arts in South Africa. This chapter lays the core argument with a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the successes and failures of CAC policy implementation, setting the stage for the recommendations that follow in the next chapter.

5.2 Coordination and Management Challenges

The coordination and management of policy implementation within South Africa's Community Arts Centres (CACs) have proven to be challenging historically and in the present, as observed through both theoretical frameworks and the analysis of interviews and documents. Drawing from Sabatier (1986, 2007) and Van Meter & Van Horn (1975), we can understand that successful policy implementation relies on effective coordination between various levels of government and clear communication of roles and responsibilities. However, the implementation of national policies in the CACs has often been hampered by a lack of synchronization and the insufficient allocation of resources. The findings indicate that the coordination and management of Community Arts Centres (CACs) policy implementation are deeply influenced by intergovernmental relations, stakeholder collaboration, and resource allocation. The Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture, and Heritage (2019) emphasizes the importance of cohesive intergovernmental cooperation to enhance the sustainability of CACs. However, the findings reveal significant policy fragmentation, inconsistent applications across different government levels, and a lack of clear communication between stakeholders.

This fragmentation of responsibilities across spheres of government resulted in reporting fatigue and poor implementation follow-through. Both centres exhibited recurring inefficiencies in communication channels, leading to duplicated efforts and missed opportunities. The absence of a unifying management protocol or shared digital infrastructure further aggravated coordination failures. Respondents from Indonsa CAC specifically pointed to delayed feedback loops and shifting policy directives as factors that hindered planning continuity.

One of the main challenges revealed through interviews was the disconnect between policy mandates and how they are interpreted at the grassroots level. Staff at both CACs in the case studies reported that while policies may look well-articulated on paper, the practical execution is often misrepresented and marred by logistical and resource-based challenges. For instance, the KZN Provincial Department of Arts and Culture has signed an MOU with the Zululand District Municipality for the operations of the Centre but has also established a District office in the same vicinity. There is no

clarity between distinct and overlapping roles, leading to competition instead of complementation.

A lack of strategic leadership and coordination leads to inefficient use of scarce resources and operational conflicts. In the case of Fezile Dabi, there doesn't seem to be any regard for policy in that there are no visible signs of its prescripts being championed for or consciously executed. This disconnect is a key factor in the failure to implement policy intentions successfully. Sabatier (1986) asserts that successful policy implementation requires a balance between top-down oversight and adequate resource provision at the local level (Sabatier, 1986). This aligns with the findings, which show that while national directives set the policy framework, their execution at CACs often struggles due to resource constraints, competition for these limited resources and lack of technical support. The cases of Fezile Dabi Community Arts Centre in the Free State and Indonsa Arts and Craft Centre in KwaZulu-Natal illustrate the disparity in coordination. Fezile Dabi faces limited funding and weak management structures, leading to suboptimal program outcomes, whereas Indonsa benefits from a far more effective stakeholder engagement and local government support.

Moreover, Freeman (2010) highlights the importance of understanding the power dynamics among stakeholders when assessing policy implementation. In the case of CACs, a lack of effective stakeholder management often means that decisions made at the national level are not well-received or understood by local arts organisations and communities. Many of the interviewees noted that national policymakers often did not consult with local stakeholders effectively, leading to policies that were unknown or not adapted to the unique needs of local communities.

This gap in communication and coordination, coupled with inadequate resources, has led to frustration and inefficiency in policy execution. Interviews with key stakeholders, including CAC managers, government officials, and community members, further highlight the challenges of policy coordination. One respondent from Fezile Dabi remarked, "The lack of alignment between what the national department envisions and what we can practically do with the little resources we have is a major issue." In contrast, a stakeholder at Indonsa noted, "Here, we have strong support from local government, which helps us align national policies with our community's needs." These insights reinforce the literature on interagency cooperation by Van Meter and

Van Horn (1975), who argue that policy effectiveness depends on aligned objectives and seamless communication among different administrative levels.

The findings also reveal that the role of private sector involvement in CACs is crucial and has great potential to bridge funding gaps. However, the absence of structured public-private partnership building capacity, restricts the sustainability and thriving of CAC programs, further exacerbating challenges in policy execution. This is more prominent in the case of Fezile Dabi Arts and Culture Centre, where no single private or public stakeholder other than the Provincial government could be clearly indicated as partnering in the survival of the centre could be indicated. On the other hand, Indonsa had a long list which included Mthashana FET College, Zululand University, Department of Public Works, NYDA, National Arts Council, Provincial Federation of Community Arts Centres and Ulundi Airport, to name a few. This observation aligns with the stakeholder management framework proposed by Freeman (1984), which emphasizes the need for collaboration across sectors to achieve long-term success. Overall, the thematic analysis of coordination and management challenges underscores the need for a more integrated governance model that fosters better intergovernmental alignment, resource mobilization, and multi-stakeholder engagement. The research findings highlight that without a holistic approach to coordination, CACs will continue to face systemic barriers that undermine their intended role in cultural and community development.

5.3 Power Dynamics and Stakeholder Influence

The power dynamics within the arts sector and the influence of various stakeholders have had a significant impact on the implementation of policies at the Community Arts Centres. Freeman (2010) suggests that understanding the relationships and power structures among stakeholders is critical for successful policy implementation. In the case of CACs, however, the power imbalance between local artists, community members, and government officials often results in policies that do not meet the needs of the very people they are supposed to benefit. The challenges in coordinating and managing the policy implementation within CACs are multifaceted and reflect deeper systemic issues. Van Meter & Van Horn (1975) emphasized that clear communication is vital for effective policy execution. However, in the case of CACs, there is often a

breakdown in communication between government departments, leading to confusion over roles and responsibilities.

