



# **2019 CDSS AFFILIATE SURVEY**

## **FINAL REPORT - MARCH 2020**

**Minor updates to Affiliate location findings October 2020**

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# 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE SURVEY & REPORT

## WELCOME!

This is the final report for CDSS's 2019 Affiliate Survey – what we plan to be an annual survey of our Affiliates. The report follows a preliminary summary of survey findings presented in the Fall 2019 CDSS News.

Unlike the reports from the 2016 and 2018 organizer surveys, this report has been written in a *slightly less formal manner and with a bit more interpretation included within the findings*.

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## WHAT IS A CDSS AFFILIATE?

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CDSS Affiliates are autonomous and independent organizations that pay an annual fee to receive information, connection and services through CDSS. Essentially, they are group members.

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## WHY CONDUCT AN AFFILIATE SURVEY?

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We (CDSS) haven't surveyed our Affiliates in over a decade. Thus, the 2019 survey was designed to gain a strong base understanding of our Affiliate community.

The survey goals were to learn:

- More about our Affiliates and the work they are doing.
- What Affiliates like about the services we provide and how we can improve.
- What value Affiliates see in traditional participatory arts and what advocacy work can be done to support our shared traditions.

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## REPORT FORMAT

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This report has five sections:

- **Section 1:** An introduction to the survey and report.
- **Section 2:** A brief summary of the findings. (Note: CDSS Staff have received a more detailed interpretation of the findings in addition to recommendations.)
- **Section 3:** Findings from the questions that focused on learning about CDSS Affiliates.
- **Section 4:** Findings from the questions that focused on examining the relationship between CDSS and our Affiliates.
- **Section 5:** Findings from the questions that focused on the value of traditional dance, music, and song (TDMS) and advocacy work in this area.

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## TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE REPORT

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The following acronyms are used throughout the report:

- TDMS: Traditional dance, music, and song.
- CDSS: Country Dance & Song Society.

In addition, throughout the survey, we have used the terms 'survey participants', 'question respondents', and 'Affiliates' to refer to the individuals who completed the survey.

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## METHODOLOGY

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### SURVEY DESIGN

The survey was developed through consultation with CDSS staff and was tested by a few Affiliate members.

The survey was long - there were 40 questions with some questions requiring multiple responses. However, we wanted to learn a lot about our Affiliates, and we knew from our broader 2016 and 2018 organizer surveys that organizers want to share information about their activities, concerns, and needs. Indeed, 94% of survey participants continued through to the final few questions – a very high retention rate.

### ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey was administered online through Survey Monkey. Our original plan was to have the survey open throughout June 2019. However, near the end of June we heard from a few Affiliates who wanted to complete the survey but needed more time. Therefore, we left the survey open for two more weeks, allowing many more Affiliates to participate (94 Affiliates responded in June and another 46 completed the survey in July).

We asked for only one response to be submitted by each Affiliate. In addition, we suggested to Affiliates that they consult among their organizing team prior to having someone complete the survey, and maybe to even complete the survey as a group (more on that in the findings).

### DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative analysis focused primarily on descriptive statistics.

Questions requiring qualitative analysis were generally coded for emergent themes/patterns in the data, with coding being reviewed across all responses to ensure that emergent themes that arose later in coding were applied to earlier coding. (An attempt was made to capture all ideas including those that didn't fit within main themes.) After all responses were coded for main themes, the data was then re-examined within main themes to identify and code any emerging sub-themes. Illustrative quotes were also flagged during this process. Once coding was complete, the grouped themes were each examined individually in order to draw conclusions and write up findings.

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## SURVEY RESPONSE RATE

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140 Affiliates or 48% of our total Affiliate membership participated in the survey which exceeded our initial response rate goal.

Our team worked extremely hard to engage Affiliates. We sent out a few group email blasts to the Affiliate list and also sent individualized emails directly to each Affiliate contact. In addition, CDSS Board and staff called many (not all) of the Affiliates who hadn't responded by late June.

While we are excited to have heard from almost half of our Affiliates, we recognize that there are still many Affiliates that we know little about – for instance, we don't know how/if they interact with our communications and what services they want and need.

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## STUDY LIMITATIONS

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There are a number of study limitations to consider when reading this report. In each case we gained valuable experience and understanding which will inform future surveys.

### LACK OF PARTICIPATION FROM 52% OF AFFILIATES

We didn't hear from 153 of our 293 Affiliates. While we were thrilled with the higher than expected response rate, we would like to know more about our other Affiliates and have their voices included in these types of community studies in the future.

### TARGETED ANALYSIS FOR PARTICULAR INTEREST GROUPS IS DIFFICULT/INCOMPLETE

We didn't have the time to look at the qualitative findings through various lenses (e.g., morris teams vs contra dances) before writing this report. However, we did gain an understanding of the varied needs of different groups through responses to certain questions and as needed, staff can go back to look at specific groups in the future.

## QUESTION DESIGN

A handful of survey questions were poorly designed, resulting in poor data for us to work with. These are highlighted in the individual question findings within Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the report.

## HAVING ONE INDIVIDUAL REPRESENT AN AFFILIATE

We invited Affiliates to consult among their committee prior to having someone in their group complete the survey. However, in most cases, it seemed that an individual was assigned to complete the survey on behalf of the Affiliate.

This is an extremely common approach to having groups respond to a survey and indeed, it is hard to engage groups as a whole. However, it does mean that when looking at questions involving perception (e.g., what is your group's biggest challenge), we are hearing from one organizer's perception rather than the group's consensus. There isn't much that we can do about this but it's important to keep in mind when looking through the findings of the report.

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## STAFF REPORT

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CDSS staff received a more detailed summary of findings with further interpretation and recommendations. That summary and this report are being used to inform decisions regarding both our support for Affiliates and our wider community resources program.

## 2: A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This section of the report provides a summary of many key findings from the 2019 Affiliate survey. Explore sections 3-5 of this report to dive into further detail about these findings and to learn about other findings not summarized in Section 2.

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### LEARNING ABOUT OUR AFFILIATES

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#### WHERE AFFILIATES ARE LOCATED

We compared the number of CDSS Affiliates to total population size for both US states and Canadian provinces. When grouped by region, there were some striking differences. For instance, in looking at the US and Canada as a whole, Canada accounts for 10% of the total population while 4% of Affiliates are Canadian.

#### GROUP STATUS

While half of Affiliates who responded to the survey are incorporated through CDSS's 501(c)3 exemption, many fall into other categories. For instance, 1/5 of respondents identified as a volunteer group/individual that is NOT officially incorporated.

#### TRADITIONS ORGANIZED BY OUR AFFILIATES

The most common form of activity organized by CDSS Affiliates are the social dance traditions. 91% Affiliates who participated in the survey organize some form of traditional social dance, 18% organize song events (participatory and/or concerts), and 11% organize ritual dance. 59% of Affiliates who participated in the survey focus solely on social dance (e.g., contra; squares); 5% focus solely on ritual dance; 2% focus solely on song; 1% focus solely on music jams; 1% focus solely on other types of traditions; and 32% organize two or more of the categories above.

#### THE WELL-BEING OF OUR AFFILIATES

We asked three direct questions to gauge how Affiliates view the health of their organization. While the majority of Affiliates reported that they are thriving or are stable, many Affiliates are struggling. For instance, 31% of respondents identified that their organization is struggling some or a lot—more than we would hope. Roughly 41% of respondents noted that their series (i.e., recurring events) is struggling some or a lot. Interestingly, only 20% of respondents felt that their special events are struggling.

#### BIG PICTURE ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING

56% of Affiliates who participated in the survey have a mission or vision statement, 66% create an annual plan, and 15% have a multi-year strategic plan.

#### DATA COLLECTION

We asked Affiliates about the data that they collect. 70% of respondents track the total number of participants at their events and 26% track the number of first-time participants. However, 24% do not collect any data and very few collect data beyond total number and first-time participants.

#### OUR AFFILIATES' STRENGTHS

Overall, our Affiliates feel most confident in their welcoming and inclusive community in addition to their ability to identify and attract talent.

#### CHALLENGES FACED BY OUR AFFILIATES

It was not surprising that the most common challenge currently facing Affiliates is around attendance – our Affiliates want more new participants, want to retain them and want to continue to engage their regular participants. Other common challenges our Affiliates face include recruiting organizers and volunteers as well as various challenges regarding finances, talent, and venues.

