Future partnerships & Collaboration/ How are we building Community?

Moderator: Dr Gerard M Samuel

№ Moderator's Opening Statement – Panel 2

Welcome to our second panel: "Future Partnerships and Collaboration: How Are We Building Community?"

In this session, we turn our attention to the networks, relationships, and shared visions that sustain dance practice and education. As we navigate increasingly complex social and institutional landscapes, we ask: What does it take to build partnerships that are ethical, inclusive, and future-facing? And how can dance serve as a catalyst for deeper community 0141connection?

We're joined by four speakers whose work spans education, leadership, and cultural practice:

- Alison Hendricks, from Dance For All, brings decades of experience in youth development and outreach through dance, particularly in under-resourced communities.
- Smeetha Maharaj, founder of Nateshwar Dance Academy, offers a perspective rooted in classical Indian dance and intergenerational cultural transmission.
- Dr. Mbongeni Mtshali, Head of Department at UCT's Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies, brings an institutional and academic lens to collaboration and curriculum.
- Aphiwe Mpahleni, from Zonneblom NEST High School, represents the vital role of arts education in schools and the everyday realities of building community with young people.

Together, they'll help us explore how partnerships are formed, sustained, and reimagined and how dance can be a powerful tool for collective transformation.

Let's begin.

!! Alison Hendricks (Dance For All – Youth Development & Outreach)

Question:

Dance For All has long worked at the intersection of access, training, and community upliftment. What have you learned about building sustainable partnerships with schools, funders, and communities — and what challenges continue to arise in that process?

🔯 Smeetha Maharaj (Nateshwar Dance Academy – Classical Indian Dance & Cultural **Continuity**)

Ouestion:

In your work with classical Indian dance, how do you approach collaboration across cultural and generational lines — and what role does community play in preserving and evolving tradition?

Tr. Mbongeni Mtshali (UCT CTDPS – Academic Leadership & Institutional **Collaboration**)

Ouestion:

As Head of Department at CTDPS, how do you envision partnerships between universities, schools, and community organisations shaping the future of dance education — and what institutional shifts are needed to support that vision?

Aphiwe Mpahleni (Zonneblom NEST High School – Arts Education in Schools)

Question:

From your perspective as an educator in a school setting, what kinds of partnerships most benefit learners and how can we better connect formal education with the broader dance community to build lasting impact?

⊗ Closing Statement – Panel 2

Thank you to our panellists for these rich and grounded reflections on collaboration and community.

What we've heard today is that building partnerships in dance is not just about shared projects, it's about shared purpose, mutual respect, and a willingness to listen across difference. Whether in schools, studios, or institutions, community is something we actively create, through trust, care, and sustained engagement.

As we move forward, let's continue to ask: Who are we building with, and how are we showing up for one another?

Thank you all, and now, we'd like to open the floor for your questions, thoughts, or provocations.