Stakeholder dynamics within the CACs often mirrored broader societal inequalities. Access to influence was shaped by proximity to government structures, command over resources, and institutional knowledge. While formal authority resided with provincial departments, informal power was often wielded by long-standing staff members or influential artists with strong community ties. This occasionally created bottlenecks in decision-making, as newer participants struggled to assert their voices in a pre-established hierarchy.

Interviews revealed that local stakeholders, including community members and artists, often felt sidelined by decision-makers at various levels of government or governance. Many respondents indicated that local voices were rarely included in the formulation of policies, leaving them with little agency in shaping the very policies that affected their work and livelihoods. One staff member at a CAC shared, “It feels like head office makes decisions without even consulting us. We’re just expected to follow through on policies we had no input in.” Furthermore, external influences from political elites and international organisations often override local needs and concerns. As Sabatier (1986, 2007) notes, such imbalances of power can undermine the credibility of policy decisions. In the context of CACs, many community leaders observed that political agendas and foreign aid considerations heavily influenced policy directives, often making them irrelevant or impractical for local implementation.

The Fezile Dabi and Indonsa arts centres offered concrete examples of how these stakeholder dynamics play out in practice. In Fezile Dabi, the lack of a coherent stakeholder management strategy has led to fragmented governance, with competing interests between the local municipality and provincial authorities resulting in inconsistent support for the centre's programs. These power dynamics' complex nature is further highlighted by political leaders at the local level, who sometimes oppose existing or new policies that contradict their political interests, creating an additional layer of complexity in the implementation process. As one community member mentioned, “The challenge lies in getting everyone on board when some local politicians don’t see the value we see in this Centre”.

Conversely, the Indonsa Centre has benefited from a more integrated approach. Stakeholders, including government bodies, local artists, and community organisations, have established effective communication channels and collaborative mechanisms through joint weekly management meetings with the HOD within the municipality or artists and community contributions to the district's IDP. This integration has enabled the centre to align its objectives with those of key stakeholders, leading to more stable funding, better-managed programs, and higher community engagement.

The findings highlight the complexities that arise when multiple stakeholders interact within the same policy environment, each with their own objectives. Stakeholder management in the CAC environment involves an intricate balance between the interests of national, provincial and local government actors, local municipalities, community-based organisations, artists, and the private sector. Furthermore, the findings suggest that power imbalances and conflicting agendas among these stakeholders often lead to fragmentation and inefficiencies in policy implementation. For instance, national government agencies are primarily focused on policy oversight and funding allocations. In contrast, local municipalities tend to prioritize short-term, tangible outcomes that align with their immediate political agendas. This divergence in priorities often creates tension and results in the delayed or inadequate implementation of CAC policies, ultimately affecting the centres' ability to effectively serve their communities.

The stakeholder analysis framework by Freeman (1984) suggests that understanding and managing stakeholder interests are critical for achieving organisational goals. However, the study finds that CACs operate within a fragmented stakeholder environment, where competing interests frequently hinder collaboration and effective governance. Local managers have found it difficult to navigate this lack of clarity, with some even expressing frustration about the ambiguous instructions they receive from higher authorities. Without a clear structure and direction, the effectiveness of policy implementation at the local level has been significantly compromised.

In interviews, several respondents shared their struggles with resource allocation. Fezile Dabi Arts and Culture Centre reported delays in receiving the necessary funds, materials, or personnel to implement the plans they were instructed to execute. These delays, which have been described as an ongoing issue, are particularly detrimental

to the centers that rely on government support to function. In some cases, local managers had to rely on limited internal resources or resorted to seeking alternative funding sources, which only added to their workload and stress, especially if that alternative funding didn't materialise. The absence of clear, efficient coordination between local government bodies and the CACs exacerbates these management challenges. According to one manager, "We often receive information too late or not at all, making it impossible to prepare for the implementation of plans or policies in a timely manner." This inefficiency is worsened by the fragmented governance structure within the South African arts sector. Each department or agency seems to operate in isolation, with little to no communication or shared responsibility, leading to a fractured approach to policy implementation.

Furthermore, the research highlights the significant role played by artists and arts organisations, who serve as both beneficiaries and implementers of CAC programs. However, their interests are often overshadowed by bureaucratic processes. Lochner (2013) notes that artists' involvement in policy implementation is crucial for program legitimacy and effectiveness. Yet, findings indicate that many artists feel excluded from strategic planning discussions, leading to a disconnect between policy intent and practical execution. A respondent from the artist community stated, "We are the ones engaging with the community daily, yet our voices are rarely considered in policy discussions."

Another critical aspect uncovered in the study is the limited influence of corporate and private sector stakeholders. While international models highlight the role of private investment in sustaining cultural initiatives (Savova, 2016), the South African context shows a lack of structured public-private partnerships. The analysis suggests that corporate actors view CACs as high-risk investments due to governance and accountability concerns, resulting in minimal engagement from this sector. The findings underscore the need for a balanced approach to stakeholder management, where the interests of national policymakers, local government actors, artists, and private investors are aligned to foster a more effective and sustainable CAC framework.

