



# Dutch performing arts abroad

Quantitative and qualitative  
analysis of the international  
position of Dutch theatre and  
dance

Marion Wester, DSP-groep,  
Netherlands

# Context

## Clients:

Department of Culture  
Council for Culture

## 3 reasons to research:

- Regarding content:
  - a. international ambitions
  - b. current discussion in the cultural field about the reputation of Dutch arts abroad.
- Monitoring different cultural branches
- Necessity to make policy more measurable: clear goals, indicators and measurable results of policy

# The assignment

1. Quantitative research: How often did Dutch theatre- and dancegroups perform abroad in the last 7 years? Increase or decrease? How many performances took place on prestigious stages of festivals?
2. Quantitative/qualitative research: How did the public, press and programmers appreciate these performances?
3. Qualitative research: How do programmers and co-producers appreciate Dutch theatre and dance in general and what factors play a role in programming Dutch performing arts?

# Results (content) 1

- Decrease of Dutch performances between 2001-2007 after a strong increase until 2003.
- Appreciation by programmers, the press and public of these performances is high, but percentage of programmers that will book the artist a second time lags behind.
- There is a significant difference between the idea of appreciation in The Netherlands and the actual appreciation by programmers (which is very positive).

## Results (content) 2

- Cultural factors and economic factors play a larger role than instrumental and practical factors.
- The distinguishing quality of performances is very important.
- Long lasting personal networks are more important than formal networks.
- Reciprocity in broader sense is important

# Methods

1. Analyzing data from two sources: Theatre Institute of the Netherlands (TIN) and the Foundation International Cultural Activities (SICA): music, theatre and dance
2. Survey through internet: Programmers of the stages where Dutch artists performed: music, theatre and dance
3. 20 interviews with programmers of prestigious stages and festivals abroad and 10 interviews with programmers and theatre and dance groups in the Netherlands: Questions partly open en partly closed.

## Results (methods)

- Two databases of SICA and TIN were merged. Important data that were not always available in each database:
  - a. name of the stage
  - b. number of performances
- The response to the internet survey was very high: 47% (normally response is about 20% or less)
- The interviews gave a deeper insight in appreciation by professionals and significant factors that play a role in programming (Dutch) arts. Appreciation: results of interviews were supported by results of internet survey.
- Next time: first quantitative research, then qualitative research