#### ROLE TERMINOLOGY IN TRADITIONAL SOCIAL DANCE

Approximately 1/3 of social dance organizers who participated in the survey noted that their group is either regularly using or are experimenting with gender-neutral terms for dancer roles. The most common gender-neutral terminology reported at the time of the survey was Larks and Ravens.

#### INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT IN PROGRAMMING FOR SCHOOL-AGED PARTICIPANTS

We asked three questions to gain a sense of both the current activities and future interest in providing programming for school-aged participants (i.e., kindergarten-university/college). Unfortunately, the wording of these particular questions didn't provide as helpful responses as we may have hoped. However, there was still much insight to be gained. For instance, 1/4 of our Affiliates are not interested in offering programming for school-aged participants while the other Affiliates are either currently offering programming open to school-aged participants or they are interested in doing so.

#### SOURCES OF FUNDING

The vast majority of Affiliates receive funds from door entry fees. However, many other sources of revenue are also being used by Affiliates. For instance, 39% of Affiliates have annual membership fees, 25% use their special events to generate funds for their organization, 24% have individuals who sponsor events, 21% hold fundraising events, and 16% hold an annual appeal for donations.

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### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CDSS AND OUR AFFILIATES

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#### AFFILIATES' PERCEPTION OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH CDSS

We were heartened by Affiliates' positive perception of their relationship with CDSS. On a five-point scale, 85% of survey respondents reported very positive or positive feelings about their Affiliate's relationship with CDSS, while the other 15% were neutral (i.e., no negative or very negative feelings among respondents).

### WHY ARE GROUPS AFFILIATE MEMBERS?

While group liability insurance and non-profit tax exemption are common reasons for groups to become Affiliate members, we were pleasantly surprised about how many Affiliates identified other reasons for joining CDSS. For instance, 20% of Affiliates cited that they became group members to be connected to the wider traditional dance music and song community - respondents could only select one reason so that's impressive! In a follow-up question (with multiple responses allowed), 60% of Affiliates see that broader connection as a reason to remain a member.

### CDSS NEEDS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

Survey results indicate that our communication with Affiliates is not nearly as effective as it could be. While our 1:1 contact seems effective (e.g., very positive feedback on phone calls and direct emails), our outreach efforts via mail, email blasts, and social media are not reaching as many Affiliates as we would like. For instance, 28% of respondents were unaware of our Affiliate Handbook and a further 24% had never used it. Also, 16% of respondents were unaware of Shop Talk eblasts and a further 22% had never used it.

### FAVORITE CDSS SERVICES

The services that Affiliates find most valuable include CDSS promotion of local Affiliates (e.g., advertisements in the CDSS News; CDSS map, event calendar, and Affiliate directory), non-profit tax exemption, insurance, matching scholarships for camp, and advice for organizers (e.g., access to online resources; one-on-one advice).

### HOW CDSS CAN IMPROVE THE SERVICES OFFERED

When asked about how we could improve the services that we offer Affiliates, the most common suggestion focused on communication (e.g., Affiliates not being aware of various CDSS resources). When asked for suggestions regarding additional services/supports/ resources that CDSS could offer, the most common response was for more 'how-to' advice for organizers.

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## THE VALUE OF TDMS AND ADVOCACY WORK

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### THE VALUE OF TRADITIONAL DANCE, MUSIC AND SONG

Affiliates identified a wide range of ways in which TDMS has a positive impact on both individuals and the wider society. These included:

- Providing a source of fun and joy.
- Supporting physical, cognitive, and emotional health.
- Providing unique social opportunities.
- A source of long-term and significant relationships.
- A source of community support to be counted on.
- A way to connect to history and heritage.
- Supporting the development of a wide set of skills.
- Shaping personal identity, outlook, and other transformational impacts.
- Other benefits to individuals.
- Societal impacts relating to the items above.

### AFFILIATE CAPACITY FOR ENGAGING IN NATIONAL ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

CDSS is in the early stages of identifying Affiliates who want to work collaboratively on issues of shared interest to our network. Because part of that work will involve advocacy, we wanted to get a sense of Affiliate experience and interest in advocacy work. Few Affiliates seem to have prior experience in local advocacy work or through CDSS's call to action regarding U.S. federal arts funding.



### 3: QUESTION FINDINGS – LEARNING ABOUT OUR AFFILIATES

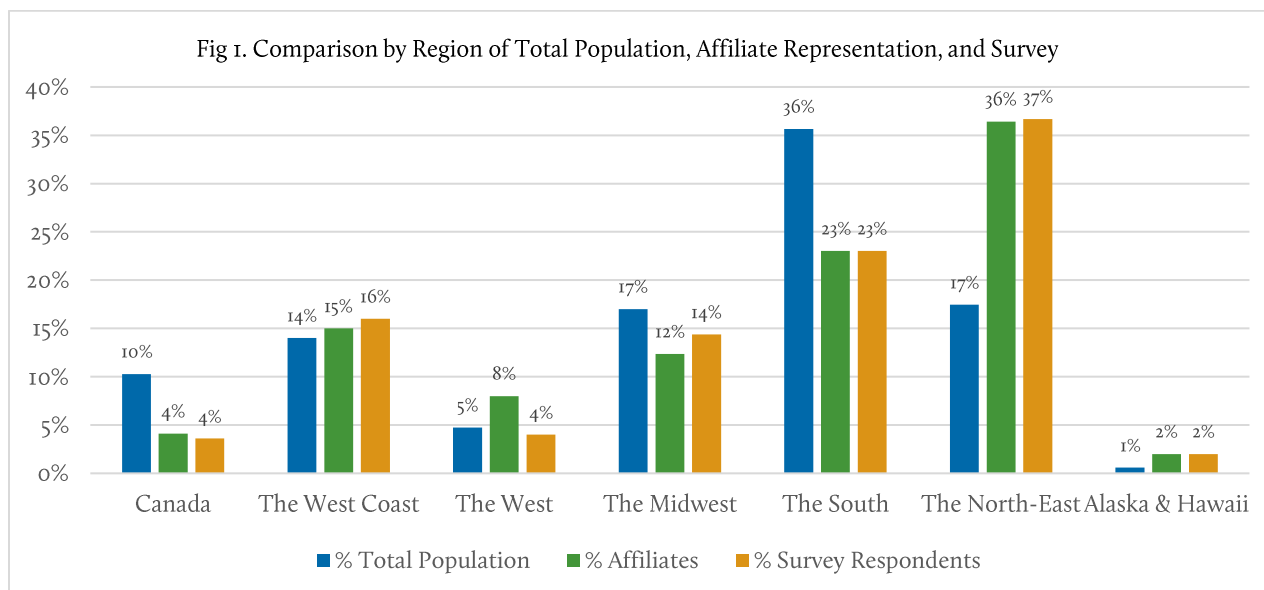
#### Q1&2: WHERE OUR AFFILIATES ARE LOCATED

The first two questions asked for some very basic information regarding both the survey respondent and Affiliate. All 140 survey respondents provided their first and last name as well as their email address. In addition, all 140 provided the name of their group/organization and 136 respondents provided a link to the group's website.

Survey participants were also asked to identify the city/town and state/province/territory in which their organization is located. All but one provided this information, with the one respondent noting that their group functions across multiple states.

In order to get a sense of the representative nature of our sample, we looked at the total population for each geographical region in comparison with the number of Affiliates and survey participants (Figure 1). In some instances, the Affiliates by region is strikingly different from the total population (e.g., when looking at the US and Canada as a whole, Canada accounts for 10% of the total population while 4% of Affiliates are Canadian).

The number of survey participants is generally representative of the number of Affiliates by region meaning that the respondent sample is geographically representative of our Affiliate base (e.g., 4% of survey respondents were Canadian and 4% of Affiliates are Canadian).



The regions were divided in the following manner:

- Canada: All of the provinces and territories
- The West Coast: California, Oregon, Washington
- The West: Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico
- The Midwest: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio
- The South: Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia
- The North-East: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania

For reference, Figures 2 & 3 illustrate the number of Affiliates by state/province and the number of respondents.