This analysis also reveals that partnerships with private sector stakeholders remain limited in the current CAC environment despite the potential benefits of public-private partnerships in enhancing sustainability and resource mobilization. This disconnect

highlights the need for strategic efforts to build partnerships that leverage the strengths of both public and private actors to benefit CACs. Moreover, the interests of community-based organisations and artists are often overshadowed by more powerful stakeholders, resulting in policies and programs that do not fully reflect the needs and aspirations of their intended communities. The data shows that while these grassroots stakeholders are frequently consulted in the policy-making process, their input is not always adequately integrated into the final decisions, leading to a mismatch between policy goals and community realities. In a report related to Fezile Dabi, one committee member indicated: “It was envisaged that the management of the Centre would strengthen the already existing relations that were made with the private sector in the municipality, for example, Sasol.

To this end, the committee would, with the assistance of the private sector and the various government departments, establish a “community oversight committee. This committee would be privy to all aspects of decision-making and meet at least once quarterly with the Centre’s management for progress reports. By keeping the industries abreast of the progress and vision of the centre and they can see that the centre management is reaching its expectations, the more inclined they would be to assist in the funding of the Centre’s projects”. The findings suggest that more inclusive and participatory approaches to stakeholder engagement, coupled with efforts to balance power disparities, are essential for improving the governance and operational effectiveness of CACs in South Africa.

5.4 Stakeholder Collaboration and Engagement

The role of collaboration and engagement between stakeholders plays a pivotal role in determining the success of policy implementation at CACs. Hagg (2003, 2010) underscores that effective collaboration between government bodies, local communities, and arts organisations is crucial to ensuring that policies are relevant and effectively executed. Both the 2013 Policy Document and the 2006 SA-Flemish Final Report identified intergovernmental misalignment and unfunded mandates as core barriers to CAC functionality. These findings are strongly corroborated by this study’s case analysis. For example, while the policy promotes strategic integration into local IDPs, neither Indonsa nor Fezile Dabi appeared to be fully incorporated into municipal planning and budgeting cycles. Respondents from both centres noted frustration with ambiguous lines of responsibility, irregular support from provincial

structures, and the near absence of national oversight beyond sporadic visits or audits. This reinforces the policy's call for stronger monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms — aspects that remain aspirational rather than implemented.

Also, in the cases of the CACs, a significant gap in stakeholder collaboration was identified. Several respondents pointed out the lack of formal platforms for collaboration, which could help bring together key stakeholders to discuss the needs and challenges of local arts communities. Without such platforms, it is difficult for local CACs to engage with government representatives, funding bodies, or artists consistently and meaningfully. “We need more open forums where everyone—from artists to government representatives—can come together to discuss policy implementation,” one coordinator at a CAC noted. Without these collaborative efforts, local arts institutions often struggle to make their voices heard and, consequently, fail to influence the policies that affect their day-to-day operations.

A key emerging theme is the tension between centralized governance and localized decision-making. Imperial (2021) argues that public policy implementation benefits from decentralized governance structures that allow for flexibility and responsiveness to local conditions. Yet, findings show that CACs are heavily dependent on top-down directives, which restrict their ability to adapt to specific community needs. One centre manager noted, “We have little say in how funds are allocated or how programs are structured, despite being on the ground.” Another barrier to effective collaboration is the occasional mistrust between community members and government representatives. Local stakeholders often feel that their concerns are not adequately addressed or that they are merely seen as recipients of plans and policies rather than partners in the decision-making process. This lack of trust hinders the potential for meaningful engagement and stifles the creativity and innovation that could arise from a more collaborative approach.

The research findings indicate that managing multiple stakeholders in the implementation of the CAC policy is a complex task requiring robust coordination mechanisms. The multi-stakeholder management model proposed by Chinyio and Olomolaiye (2010) emphasises the need for continuous engagement, transparency, and shared decision-making. However, the study reveals that stakeholder management in CACs is often ad hoc, with limited institutionalised structures for engagement. Their study also identified challenges related to trust and collaboration

among stakeholders. Research by Kanyane and Nazo (2008) highlights that successful policy implementation requires strong inter-agency relationships built on mutual trust. However, interviews with CAC staff and government officials indicate that there is often mistrust and competition between different levels of government, artists, and community members. One respondent from a local government department admitted, “There is a perception that CACs are mismanaged, which makes it difficult to secure additional funding and support.”

To improve stakeholder management, the research suggests adopting participatory governance models that facilitate inclusive decision-making. This aligns with Fischer’s (2017) call for deliberative governance approaches prioritising stakeholder engagement in policy formulation and execution (Fisher, 2017). The study concludes that without structured stakeholder management frameworks, CACs will continue to experience operational inefficiencies and conflicts among key actors.

5.6 Conflicts Between Personal and Collective Interests

A significant challenge to the implementation of policies at the CACs is the tension between personal and collective interests. Van Meter & Van Horn (1975) argue that when personal interests interfere with collective goals, it becomes difficult to achieve the desired outcomes (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975). Interviews with local managers and staff revealed that personal or organizational interests often precede the broader goals of policy implementation, especially when resources are scarce. Local managers mentioned the difficulty of role-players balancing personal goals with the need to serve the collective mission of the community arts space. In many cases, the pressure to secure resources or maintain political relationships led individuals to prioritize personal ambitions or short-term goals rather than long-term collective development. One coordinator explained, “Sometimes, personal interests come into play, and it becomes harder to focus on the larger vision when we’re all just trying to keep our jobs or programs afloat.”

