

VANSA AGM 2016 Minutes

Venue: VANSAs Office, 1st floor King Kong Building, 6 Verwey Street, New Doornfontein, Johannesburg

Date: 22 October 2016

Time: 10:30 – 12.30

In attendance:

Board of Directors:

Bandile Gumbi **BG** (chair), Themba Shibase **TS**, Michelle Joubert **MJ**, Molemo Moiloa **MM** (National Director)

Apologies:

Jonathan Garnham, Denisha Jairam, Churchill Madikida

Members:

Neil Niewoudt, Samantha Modisenyane, Dirk Bahmann, Bolelang Leepile, Sam Djedje, Clare Louis, Mariapaola McGurk, Siphon Gwala, Siyabonga Gumede, Gordon Froud, Mxolisi Sonti, Belisa Rodrigues, Mthunzi Ndimande, Sally Shorkend, Ashley Whitfield, Sara Hallatt, Lesego Molokoane

Lauren von Gogh (Minutes)

Apologies:

Lucy MacGarry, Fezile Monki, Dodo Monamodi, Ntombizodwa Ganta, Moira Katz, Dr Jillian Carman, Dorothee Kreutzfeldt

1. Arrival

Bandile Gumbi greeted everyone and introduced the VANSAs board and staff to the members.

The minutes of the 2015 AGM were approved and no changes in the agenda were required.

2. Background to the Meeting

Themba Shibase presented a brief history of VANSAs, how it was founded as a voluntary organisation and some of the key shifts over

the years.

He outlined the objectives of the AGM as follows:

To report back to the constituency on the work VANSAs has done
To be accountable and transparent on governance
To meet constitutional requirements for adoption of financials
To get input from VANSAs's constituency for the coming year

3. Organisational Report (Director's Report)

Change in Staff

MM outlined the significant change in staff at VANSAs due to the shift in projects and funding. VANSAs currently employs three staff members but manages to do the same amount of projects. MM noted the importance of VANSAs's flexibility in order to be sustainable.

Change in Board

Denisha Jairam is a new board member with finance and auditing skills, to help ensure financial accountability for VANSAs.

Zen Marie and Jenny Stretton resigned from board, and there are now three positions available. VANSAs is looking for nominations for new board members, particularly with legal and governance experience.

Nominations were taken via email and from the floor for new board members:

Don Mthobela, Masajane Mofokeng, Johan Bauer, Tanisha Bhana, Mariapaola McGurk.

Main New Projects

Open Office Research Residencies – These are an extension of the VANSAs/Africalia Internship Programme. The six residencies focused on training in research methodologies that the participants could implement back in their home provinces. The residencies proved beneficial not only for the researchers but were extremely useful for the VANSAs team too.

Legal Helpdesk – This service offers free basic legal advice to artists and cultural workers. The small bouquet of services includes advice on contracts, copyright, and starting a small business.

Norms & Standards – The development of the Best Practice Guide for the Visual Arts in South Africa, which was one of the recommendations from VANSAs's 2010 research project funded by DAC and HSRC. VANSAs worked with partner organisations across the country to hold

consultation workshops, information sessions and to disseminate the guide.

Networks – VANSAs membership is constantly growing, with upwards of 7800 members. Social media reach has grown organically, with 6682 likes on Facebook. Website users per annum are at 127 956, which is significant as VANSAs has no budget for PR and marketing.

Further project reporting details will be published in the Annual Report

4. 2013 – 2016 Three Year Strategic Plan Report Back

Governance: The VANSAs constitution was updated with the help of a legal team, policies were put into place and the board was developed.

Staffing Capacity: VANSAs budget struggles to raise funds to cover staff salaries, and therefore VANSAs has struggled to hire and maintain highly skilled staff. This has shifted during the course of the last three years whereby VANSAs currently has fewer staff with higher capacity.

Membership (and membership income): VANSAs membership strategy shifted in 2014, encouraging individuals and organisations to pay their contributions on a sliding scale of what they can afford, without excluding anybody who can't afford to pay. The overall income from membership has dropped over the last financial year.

Financial Sustainability: VANSAs always starts the year in a precarious situation and is unable to finish the year with enough funds. It is difficult to accumulate savings due to projects based work.

5. Intentions for VANSAs 2017-2019 Strategic Plan (still in draft)

MM outlined the 3 core programme areas for the future strategic plan:

Decentralisation – Independent work happening outside of the main cities, encouraging and supporting independence

Study & critical quality – Co-learning, new knowledge and encouraging critical engagement

Professional access – Enabling professional access for practitioners but also encouraging (lobbying for) accessibility of the field

6. Financials

MM presented the 2015/2016 financial year Annual Financial Statements prepared by Audit Pro Auditing Firm. The auditors found all test checks accurate and reasonable in VANSAs finances, processes and systems. Primary findings of the financials was a decrease in overheads and salaries costs but an increase in project expenditure

indicating a lean and productive organisation. Membership fee contributions remain very small and have decreased in the past financial year. 2015/2016 also saw more accurate allocations across organizational costs.

Mxolisi Sonti and Gordon Froud approved and seconded the financials respectively.

Further financial reporting details will be published in the Annual Report

7. Defining the Mandate: Questions and Answers

Mthunzi Ndimande noted how the new membership strategy is not working, and said VANSAs should be receiving more money through membership contributions. He asked what efforts VANSAs is putting in to get more government funding such as Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). MM explained that there are significant capacity issues with managing membership costs and that low maintenance approaches needed to be found. MM also explained that VANSAs applies for government funds whenever possible and is successful part of the time. She also indicated that while VANSAs has worked with DTI cultural desk (now Department of Small Business Development) in the past, the options are currently limited but a relationship is retained.

Mariapaola McGurk suggested that VANSAs should receive free space from the city, at JAG for example. She also suggested that members have the option to pay VANSAs a small fee via debit order every month, and that industry should start contributing. MM noted her suggestions and also explained that the board was due to consider membership fee issues very seriously and that these suggestions were of significant value.

Clare Louis asked if there is something stopping VANSAs from receiving more funding or help. MM explained how the funder's list changes depending on the specific funder's focus of that period and that funders shift and it is therefore difficult to plan over multiple years.

Sipho Gwala suggested that VANSAs host an auction every three months as a fundraiser. MM took note of his suggestion as a potential option, however described how it might be difficult to choose a few artists out of the large network of artists VANSAs supports. Furthermore that there are capacity limitations for fundraising.

Further conversation was had on fundraising strategies. MM indicated that the suggestions would be recorded and discussed. And that they would be considered in relations to capacity, cost and organizational focus.

Belisa Rodrigues asked about a possible business unit and how to partner with people in the network. She suggested a skills audit of the VANSAs membership base.

The AGM was adjourned at 12.30.