Fig 2. Number of Affiliates by State/Province/Territory N=291

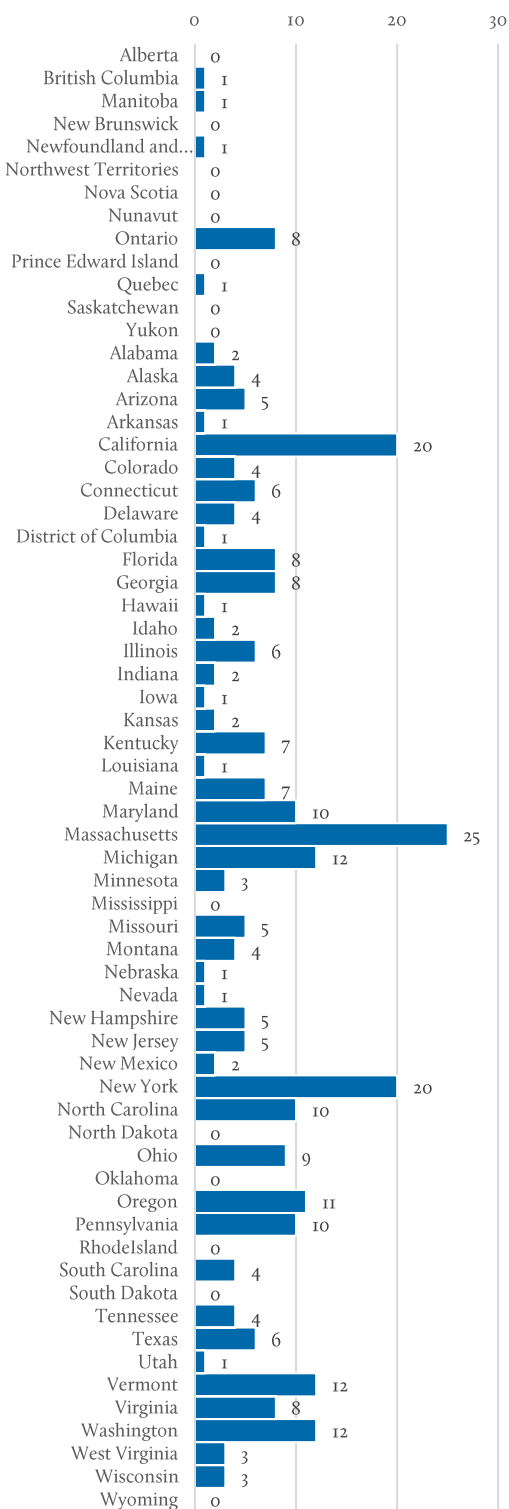
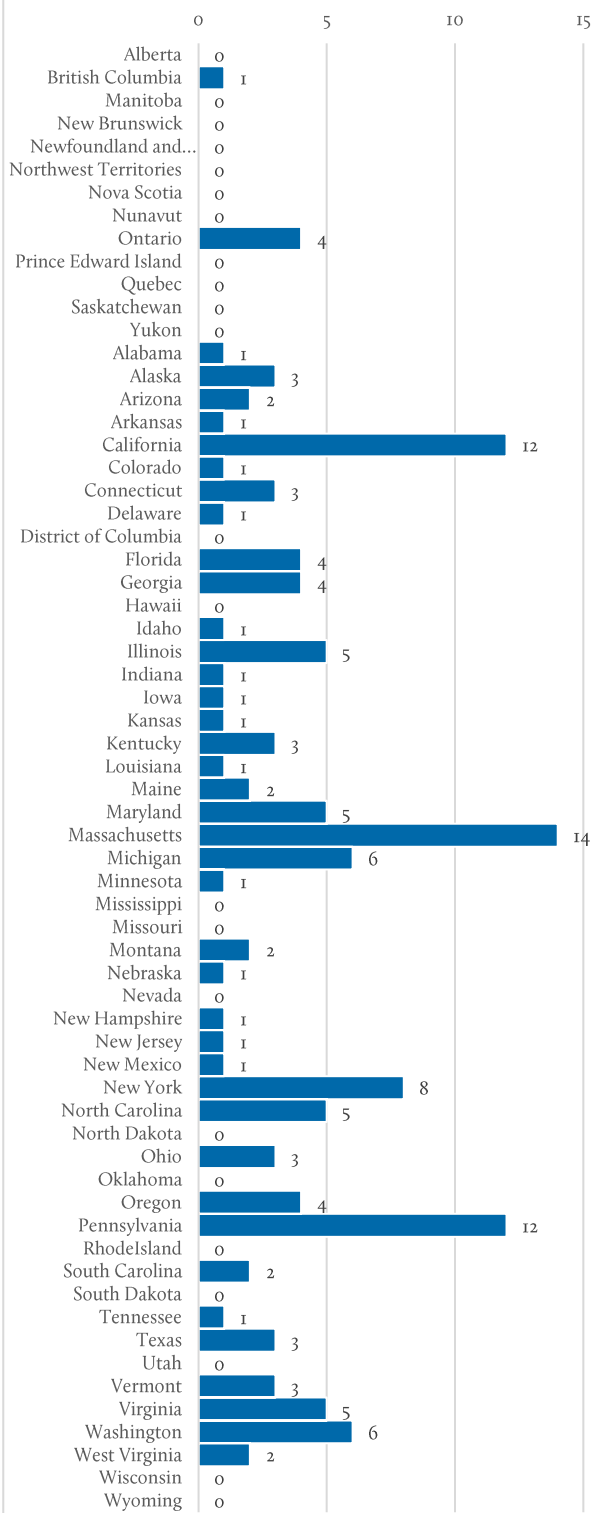


Fig 3. Number of Survey Respondents by State/Province/Territory N=140

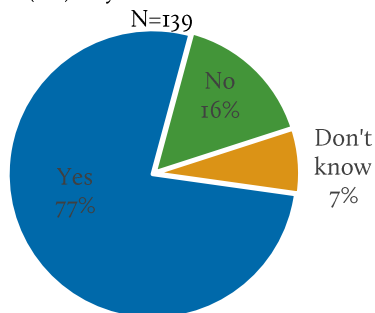




### Q3&4. WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY ON BEHALF OF AFFILIATES

Approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of survey respondents self-identified as being the CDSS Affiliate contact for their organization (Figure 4). This is important to consider when examining some of the other findings from the survey (e.g., engagement in our communication tools) as our current approach to having one contact per Affiliate results in that individual being the gatekeeper in getting messages through to other members of the local organization.

Fig 4. Are you designated as the CDSS contact for your organization (i.e., do you receive the Affiliate emails)?

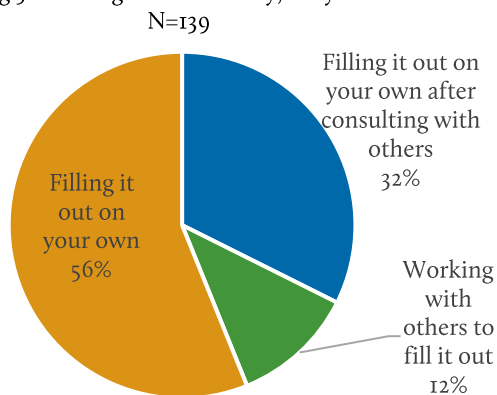


When we asked Affiliates to complete the survey, we noted that the Affiliate contacts didn't have to be the person to actually fill out the survey. We did this because Affiliate contacts are not necessarily the person on their committee most interested completing surveys.

As part of the promotion of the survey, we asked Affiliate contacts to consider filling out the survey in consultation with other members of their organizing team so that we could gain perspectives from the team rather than one member. However, we also noted that it was ok if they couldn't consult with others as that was a bigger ask in terms of time and energy.

Over half of the survey respondents filled out the survey on their own without consulting others (Figure 5) while only 4% of respondents organize their events on their own (Q6).

Fig 5. In filling out this survey, are you...



### Q5. GROUP STATUS

Approximately half of Affiliate groups who responded to the survey are incorporated through CDSS's 501(c)3 exemption. However,  $\frac{1}{5}$  are not officially incorporated and another  $\frac{1}{5}$  are incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit through other means. Still other groups fall under other categories including the small number of Canadian Affiliates who tended to be incorporated as non-profit but without charitable status - charitable status a more difficult to maintain in Canada than non-profit status as there is more reporting required.