Such conflicts were further exacerbated by limited oversight and vague role definitions. In several instances, programme decisions were based on individual preferences rather than inclusive planning processes. This not only affected the legitimacy of

implemented programmes but also alienated broader community participation. As highlighted in several interviews, these tensions were particularly pronounced in instances where CAC facilities were used as platforms for political positioning or patronage.

This tension between personal and collective interests further complicates the process of policy implementation. In some cases, local leaders were forced to make decisions that were more beneficial to their personal or political agendas, rather than aligning with the collective interests of the community or the policy's broader goals. The findings highlight a persistent conflict between personal and collective interests within the CAC sector, affecting governance, resource allocation, and program sustainability. Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) argue that policy effectiveness depends on the extent to which individual actors align their objectives with collective goals. However, the study finds that personal ambitions, political affiliations, and competing agendas frequently disrupt CAC operations. One prominent example from the research is the influence of political patronage in CAC leadership appointments. Respondents noted that many centre managers are selected based on political loyalty rather than expertise, leading to poor decision-making and inefficiency. One artist shared, "We often see CAC leadership positions being given to individuals with no background in arts or cultural management, simply because of their political connections." This finding echoes the observations of Tapscott (2000), who warns that political interference in local governance can undermine service delivery and institutional integrity.

Additionally, the research reveals that competition for limited funding exacerbates individualistic behaviour among CAC stakeholders. Artists, administrators, and policymakers often prioritize personal or organizational survival over collective development. This is consistent with Chinyio and Olomolaiye's (2010) argument that resource scarcity intensifies conflict in stakeholder environments. A CAC staff member expressed frustration: "Instead of working together, everyone is trying to secure funding for their own projects, which weakens our collective impact." The study suggests that fostering a culture of shared responsibility through collaborative governance frameworks can help mitigate these challenges. This aligns with Bourne's (2016) stakeholder relationship management model, which emphasizes trust-building and shared accountability as essential for long-term institutional success.

The balance between personal and collective interests is a recurring theme in the management and implementation of CACs in South Africa. The findings indicate that the successful implementation of CAC policy is often contingent on the extent to which these interests are reconciled, emphasizing the importance of collective vision and shared goals among stakeholders. The tension between personal and collective interests is a well-documented issue in stakeholder management theory. In the CAC environment, these conflicts are particularly evident in the interactions between government officials, community leaders, artists, and local organisations. The comparative case studies of Fezile Dabi and Indonsa illustrate how these competing interests can either hinder or enhance the effectiveness of CACs, depending on how they are managed.

In Fezile Dabi, personal interests often precede collective goals, leading to fragmented governance and inconsistent policy implementation. For instance, local leaders may prioritize initiatives that enhance their own standing within the community or secure funding for their projects, even if these initiatives do not align with the broader objectives of the CAC. This dynamic results in a lack of coherence in program delivery and undermines the centre's ability to serve the community effectively. Conversely, at Indonsa, a stronger focus on collective interests has fostered a more cohesive and collaborative environment. The findings suggest that the centre's leadership has made great strides in creating a shared vision that aligns personal aspirations with the community's broader goals. This alignment has been achieved through inclusive decision-making processes, regular stakeholder consultations, and a governance model that incentivizes contributions to the collective good. The success at Indonsa supports the views of Bourne (2009) and Bryson (2004), who argue that aligning individual and collective interests is key to effective stakeholder management and policy implementation.

The role of leadership is critical in balancing these interests. Leaders who can articulate a clear vision and foster a sense of shared purpose are more likely to build consensus among stakeholders, reducing the risk of conflicts that arise from divergent agendas. The findings indicate that in cases where leadership is weak or self-serving, as observed in Fezile Dabi, personal interests dominate, leading to governance breakdowns and policy failures. The research also finds that personal interests can sometimes align with collective goals, particularly when stakeholders perceive tangible

benefits from contributing to the success of the CAC. This alignment is more likely to occur when there are clear incentives for participation, such as access to resources, recognition, or opportunities for professional development. At Indonsa, for instance, the leadership has implemented mechanisms to ensure that individual contributions are recognized, thereby motivating stakeholders to work towards the centre's collective objectives.

The findings further indicate that trust is a crucial factor in reconciling personal and collective interests. In environments where trust is low, stakeholders are more likely to prioritize their own agendas, fearing that collective action may not yield benefits for them personally. At Indonsa, the leadership's efforts to foster trust among stakeholders have been key to aligning personal and collective interests, resulting in a more effective governance model. The balance between personal and collective interests is a critical factor in the successful implementation of CAC policy. The findings highlight the need for governance structures and leadership approaches that recognize and reconcile these interests, fostering a shared vision that aligns individual motivations with the collective good. By creating an environment where personal ambitions can be fulfilled within the framework of collective objectives, CACs can achieve greater coherence, sustainability, and impact.