Table 1: Which best describes your group?	N=139	%
A volunteer group/individual that is NOT officially incorporated		22%
USA - Incorporated state non-profit but NOT 501(c)3 Tax Exempt		6%
USA - 501(c)3 non-profit through the CDSS Group Exemption		47%
USA - 501(c)3 non-profit NOT through CDSS Group Exemption		19%
CANADA - Incorporated non-profit WITHOUT charitable status		2%
CANADA - Incorporated non-profit WITH charitable status		0%
For-profit business whether incorporated or not		1%
Other (please specify)		2%

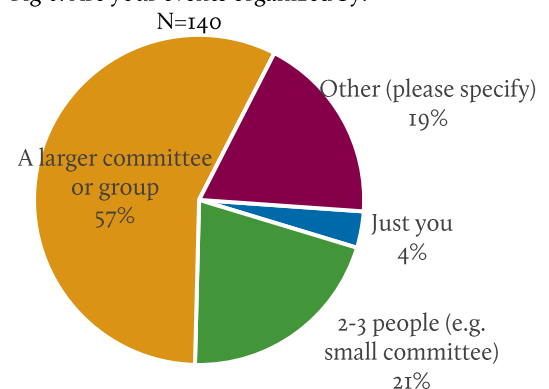
Qualitative responses (N=3)

- Limited Liability Company.
- Michigan State and National Grange.
- Registered with NY State charities board.

### Q6. STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZING TEAM

Almost all of the Affiliates organize their events as a team rather than working on their own (Figure 6).

Fig 6. Are your events organized by:



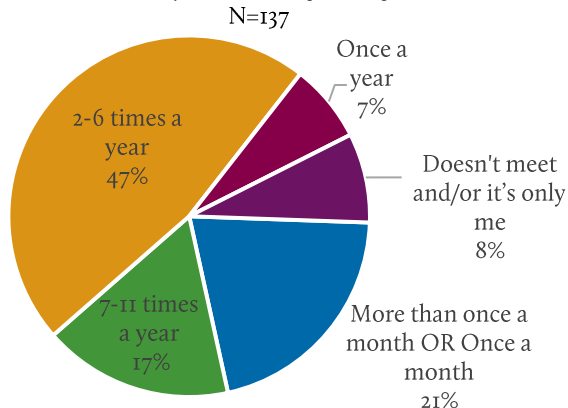
Almost all of the qualitative responses (N=26) described different teamwork models. For instance:

- The Board doesn't run events. Each event has a sub-committee.
- Anyone in the group can organize events.
- Multiple committees for multiple events, with some overlap.
- A few people who then pull in others as needed.

## Q7&8. THE FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

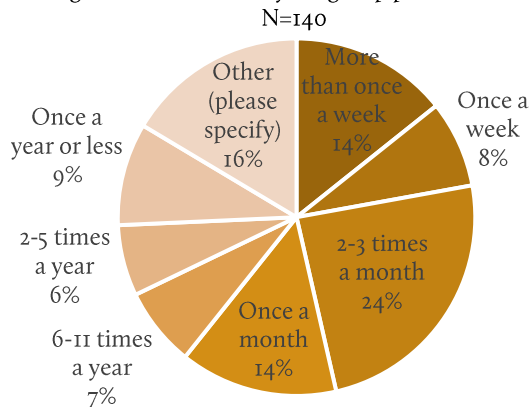
There is a lot of variety in the frequency with which our Affiliates meet to plan their events.

Fig 7. How often does your main organizing committee meet? N=137



As expected, there is also a lot of variety in the frequency of their events (Figure 8).

Fig 8. How often does your group put on events? N=140



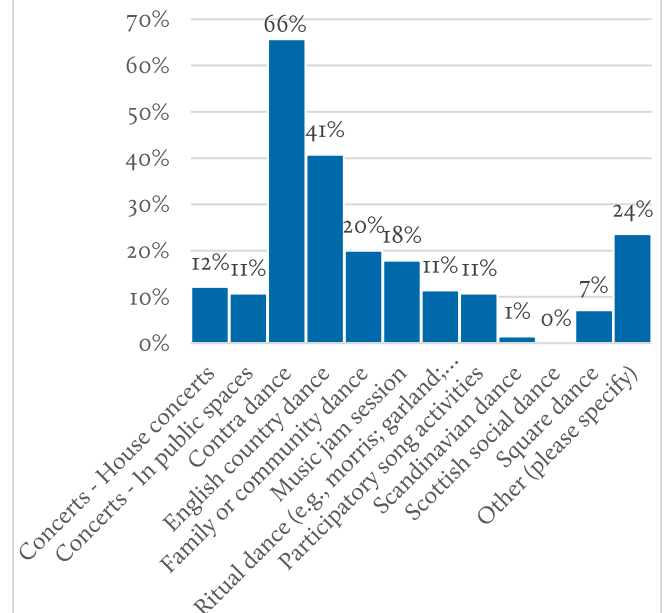
Many participants (N=23 or 16%) selected 'Other (please specify)' for this question. However, their written responses often related closely to the options provided in the survey question (e.g., 35-36 events per year is roughly equivalent to 2-3 events/month). Therefore, in order to gain a better understanding of the relative frequency of events, we coded the 'other' responses into the frequency categories. With this additional analysis, it became clear the majority of our Affiliates are involved in hosting many events throughout the year.

- Roughly 1/4 of Affiliates hold events at least once a week.
- Roughly 3/4 of Affiliates hold events at least once a month.
- Roughly 1/10 of Affiliates hold events once a year.

## Q9&10. THE TYPE OF TDMS ACTIVITIES THAT AFFILIATES ORGANIZE

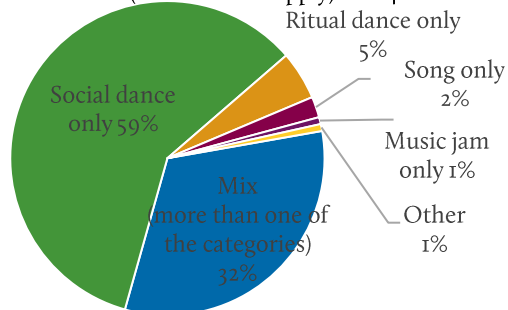
Q9 asked Affiliates what TDMS activities they organize. Respondents were able to select as many of the options as applied to them and were also able to add additional events. Figure 9 provides a detailed breakdown as to the type of events. When grouped together, 91% organize at least one social dance tradition, 18% organize song events (participatory and/or concerts), and 11% organize ritual dance.

Fig 9. What traditional dance, music and/or song activities does your group organize? (select all that apply) N=140



From those same survey responses, we looked at whether Affiliates focus on one particular type of event or whether they organize a range of events (Figure 10). 59% focus solely on social dance; 5% focus solely on ritual dance; 2% focus solely on song; 1% focus solely on music jams and 1% focus solely on other types of traditions. 32% of Affiliates organize two or more of the categories above.

Fig 10. The traditional dance, music and/or song activities Affiliates organized, grouped by broader theme (select all that apply) N=140



36 Affiliates provided written responses to Q9 which included, in part, variations on the events listed in the question (e.g., four Affiliates noted that they incorporate squares into events with other forms of dancing). However, other Affiliates identified traditions that weren't on our original list and that don't necessarily fit in with traditions commonly associated with CDSS. While some of these Affiliates also organized other events within CDSS's traditional wheelhouse, a handful do not.

Table 2: Traditions being organized by CDSS Affiliates	# of respondents
International Folk dance	6
Waltz	4
Crafts/Arts	2
Festival (e.g., folk festival)	2
Round dance (General)	1
Dances from the British Isles	1
Ballroom dance	1
Early and Folk Music Workshop	1
Early American dances (1700-1800s)	1
Historical dance often in costume	1
Open mic performances	1
Play parties	1
Swing	1
Cajun/Zydeco	1
Vintage (vintage contra, quadrilles and turning dances)	1
General social dance	1
Storytelling	1
Various forms of traditional percussive dance (e.g., Appalachian Clogging)	1

### THE TYPES OF SONG ACTIVITIES THAT AFFILIATES ORGANIZE

As a follow-up to the initial question about the types of activities that Affiliates organize, we asked Affiliates to provide a brief description about the type of participatory song activities that they organize. 20 Affiliates provided a response.

Comments varied greatly and were somewhat hard to categorize as the definitions of song activities are not all clearly defined. Affiliates mentioned:

- Pub sings

- Song circles
- Singing parties in homes
- Sing-alongs
- Singing at festivals
- Open mic nights
- Shape Note and Sacred Harp Sings
- Music jam that involves singing
- Organizing/leading singing during a week-long event
- Workshops in different repertoires and techniques
- A song or two incorporated into dance activities.

### THE SQUARE DANCE TRADITIONS THAT AFFILIATES ORGANIZE

As a follow-up to the initial question about the types of activities that Affiliates organize, we asked Affiliates to provide a brief description of the type of square dance they organize. Interestingly, while 10 Affiliates selected "square dance" in Q9 (i.e., what TDMS activities they organize), 38 Affiliates wrote about the type of square dances that they organize in Q10b (i.e., specifics regarding the style of square dance).

20 Affiliates specified the broad definition of "United States" squares. Other traditions that were listed included:

- 2 Modern Western
- 6 Appalachian
- 1 Old time
- 1 Patter
- 1 New England
- 1 Canadian
- 1 Irish
- 1 Quadrille style
- 1 Vintage American (19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> c)

6 Affiliates noted that their group incorporates squares into an evening of other activities, often contra dances.

### THE RITUAL DANCE TRADITIONS THAT AFFILIATES ORGANIZE

As a follow-up to the initial question about the types of activities that Affiliates organize, we asked Affiliates to provide a brief description of the ritual dance tradition they organize. 18 Affiliates provided a response.

Three Affiliates noted that they organize Ales which have a variety of dance styles. The other Affiliates described their traditions as the following (some listing more than one tradition):

- 7 Morris (not specific)
- 3 Cotswold morris
- 2 Border morris
- 1 North-West Clog morris
- 3 Molly
- 1 Garland
- 2 Rapper sword
- 2 Long sword
- 2 Sword (not specific)
- 2 Abbots Bromley
- 1 Appalachian clogging
- 1 Step dance (not specific)

## Q11. ROLE TERMINOLOGY IN TRADITIONAL SOCIAL DANCE

Affiliates were asked if their group uses gender-neutral terms for social dance roles and if so, to identify the terms. Of the options we provided, Larks and Ravens were clearly the most common gender-neutral terms currently being used by Affiliates.

Table3: The use of gender-neutral terms for social dance roles N=54	%	#
Larks & Ravens	19%	10
Rubies & Jets	0%	0
Bands & Bares	0%	0
Leads & Follows	7%	4
Other (please specify)	74%	40

Interestingly, the vast majority of Affiliates who responded to this question chose the 'other' category, noting that the defined categories provided in the question didn't capture the reality for many dance communities. This included 6 Affiliates said that they do not use gender neutral terms. Another 5 Affiliates noted that they use Ladies and Gents all or most of the time. One Affiliate noted that they see these terms as dancer roles which are not gender specific. One additional Affiliate noted that they use the terms Gents and Ladies for historical-based dances events.

11 Affiliates noted that they use Larks and Ravens some of the time. When taken along with the other 10 Affiliates who selected Larks and Ravens as one of the provided options, that results in roughly 1/2 of question respondents using Larks and Ravens (i.e., 21/54). Other terms that groups are using some or all of the time include:

- 2 Leads and Follows
- 2 Left File and Right File (one group for 30 years)
- 1 Moon and Stars
- 1 Lefts and Rights
- 1 Universal language
- 1 Positional calling

A few additional sets of terms that have been experimented with or are used occasionally include:

- Foxes and Rabbits
- Terms relating to themed events (e.g., Fantasy dance with terms like Elves, Fairies, and Goblins).

3 Affiliates said that the caller chooses the terms while another group said that they do not have an organization-wide policy.

While we can't be certain, given that approximately 83 Affiliates organize social dance (coding of Q9) and approximately 30 Affiliates wrote about using or experimenting with gender neutral terms, a substantial percentage of Affiliates are exploring or using gender neutral terms.

Note: The survey data was collected just prior to the recent discussion about cultural issues with the term Raven and the

resulting shift of some communities using the term Robin. It will be interesting to see how the terms continue to evolve.

## Q12,13&16. THE WELL-BEING OF OUR AFFILIATES AND THEIR EVENTS

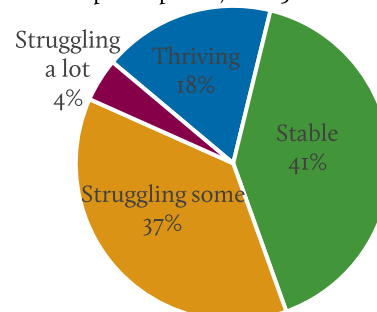
We were interested in finding out about the self-perceived well-being of our Affiliates. As part of that, we asked three sets of questions on regularly occurring events, special events, and organizational health as a whole.

### THE HEALTH OF REGULARLY OCCURRING EVENTS

We asked survey participants to select one of four terms to describe their series (e.g., monthly/weekly event). If Affiliates host more than one series, they were asked to report on the one that has the highest attendance.

Of the 113 Affiliates who answered the question, 2/5 have a stable series, 2/5 are struggling some or a lot, and 1/5 identified their event as thriving (Figure 11).

Fig 11. If you organize a series (e.g., a monthly/weekly event), overall how would you describe the series? (If you have more than one series, please answer this question in reference to the series with the most participants.) N=113



Related, Affiliates were asked an open-ended question regarding the average attendance at their series and what percentage of the crowd was attending for the first time. The written responses were coded, with some interpretation being required.

Affiliates are holding relatively small events (i.e. approximately 80% of question respondents host a series that have as a regular attendance of under 75 participants; approximately 60% under 50 participants).

Table 4: Series/regular events N=104	Rough %
Under 25 participants	17%
25-49 participants	41%
50-74 participants	21%
75-99 participants	9%
100-124 participants	10%
125-149 participants	1%
150+ participants	1%

When asked what percentage of their crowd is attending for the first time, the most common response was 10-15%.

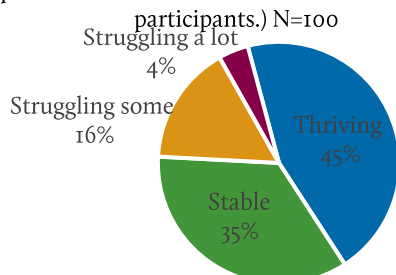
Large numbers don't necessarily equate with a thriving event. For instance, this question includes responses from morris teams who by nature have a relatively small number of participants. We could look at the data through the lens of different types of events to gain a better picture.

### THE HEALTH OF SPECIAL EVENTS

As with Q12, we asked Affiliates to select one of four terms to describe their special event (e.g., ball/festival). If Affiliates host more than one special event, they were asked to report on the one that has the highest attendance.

Of the 100 Affiliates who identified their group as running a special event, 4/5 are either thriving or stable while 1/5 are struggling some or a lot (Figure 12). Overall, special events seem to be much more than series/regular events (Figure 11).

Fig 12. If you organize a special event (e.g., ball; festival), overall how would you describe the special event? (If you have more than one special event, answer the question in reference to the event with the most participants.) N=100



Related, Affiliates were asked an open-ended question about the average attendance at their largest special event. The findings below are interpretations from the written responses.

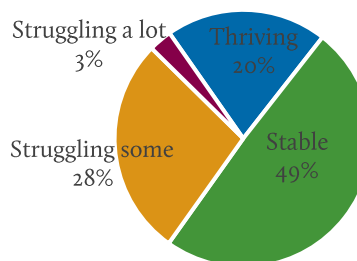
Table 5: Size of regular events N=104	Rough %
Under 50 participants	9%
50-99 participants	22%
100-149 participants	26%
150-199 participants	15%
200-249 participants	13%
250+ participants	15%

### ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

In addition to getting a sense of how Affiliates view the health of their events (Q12&13), we wanted to get a sense of overall organizational health. Therefore, we asked Affiliates to select how they would describe their organization from a set of four words.

Overall half of the survey participants identified their organization as stable. Another 1/5 noted that their group is thriving. 1/3 of survey respondents (N=42) noted their group is struggling either some or a lot.