5.7 The Role of Collaborative Governance and Shared Responsibility

The research underscores the importance of collaborative governance in fostering mutual respect and recognition among CAC stakeholders. Fischer (2017) defines collaborative governance as a participatory process where multiple actors engage in joint decision-making to achieve common objectives. However, findings indicate that in many CACs, collaboration is hindered by hierarchical power structures and a lack of trust between government agencies, artists, and community representatives. A case study comparison between Fezile Dabi and Indonsa reveals differing approaches to governance. Indonsa CAC has adopted a more inclusive model, where local artists and community members actively participate in program planning. One interviewee noted, "At Indonsa, we have regular meetings where all voices are heard, which helps us align our goals." Conversely, Fezile Dabi operates under a more rigid structure, with minimal consultation between management and community stakeholders, leading

to dissatisfaction and disengagement. The findings suggest that implementing structured collaboration mechanisms, such as advisory councils or stakeholder forums, could enhance participatory governance. This supports Kanyane and Nazo's (2008) argument that institutionalizing engagement platforms strengthens stakeholder relationships and improves policy implementation outcomes.

Collaborative governance and mutual respect and recognition among stakeholders are key themes that emerge from the analysis of the CACs policy implementation in South Africa. The findings in this section emphasize that collaboration, underpinned by mutual respect, is essential for overcoming the challenges inherent in managing multiple stakeholders with diverse interests and power dynamics. In the case studies of Fezile Dabi and Indonsa Community Arts Centres, the degree of collaborative governance has a direct impact on the effectiveness of policy implementation and the overall success of these centres. The findings further highlight that mutual respect and recognition are foundational to successful collaboration. This environment of respect has contributed to the centre's ability to maintain consistent programs and attract sustained support from both government and community actors. In contrast, the Fezile Dabi centre struggles with mistrust and a lack of recognition among stakeholders, leading to fragmented efforts and inconsistent policy outcomes.

The findings suggest that intermediary organisations, which can operate at provincial or district levels, play a crucial role in bridging gaps between national policies and local implementation. These organisations help facilitate dialogue, coordinate resources, and mediate conflicts, ensuring that the interests of all stakeholders are represented. Another key finding is the importance of structured engagement processes that promote inclusivity and equal participation. At Indonsa, regular stakeholder forums and joint planning sessions are held, ensuring that all parties can contribute to the decision-making process. This structured approach has been instrumental in aligning the interests of different stakeholders and achieving collective objectives. However, the findings also point to the challenges of implementing collaborative governance in environments characterized by power imbalances and resource inequalities. In the Fezile Dabi case, for instance, government officials often dominate decision-making processes, sidelining community voices and leading to resentment and disengagement among local stakeholders.

The concept of mutual recognition is critical in this context. Mutual recognition involves acknowledging the legitimacy and value of each stakeholder's perspective, regardless of their power or status. The role of leadership in promoting mutual respect and recognition cannot be overstated. Leadership approaches that emphasize empathy, active listening, and shared decision-making are particularly effective in fostering mutual respect. The findings show that at Indonsa, leadership that prioritizes respect and inclusivity has led to a more harmonious and productive stakeholder environment, while the lack of such leadership at Fezile Dabi has contributed to ongoing tensions and implementation challenges.

Collaborative governance and mutual respect and recognition are crucial for the effective implementation of CAC policies. The findings suggest that fostering collaboration requires a governance structure that is inclusive, transparent, and adaptive to the needs of all stakeholders. By embedding respect and recognition into the governance framework, CACs can create an environment where diverse interests are harmonized, collective goals are prioritized, and sustainable partnerships are built. The insights from this analysis provide a foundation for exploring how these themes intersect with the blending of top-down and bottom-up approaches, which will be discussed in the following section.

5.8 Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches

The study identifies the need for a hybrid policy implementation approach that integrates top-down and bottom-up methodologies. Sabatier (1986) argues that the most effective policies blend hierarchical oversight with grassroots involvement to ensure adaptability and efficiency. Findings show that while top-down directives provide policy structure, local autonomy is essential for responsiveness and innovation in CAC programming. The analysis of CAC operations suggests that rigid top-down models often result in bureaucratic inefficiencies, while purely bottom-up approaches struggle due to resource constraints. One centre tutor director emphasised, "We need guidance from the provincial level, but we also need the flexibility to tailor programs to our community's needs and what the market demands." The research concludes that a balanced implementation strategy, combining strong policy frameworks with decentralized decision-making, is key to enhancing CAC effectiveness. This aligns

with Fischer's (2017) call for multi-level governance systems integrating structured oversight with local agency.

To optimise CAC functionality, it is essential to cultivate adaptive governance models that merge policy imperatives with lived local realities. While top-down mandates provide necessary structure and resources, bottom-up approaches ensure contextual relevance and community buy-in. A synthesis of these models, reinforced by meaningful stakeholder engagement, may provide a viable pathway to revitalising South Africa's community arts infrastructure.

The intersection of top-down and bottom-up approaches, often referred to as "the third way," is a significant focus of public policy implementation literature, particularly in contexts characterized by complexity and multiple stakeholder involvement, such as Community Arts Centres. Top-down approaches are traditionally characterized by centralized decision-making, where directives, goals, and resources flow from higher levels of government to local entities. Conversely, bottom-up approaches emphasize the role of local actors, such as community members, grassroots organisations, and local government officials, in shaping policy implementation. The findings from Fezile Dabi and Indonsa CACs illustrate that where local actors have more autonomy and input into decision-making, there is greater alignment between policy goals and community needs.