Fig 13. Overall, how would you describe your organization? N=138



Ideally, it would be wonderful to for almost all Affiliates to be stable, or even thriving. However, we know that there are always challenges associated with organizing with limited time and energy, most (if not all!) of which is volunteer. Even so, it is a worthwhile goal to support Affiliates in moving towards being thriving organizations and groups. As stated later in another question, stable isn't necessarily leading towards a healthy future.

[...] the main story is that while we are "stable" we are aging and unless we are able to attract enthusiastic young people (we are working on some) it is unlikely we will increase our ties to CDSS--however, if CDSS has some ideas for us, WE ARE ALL EARS! Paul Epstein Kanawha Valley FOOTMAD, West Virginia

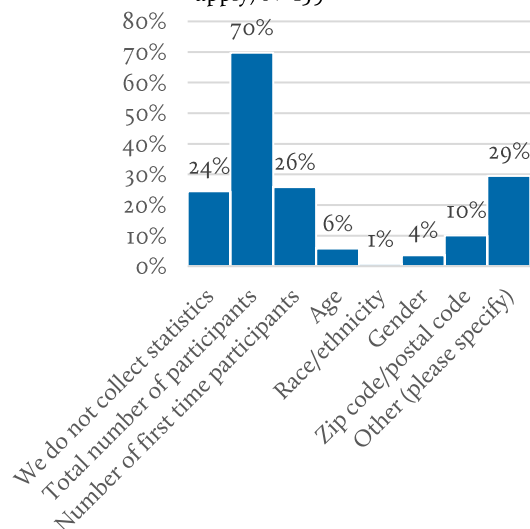
## Q14&15. COLLECTION AND USE OF STATISTICS

We asked Affiliates whether they collect statistics and if so, how they use their data.

### WHAT DATA IS COLLECTED

It is quite common for Affiliates to track the total number of participants (70%) and some track the number of first-time participants (26%) (Figure 14). However, many Affiliates do not collect any data (24%) while small numbers of Affiliates collect information such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, and zip/postal code.

Fig 14. Do you collect attendance statistics at your events? If yes, what type of information? (select all that apply) N=139





In a follow-up question, Affiliates wrote about other forms of data that they collect, some of which overlapped with the options provided in the initial question. Table 6 combines the counts for both the close-ended and coded open-ended responses.

Table 6: Statistics collected	N=139	Rough #
Number of attendees – a few noted that they do a rough count		102
First and/or second time attendees (i.e., new participants)		42
Location – not always zip code, often the city and/or state		18
Age – a number of Affiliates wrote about keeping track age groupings rather than exact age (e.g., deal for those under 30 so track that; number of children)		14
Contact information - mostly email although occasional phone numbers		12
Members vs non-members		6
Gender- often mentioned a rough estimate by looking around the room		5
Student – included a few references for student discounts and even one Affiliate that mentioned tracking college-funded students		4
Where heard about the event/group		3
Comp (complimentary entry)		3
Birthday – collected on membership form		1
Name		1
Time of arrival		1
Race/ethnicity		1

A few Affiliates also mentioned tracking the overall money raised by their events and tracking fundraising efforts.

### HOW DATA IS USED

We followed up by asking how Affiliate use the statistics they collect. 104 survey participants responded.

Many Affiliates wrote about using data to determine overall success, identify trends, and shape future planning.

We use these to help us plan for the following year. Ruth Haring, Washington Regency Society

Comparison to other years. David Hamlin, The Portland Roadhouse

Some Affiliates wrote about using the data to make decisions about marketing (e.g., when to do more marketing; measuring the effectiveness of publicity campaigns; identifying whether new participants are returning). A few Affiliates wrote that they use data to inform their targeted advertising to a younger demographic while a few others wrote that they track where people live so that they can target advertising in those areas.

We use [statistics] to decide how many flyers to send to their home dances. Barb Smith, North Texas Traditional Dance Society

Many Affiliates wrote that they use stats to inform financial considerations. For instance, some noted that they use attendance stats to reconcile the event financials while others wrote about wanting to track financial trends and to make projections and budgets.

Approximately one dozen Affiliates wrote about collecting data for external audiences. This included reporting for insurance purposes, 501(c)(3) paperwork, or because their venue is interested in knowing the number of attendees. Two Affiliates wrote that they use statistics for grant applications.

A handful of Affiliates wrote about the following topics:

- Using data to make programming decisions. This included who they might hire, when to hold special youth dances or when to invite certain groups to particular events.
- Collecting email addresses in order to add them to contact lists. This included a few Affiliates who mentioned that they send welcome messages to new participants.
- Collecting statistics but not necessarily referencing them.

A few individuals mentioned other uses of data such as tracking who is attending so they can follow-up with those who aren't attending to make sure those individuals are ok.

## Q17. ORGANIZATION & COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

We asked Affiliates to identify their organization and/or community's strengths (i.e., what they do well). 136 of the 140 survey respondents provided a written response. The most common strengths, in order of frequency were:

- A welcoming community culture
- Talent and support for talent
- Experience level of the participants
- Organizers and volunteers
- Publicity
- Programming
- Venue/facility
- Committed community
- Youth engagement
- Special events
- Finances
- Community safety
- Refreshments

Other strengths were mentioned by a few Affiliates. These are listed the end of the section.

### A WELCOMING COMMUNITY CULTURE

A full 2/5 of question respondents wrote about community culture. They used terms such as: welcoming, inclusive, friendly, open, supportive, cooperative, and committed. This included a few Affiliates who wrote about being particularly supportive of new participants and/or children & youth.

We always try to provide an open, welcoming, non-discriminatory atmosphere to all new &/or established dancers... Joyce Eyler, Nashville Country Dancers

Welcome people, make them feel at ease, fill them with joy. Darlene Hamilton, The Historical Tea & Dance Society

At all ECRS events, participants experience the power of an intergenerational and cooperative community. We build community through dance, singing, drama, and improvisation, crafting and playing games. We also teach recreation leadership for anyone who wants to develop their leadership skills; classes are led by members and everyone participates at their own level. It's more like a summer camp - but for adults and children of all ages - than a "school for learning". Jack Marquess, Eastern Cooperative Recreation School, Inc.

### TALENT AND/OR SUPPORT FOR TALENT

One-third of question respondents wrote about talent. Most of the comments focused on Affiliates ensuring high quality calling and music. Occasionally, Affiliates mentioned balancing new/up-and-coming/local talent with highly experienced/touring talent. A few others wrote about having great local talent at hand.

[...] We take booking seriously, and balance training up and coming performers with hosting experienced, skilled performers [...] Dela Murphy, Portland Intown Contra Dance

We seek out and present great new and established local and regional talent. [...] Ellie Nowels, Big Scioto Contra Dance

We have a great band with over thirty years of experience playing for all kinds of dance. We have two active and experienced callers who work well together. [...] Linda Lewis Lieberman, Central Iowa Traditional Dance

We hire local callers and musicians (can't afford expensive out-of-towners), and our area is crawling with talent. So they're part of the community. [...] Sharon McKinley, Mid-Maryland Folk Arts Council

Interestingly, while many Affiliates highlighted the high quality of the talent, others used words such as 'good' or that their strength was they 'have talent available.'

A handful of Affiliates wrote that one of their strengths was fostering the development of new callers and/or musicians, while a few other Affiliates wrote about having good correspondence/rapport with talent or paying talent more than most communities.

### EXPERIENCE LEVEL OF THE PARTICIPANTS

One quarter of question respondents wrote that their group's strength (or one of their strengths) was the experience level of their participants. Virtually all of these Affiliates wrote about being welcoming of new participants or welcoming a wide range of skill levels and abilities.

We are welcoming to all skill levels and people. We actively seek the new people to bring them in to the dance. Our gender-neutral calling does not leave anyone out looking for a partner. We value community and inclusiveness highly. Mary McConnell and the Sun Assembly Steering Committee

A few Affiliates wrote about having skilled dancers or that they have 'comparatively high level of dancers.'

### ORGANIZERS, ORGANIZING, AND VOLUNTEERS

One quarter of question respondents (approx. 30) wrote about organizers, organizing and volunteers as one of their strengths. This included a range of comments including:

- Valuing organizers.
- Having a strong and dedicated volunteer base.
- A stable committee that works well together.
- Many young members on the organizing committee.
- Strong information sharing.
- Solid policies.
- All Board members taking on important tasks; good sharing of responsibilities; responsible committee members.
- Having clear volunteer roles and a good system for managing volunteers.
- Well run and respectful meetings.
- Transparent organizational practices shared with other groups.