The "third way" seeks to integrate the strengths of both approaches, creating a hybrid model that leverages centralized coordination and oversight while empowering local actors to adapt policies and strategies to their specific contexts. The findings show that in CACs where a balanced integration of these approaches is applied, such as Indonsa, there is better alignment between national objectives and local realities. This balance is achieved through a governance model that allows for local adaptation within the framework of national goals, supported by regular communication and feedback mechanisms between national and local actors.

However, the success of this integrated approach is contingent on the presence of mechanisms for resolving conflicts and ensuring accountability. Conflict often arises when there is a disconnect between the priorities of national and local actors or when local stakeholders feel marginalised in decision-making processes. This tension is evident in the Fezile Dabi case, where top-down directives have clashed with local

priorities, leading to resistance and fragmented implementation. The findings also underscore the importance of building capacities at the local level to engage effectively in a third-way governance model. Local actors need the skills, knowledge, and resources to participate meaningfully in the implementation process. In Indonsa, the provision of training and technical support to local managers and stakeholders has been crucial in ensuring that overarching goals are effectively localized, leading to more sustainable outcomes.

The integration of top-down and bottom-up approaches offers a promising framework for improving the implementation of CAC policy in South Africa. The third-way approach combines the strengths of centralised coordination and local adaptability, enabling more effective and context-sensitive policy outcomes. However, for this approach to be successful, it must be supported by robust governance structures, capacity building, and conflict resolution mechanisms. The insights from this analysis provide a foundation for exploring how power distribution and collaboration among stakeholders can be optimised, which will be examined in the following sections. As a practitioner familiar with the historical trajectories of community arts spaces, the case of Fezile Dabi CAC resonates deeply. Its journey from ZAPAP — a community-mobilised performing arts project — to ZAPAC and then to a government-supported CAC encapsulates both the potential and vulnerability of these centres. The disjuncture between early vision and present dysfunction reflects a broader policy gap: the failure to institutionalise and protect community-driven momentum within formal systems.

5.9 Trust, Communication, and Relationship Building

Power distribution is a critical factor in effectively implementing CACs policy, particularly in multi-stakeholder environments characterised by varying interests and influence. In the context of CACs, power is distributed across multiple levels of government (national, provincial, and local) and among civil society organisations, artists, community members, and the private sector. The findings from this research indicate that power imbalances and conflicts between these actors are significant barriers to achieving cohesive policy outcomes. This dynamic is more evident in the Fezile Dabi Community Arts Centre, where local stakeholders have limited influence over key decisions, leading to dissatisfaction and disengagement. In contrast, the Indonsa Arts Centre demonstrates a more balanced power distribution, where local

managers and community representatives play a more active role in shaping programs and policies. This distribution of power has contributed to greater stakeholder buy-in and more effective policy implementation.

The concept of power-sharing is central to the literature on collaborative governance, which emphasises the importance of equitable decision-making processes that recognise the contributions and needs of all stakeholders. In the CAC context, this translates into creating platforms for dialogue and negotiation where power is not concentrated in a single entity but is distributed according to each stakeholder's role, expertise, and contribution to the shared objectives. The findings also reveal that distributing power equitably is easier said than done. Power imbalances are deeply entrenched in historical, social, and economic inequalities that are difficult to overcome. For instance, government officials often hold more formal authority and control over resources, which can create a power hierarchy that disadvantages local actors, particularly those from under-resourced or marginalized communities.

Effective power distribution requires not only formal mechanisms for inclusion but also informal practices that build trust and cooperation among stakeholders. The research finds that in settings where informal networks and relationships are strong, there is greater flexibility in decision-making and a more adaptive approach to power-sharing. Another critical aspect of power distribution is the capacity of stakeholders to exercise the power they are granted. In the case of Indonsa, targeted training and support have enabled local managers to take on more leadership responsibilities, contributing to a more balanced power dynamic that supports effective implementation.

Nevertheless, the findings caution against the assumption that more distributed power automatically leads to better outcomes. Power distribution must be carefully managed to avoid fragmentation and decision-making paralysis. Too much decentralization can lead to a lack of coherence in policy implementation, as seen in cases where local actors pursue divergent goals that are misaligned with national priorities. This challenge underscores the need for a governance framework that balances local autonomy with centralized coordination, ensuring that all actors are moving towards the same objectives while retaining the flexibility to adapt to local conditions.

5.10 Capacity Building and Resource Allocation

The findings from the analysis reveal that capacity building and resource allocation are fundamental issues impacting the performance and sustainability of CACs in South Africa. Capacity building is identified as a crucial factor in ensuring that CACs can deliver on their objectives, particularly in fostering cultural participation and supporting community development. The findings further highlight that while there have been efforts at the national level to provide training and development programs, these initiatives have often been inconsistent and poorly coordinated. For instance, the case study of Fezile Dabi Community Arts Centre demonstrates that despite receiving occasional training sessions, there remains a significant skills gap among the staff, particularly in areas of management, programming, and financial planning. This gap directly affects the centre's ability to effectively engage the community and run sustainable programs. On the other hand, Indonsa Arts and Craft Centre, which has benefited from more structured and continuous capacity-building efforts, shows better operational outcomes, although challenges persist in ensuring these efforts are sufficiently funded and systematically implemented.

Resource allocation, particularly in terms of financial support, is another key concern highlighted in the findings. Both case studies reveal that CACs operate with limited budgets that are insufficient to cover essential operational costs, let alone invest in long-term development. The national budget allocations for CACs are markedly lower compared to other cultural initiatives, which undermines the ability of these centres to fulfil their mandates. The findings indicate that this issue is exacerbated by the inconsistent flow of funds, bureaucratic delays, and a lack of strategic planning at the local government level. The Fezile Dabi Community Arts Centre, for example, struggles with outdated infrastructure and inadequate equipment, largely due to the irregular and insufficient funding it receives. This situation is mirrored across many other CACs, where the lack of resources has led to deteriorating facilities and a decline in program quality.

Interviews with stakeholders and documentary data reveal that resource allocation decisions are often disconnected from the actual needs of CACs. There is a tendency for funding to be allocated based on political priorities rather than a clear assessment of where resources would be most effective. Additionally, the findings indicate that there is a critical need for better alignment between national, provincial, and local

governments to streamline resource distribution and ensure that funds are used efficiently. The study further identifies the importance of developing local fundraising initiatives and partnerships with the private sector as potential solutions to address the funding gaps that many CACs face.

5.11 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has outlined the key findings from the research on the implementation of policies within South Africa's Community Arts Centres. Through analysis, it becomes evident that while the intention behind national policies may be strong, their successful implementation is often hindered by challenges such as poor coordination, a lack of effective stakeholder engagement, and deep power imbalances. The findings highlight the importance of collaborative governance, clear communication, and the incorporation of both top-down and bottom-up approaches in policy design. Additionally, the creation of environments that foster trust and relationship-building will be essential for improving the policy implementation process and ensuring that the cultural sector thrives. By integrating these findings into the ongoing development of policies for the arts sector, it will be possible to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of policy frameworks, ensuring that they better serve local communities and artists. The next chapter will delve deeper into the implications of these findings and propose recommendations for future action based on the insights gathered.

The research underscores the importance of adaptive governance, where policies are continuously evaluated and refined based on feedback from both higher-level authorities and local practitioners. Moreover, the research findings emphasise the role of capacity-building and trust-building as foundational elements for fostering sustainable collaboration and cooperation among diverse stakeholders. These insights are vital for informing future policy interventions and ensuring that the transformative potential of CACs is fully realised. The analysis also points to the persistent barriers that hinder the smooth implementation of cultural policies in CACs, including power imbalances, competing agendas, and resource constraints. The implications of these findings extend beyond the immediate context of community arts, offering broader insights into the challenges of multi-stakeholder governance and the implementation of public policies in complex social settings.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis of the key findings, followed by targeted recommendations to improve stakeholder management and policy implementation in Community Arts Centres (CACs) across South Africa. Building on the rich empirical evidence from the Indonsa and Fezile Dabi CAC case studies, and guided by the Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (2018), the 2013 CAC Policy Framework, and the Final Report of 1 May 2006, this chapter translates lessons into actionable strategies. The recommendations are categorised under policy and planning, institutional and operational reforms, and communication and policy literacy. Each recommendation responds directly to the research questions that guided the study:

- Who are the key stakeholders involved in CAC policy implementation, and how are their roles managed?
- What factors enable or hinder effective stakeholder coordination and governance?
- How do the realities at selected CACs reflect or diverge from national policy intentions?
- The chapter concludes with reflections on the study's contribution and final remarks on the future of CACs in South Africa.

6.2 Policy and Planning Recommendations

6.2.1 Develop a National Stakeholder Management Framework for CACs

A central finding of this study is the absence of a coherent, nationally recognised stakeholder management framework tailored for CACs. The fragmentation across national, provincial, and local levels has led to confusion over roles, lack of coordination, and misaligned expectations. The 2013 policy document recognises this

fragmentation but does not propose operational solutions. Therefore, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC), in collaboration with SALGA and provincial departments, should develop a formalised National Stakeholder Management Framework.

This framework should:

- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all three government spheres, community actors, and non-profit organisations.
- Include engagement protocols, conflict resolution mechanisms, and escalation pathways.
- Provide tools such as stakeholder mapping templates, performance scorecards, and joint planning timelines.

As a government official at Fezile Dabi noted, "We need something formalised that all parties can work from. Otherwise, we are always reacting instead of planning." A unified framework would institutionalise collaboration and prevent duplicated efforts or governance vacuums.

6.2.2 Align the Revised White Paper on Arts and Culture with Implementation Realities

Although the Revised White Paper on Arts and Culture (2018) articulates a progressive vision for community empowerment through arts infrastructure, it often lacks operational specificity. The findings show that neither Indonsa nor Fezile Dabi centres fully implement the policy due to its abstract nature and the lack of an implementation matrix.

To address this gap, DSAC should:

- Develop an annexure to the White Paper comprising an implementation matrix.
- Include timelines, budget allocations, responsible departments, and performance indicators.
- Institutionalise an annual review mechanism that includes input from CAC users, artists, and managers.

This would bridge the gap between aspirational policy and lived implementation. As one respondent remarked, "The policy sounds good, but we don't know what to do with it."

6.2.3 Institutionalise Participatory Planning Mechanisms at Centre Level

This research revealed limited evidence of structured community involvement in planning at either CAC. Most users felt excluded from decisions, creating a sense of alienation and disempowerment. Participatory governance is not only a democratic imperative but also a practical necessity.

Each CAC should establish a Community Advisory Forum (CAF), composed of local artists, educators, cultural practitioners, youth leaders, and disabled persons' representatives. These forums should:

- Convene quarterly to assess programming, budgeting, and infrastructure needs.
- Submit formal recommendations to centre managers and the provincial department.
- Receive feedback on how their input has influenced decisions.
- This aligns with Cornwall's (2004) theory of "invited spaces" and the public participation principles enshrined in the Constitution.