### PUBLICITY

Approximately one dozen respondents wrote about publicity as being one of their strengths. Many of the comments related to having a good website. Other comments included:

- Being good at publicity generally.
- Strong on online messaging.
- Public thank yous highlighting contributions.
- Strong publicity of talent including pictures and bios.
- Great monthly newsletter.
- One group noted that they have 400K hits/month on their online calendar.

### PROGRAMMING

Separate from the quality of talent (addressed above), approximately one dozen Affiliates wrote about other aspects of programming as one of their strengths. Comments varied widely:

- Beginner lessons being well taught.
- Programming dances that reinforce basics and add new figures/challenges.
- Callers who teach to the needs of the dancers that are present.
- Variety in dances such as chestnuts, triplets, and more.
- Skilled at teaching school-aged participants.
- Scheduling is done well in advance.
- Community feedback is sought including suggestions for callers/musicians.

### VENUE/FACILITY

Approximately one dozen respondents wrote about their venue as being a strength. Affiliates referred to having an excellent dance floor, a charming venue, air conditioning and overhead fans, affordable rent, and generally having a venue that meets their needs.

A few Affiliates wrote that their group provides a fantastic venue for dance events or that their group fundraises for capital improvements and maintenance for their hall.



## COMMITTED COMMUNITY

In addition to committed organizers and volunteers, approximately one dozen respondents wrote about having committed participants. This included references to having a 'true community' or a dedicated group of dancers.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Approximately one dozen respondents wrote about youth engagement. This included:

- Welcoming children.
- Having a wide range of participants including youth.
- Having youth on the organizing committee.
- Particularly attracting youth participants.

There were no comments about hiring or fostering youth talent although there were more general comments about fostering new talent.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Approximately one dozen respondents wrote about special events as their strength. This included weekend dance events, week-long camps, and more. Organizers noted that their events are well-organized, popular, inclusive, have a community feel and include great food.

## FINANCES

Approximately one dozen respondents wrote about finances. These comments included:

- Events being affordable for participants.
- Holding an amazing benefit yard sale.
- Dance camp auction balancing the annual budget.
- A strong bank balance which provides financial stability.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

Half a dozen respondents wrote about their community being safe. Individuals noted that:

- Their committee is responsive to participant concerns and that the committee addresses issues promptly.
- The group has strong policies on safety.
- The committee models positive behaviour and has high-integrity conversations.
- The group is proactive in creating a safe and welcoming community.

## REFRESHMENTS

Half a dozen respondents noted that they offer great refreshments at their events.

## OTHER STRENGTHS

Other strengths mentioned by one or a few of our Affiliates included:

- Great sound quality/system
- Partnerships with other dance communities
- Open to feedback and change
- Bring traditions to their local region
- Consistency in events
- CDSS as a strong source of support
- Education (no details)
- Inclusive
- A long history
- Dance uses non-traditional roles

- Researching and using ideas from other groups
- Socializing outside events
- Various ethnic backgrounds
- Focused on one particular event
- Teach history as part of the activity
- Engage the audience in performance events.

A number of Affiliates also wrote about their events as generally being fun, exciting, and enjoyable

A few Affiliates wrote about not having strengths.

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## Q18. THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING OUR AFFILIATES

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We asked Affiliates to write about the biggest challenge/concern that their organization faces and to tell us why. 137 of the 140 survey participants responded to this question.

The most common challenges, in order of frequency were:

- Issues relating to attendance and/or publicity.
- Challenges relating to organizing and volunteers.
- Various topics relating to finances.
- Various topics relating to talent.
- Various topics relating to venues.

### ISSUES RELATING TO ATTENDANCE AND/OR PUBLICITY

By far, the most common challenges facing our Affiliates relate to attendance. Approximately 70% of question respondents noted various issues around recruitment and attendance.

Many Affiliates wrote about declining attendance or wanting to increase their attendance to meet costs, maintain a vibrant scene, and grow a healthy community for the future. And while Affiliates wrote about wanting to attract new participants, others also wrote about wanting to retain the new participants and convert them into regular participants.

Attendance and bringing in new people who keep coming back.  
Jessica Atkinson, Tummas Dance Group

A handful of organizers also wrote about the challenge of retaining the interest and attendance from their regular dancers. A few Affiliates noted that they may not have strong consistent talent or that people's lives are so busy that they don't have time to participate on a consistent basis.

Many Affiliates wrote about their community aging out and that many members are longer able to attend regularly.

Twenty years ago there were many Baby Boomers and older contra dancing people attending our dances. Most of those people can't contra anymore, don't drive at night (our dances are from 7 to 10), have moved away, or have died. [...] Bruce Hardwick Folk Happens!

Related, many Affiliates are interested in engaging a stable younger audience but find this difficult to do. A few noted that it's harder to get younger participants to commit to an ongoing event, that there's a lot of turnover in college students, that it's hard to retain new youth if there aren't a core of younger participants at the event, and that it's difficult to even reach a younger audience in the first place (e.g., hard to promote to college students).

Attracting and maintaining teenage and college students that will continue to attend as they mature. Under 12 are free and students are only \$5. Sherry McLain, Harrisburg Area Contra Dance Association

[...] Attracting younger dancers, return and retention of new dancers. Austin has a lot of other music and dance activities that may appeal to the young. Pamela Weems, Traditional Austin Area Dance Association

Also related to increasing attendance, approximately 20 Affiliates reported that one of their biggest challenges is executing effective promotion. Affiliates wrote that they don't have effective marketing or enough energy to promote their events, and that they don't necessarily know how to reach the audiences that they want to target.

Publicity. We try to advertise in local papers, libraries. Word of mouth works the best. Mary Shleifman, Ottawa English Country Dance Club

Finally, a few other Affiliates provided further insight into why they may be experiencing attendance issues.

Attendance numbers are decreasing because we don't have a steady venue and date for our second weekend dance (the other dance each month is stable), and maybe because we need more targeted outreach, consistently better music and calling, a greater presence in the community, higher numbers so newcomers see an active scene, better retention of dance audience. Linda Nieman, Phoenix Traditional Music & Dance, Inc.

Getting enough dancers together to practice and to perform. (Why? Currently many of our members have other priorities, and due to our current small numbers, if two dancers have injuries/illness/conflicts, we will need to cancel a practice or not book a performance.) Carl Friedman, Charm City Rapper

## **CHALLENGES RELATING TO ORGANIZING AND VOLUNTEERS**

One quarter of question respondents wrote about not having enough committed and/or skilled organizers and volunteers. Often the concerns related to organizers have too much to do, not having enough support, or that organizers aren't interested/have busy lives which makes it hard to accomplish everything that the group might want to do.

Affiliates wrote about finding it hard to attract strong leadership. Some Affiliates pointed out that as their leadership team ages, it's particularly hard to engage younger volunteers.

Aging dance community, attendance has been declining, unwillingness of most dancers to take on volunteer roles (volunteer roles = all of them), lack of younger blood on our committee. Robert Lindauer, Hartford Community Dance

A handful of Affiliates wrote about finding it hard to attract volunteers to help at the actual events.

One Affiliate pointed out that perhaps they have fewer young participants because their core volunteers/organizers are all in their seventies.

## **VARIOUS TOPICS RELATING TO FINANCES**

Approximately 15 Affiliates wrote about challenges relating to finance. These included:

- Loosing money due to low attendance.
- The admission fee not covering costs and therefore relying on donations.
- Wanting to pay the talent more.
- Keeping events affordable.
- Rising venue costs or concerns about the financial stability of the venue.
- Rising costs of everything from catering to flights and visas.

## **VARIOUS TOPICS RELATING TO TALENT**

Approximately 15 Affiliates wrote about challenges relating to talent. These included:

- Not being able to pay as much for talent as would like.
- Not enough, or consistently great talent to keep the interest of dancers.
- Talent doesn't always feel valued.
- The cost of out-of-town talent (e.g., travel).
- Finding talent that will play for an all-night event.
- Training new callers.
- Poor quality of talent.