6.3 Institutional and Operational Recommendations

6.3.1 Strengthen Intergovernmental Coordination Structures

Both case studies revealed inconsistent and fragmented coordination between spheres of government. The 2006 DAC report also flagged this, noting that CACs were being "pushed down the governance hierarchy" without resources or support.

To improve coordination:

- Reinstate and operationalise Intergovernmental Arts and Culture Forums at district and provincial levels.
- Designate CACs as standing items on Integrated Development Plan (IDP) meetings.
- Link budget allocations to demonstrated intergovernmental collaboration and shared performance outcomes.
- This would ensure that CACs are embedded in municipal planning and budgeting systems, reducing siloed decision-making.

6.3.2 Invest in Capacity Building and Leadership Development

Leadership instability and lack of technical skills were consistent problems at both centres. Respondents cited burnout, absence of induction, and lack of authority as major barriers to effectiveness. The custom CAC policy document of 2013 underscores the importance of local leadership in centre viability.

DSAC and provincial departments should:

- Establish a CAC Leadership Academy or integrate CAC management into existing government training programmes.
- Cover modules such as arts administration, stakeholder management, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and cultural entrepreneurship.
- Introduce peer mentorship, succession planning, and performance-based incentives.
- This investment in human capital would move CACs from mere venues to dynamic institutions of community innovation.

6.3.3 Improve Infrastructure and Resource Allocation

The decaying infrastructure and erratic funding streams observed at both centres severely undermined their ability to deliver quality programmes. This echoes the 2006 DAC report's warning about "infrastructure without maintenance" becoming liabilities.

To address this:

- Create a ring-fenced infrastructure grant managed by provinces but monitored nationally.
- Require annual infrastructure audits involving both officials and community stakeholders.
- Reform procurement processes to allow for responsive, centre-level purchasing of materials, IT equipment, and service contracts.
- Moreover, multi-year budgeting tied to programme cycles should replace short-term allocations that undermine planning.

6.4 Communication and Policy Literacy Recommendations

6.4.1 Launch a National CAC Policy Literacy Campaign

Low policy literacy was one of the most striking findings across both case studies. Many stakeholders had never seen or discussed the White Paper or CAC policy.

To rectify this, DSAC should:

- Develop a Policy Literacy Toolkit that includes infographics, translated summaries, and interactive workshops.
- Partner with local libraries, schools, community radio, and social media platforms for dissemination.
- Train centre managers to facilitate policy dialogues with users.

As one user lamented, "How can we implement policy we've never read or discussed?" Policy only matters when it is accessible, understood, and actionable.

6.4.2 Create a Transparent Monitoring and Feedback System

Feedback loops between CACs, communities, and policymakers are almost non-existent. This perpetuates mistrust, poor planning, and top-down governance.

To build a culture of transparency:

- Introduce real-time monitoring tools such as a national CAC dashboard, quarterly progress reports, and community feedback sessions.
- Pilot mobile-based reporting tools (e.g., WhatsApp surveys) for users to report issues or suggest improvements.
- Require public disclosure of CAC budgets and performance metrics annually.

Transparency enhances accountability, community trust, and informed planning.

6.5 Reflections on the Research Contribution

This study addressed the core research questions through a grounded, comparative lens. It has shown that stakeholder fragmentation, limited capacity, and policy-practice disjuncture continue to plague CAC implementation. However, it also revealed promising practices, latent capacity, and a resilient community of practitioners and users who continue to hold space for creativity, dialogue, and learning.

Specifically, this research contributes to the field by:

Bridging theoretical models (e.g., stakeholder theory, Arnstein's ladder, intergovernmental relations) with empirical realities.

Giving voice to underrepresented actors—users, centre managers, local officials—whose perspectives are often absent in formal evaluations.

Reasserting the relevance of cultural policy in nation-building and development.

The methodological triangulation of interviews, site visits, document analysis, and reflective ethnography provided both rigour and richness.

I believe that the study thus offers a framework for policy reform, institutional development, and scholarly inquiry.

6.6 Final Concluding Remarks

Community Arts Centres occupy a liminal but powerful space in South Africa's cultural ecosystem. They are neither fully institutionalised nor fully autonomous. They are simultaneously marginalised and symbolically powerful. This research affirms that their survival—and flourishing—depends on strategic stakeholder management.

The cases of Indonsa and Fezile Dabi illustrate both the potential and peril of policy implementation. Indonsa's modest success stems from intergovernmental coordination and some staff continuity. Fezile Dabi's decline reflects governance neglect, leadership instability, and community disengagement.

Yet the desire for vibrant, inclusive, and community-rooted CACs remains. The challenge is not merely technical—it is political, institutional, and relational. If we are to realise the transformative vision set out in the White Paper and the Constitution, CACs must be reimagined not just as sites of artistic expression, but as democratic spaces where creativity, accountability, and participation converge.

Ultimately, this study concludes that stakeholder management is not a peripheral administrative function—it is the core engine of cultural policy implementation. A shift toward inclusive, coordinated, and capacitated stakeholder ecosystems will be key to reviving South Africa's Community Arts Centres and fulfilling their mandate of cultural democracy, empowerment, and social transformation.

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