## **TOPICS RELATING TO VENUES**

Approximately 15 Affiliates wrote about challenges relating to venues. These included:

- Hard to gain access to college venues.
- The rising costs of venues.
- Finding appropriate venues (e.g., lack of ambiance; not near public transportation; storage for equipment).
- Not having a steady venue.
- Long-term stability of the rented site.
- Demands relating to maintaining the facility including both costs and volunteer labour.

## **OTHER CHALLENGES FACED BY OUR AFFILIATES**

Other challenges mentioned by one or a few of our Affiliates included:

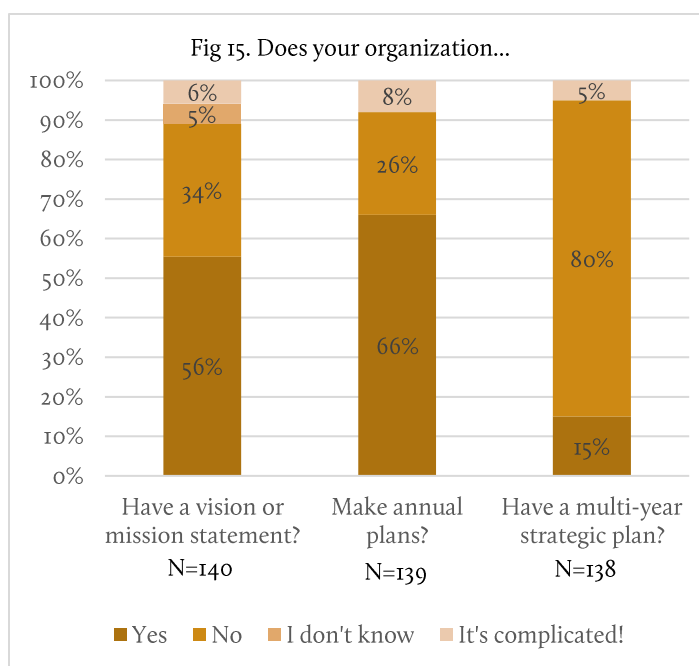
- Competition, either with similar events or with other local events.
- Maintaining an inclusive, warm, and welcoming community culture.
- Maintaining programming that satisfies both new and experienced participants.
- Keeping the (morris) team organized.
- Balancing paid gigs with those that are more enjoyable but that don't pay.
- Dealing with an insurance claim from an injured dancer.
- Not having a steady schedule.
- Whether, or how, to use gender-neutral calling terms.
- Managing community safety concerns.
- Developing a photography policy that satisfies everyone.
- Social changes in the sacred harp community.

- Transitioning from a sole proprietor to non-profit.
- Ongoing challenges that come from being involved with a non-profit run by volunteers (e.g., organizers moving).
- The growing schism between progressive and conservative contra dancers that results in unhealthy cultural dynamics and which threatens the growth of the tradition.

## Q19. BIG PICTURE ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING

We asked Affiliates three questions to get a sense of their experience in bigger picture organizational planning.

Slightly more than half (56%) of Affiliates have a mission or vision statement and while the majority (66%) create an annual plan, very few (15%) create a multi-year strategic plan.



## Q20. COLLABORATION AND CROSS-PROMOTION

We asked Affiliates if their group collaborates or cross-promotes with other local organizations, and if yes to provide a brief description about the relationship(s). 131/140 survey participants responded to this question.

Of those who responded, approximately 25 said that either they do not collaborate or cross-promote with other groups. A few noted that they had tried but it hadn't worked, that they would like to collaborate, or that they have plans in the works. One Affiliate asked for help in this regard.

### CROSS-PROMOTION WITH OTHER DANCE, MUSIC, AND/OR SONG GROUPS

Almost half the question respondents wrote about cross-promoting their events with local or regional dance, music, and/or song communities. This included many references to sharing flyers, making announcements at dances, and sharing information on each others' websites, Facebook pages/groups, and email lists.

Yes, [we promote] other music and dance events by sharing flyers, word of mouth and sharing on Facebook or promotional emails. Joanie Blanton, Upper Potomac Music Weekends

A few Affiliates wrote about other cross-promotion activities:

- Having events featured in local newspapers, a local arts calendar, or through the venue.
- Inviting other dance instructors and having them make announcements.
- Morris teams dancing at other TDMS events to promote their group.
- Sharing promotional tasks with other groups (e.g., working with other morris teams to promote events).

### COLLABORATION AROUND PROGRAMMING

One quarter of question respondents wrote that they collaborate with other TDMS groups regarding programming.

A number of the organizers wrote that they consult with other regional groups prior to booking events so as to avoid conflict.

Yes. We all make sure to avoid fate conflicts and to promote each other's dances on respective web sites, announcements at dances, etc. Jon Greene, Lenox Contra Dance

Some Affiliates wrote about co-producing or co-sponsoring events with other groups. This included workshops, weekends, ales, or other events such as the Cascade Promenade – a multi-date and multi-location event.

[...] We collaborate with the Berea group to put on a joint-venture dance weekend once a year where the Fri. night dance is held in Lexington and workshops and the Sat. night dance are held in Berea. [...] Barbara Ramlow, Lexington Traditional Dance

The third way in which Affiliates collaborate with other TDMS groups is through coordinating the booking of touring talent.

[We] co-operate to help bands and callers organize tours in our area. Bob Thompson, Old Famers Ball

One group said that they share the actual booker while another group said they would like to share booking but that their group's dates don't align with other regional dances.

### PARTNERING WITH NON-TDMS ORGANIZATIONS ON EVENTS

Some Affiliates wrote about working with other organizations to host events. These included:

- Sponsoring/hosting/planning/performing dance at folk festivals.

- Hosting an annual English Country Dance with a local library as part of a Jane Austin Event; helping a college prep their students for an English Ball associated with a Jane Austen program.
- Working with a local health organization to promote healthy living.
- Working with local arts organizations (e.g., art councils; dancing in the streets).
- Leading 'pioneer' dancing for school-aged children at a museum.
- Partnership with the local farmers market.
- Being paid to organize a dance as part of local events or for local groups (e.g., church group).

### OTHER COLLABORATIONS

One or a few Affiliates mentioned other forms of collaboration. These included:

- Cross over in participants.
- Act as a channel for tax-deductible contributions.
- Facilitating group conversations.
- Sharing equipment and/or facilities.
- Sharing literature, materials, best practices and organizer information.
- Collaborating with schools on K-12 programming.
- Partnering with other TDMS groups to have meet-and-greets for area dances.
- Informally promoting local callers and bands in the area to potential clients.
- Collaborating between the local facility (e.g., grange) and various dance communities on use, promotion, etc.
- Organizing regional organizer retreats.

The following collaboration particularly stood out as one way that organizers can work with each other directly to provide valuable support.

[...] We've organized and run two regional weekend retreats in 2017 and 2018 in Atlanta with food and housing costs covered for attendees. Those pulled in dance organizers from Memphis, Charleston, Charlotte, Roanoke, DC, Baltimore, Charlottesville, Blacksburg, Atlanta. We are supporting Berea's running this year's version of that regional weekend retreat which is occurring next weekend (I'm covering food costs, my wife and Doug from Memphis will cook meals, etc.). Heitzso, Atgaga Incorporated

## Q21-23. INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT IN PROGRAMMING FOR SCHOOL-AGED PARTICIPANTS

We asked a number of questions to gain a sense of both the current activities and interest in providing programming for school-aged participants (i.e., kindergarten-university/college).

### GAUGING INTEREST IN PROGRAMMING FOR SCHOOL-AGED PARTICIPANTS

The first question asked whether Affiliates were interested in offering programming for school-aged participants (both K-12 and college/university). In hindsight, this particular survey question wasn't clear enough as 35% chose the 'other' option with many of those individuals pointing out that their regular events are open to families and students but that they aren't targeting promotion to attract those communities. However, despite this, and taking into the 'other' responses, we can determine that approximately ¼ of our Affiliates aren't interested in offering programming for school-aged participants while the majority of the others are either currently offering programming open to school-aged participants or they are interested in doing so (see Figure 16).

Fig 16. Is your organization interested in offering programming for school-aged children (Kindergarten - Grade 12) and/or college students? (e.g., events where families are encouraged to attend; working with schools) N=139



48 Affiliates provided written responses to the 'other – please specify'. As mentioned above, many noted that their programming is open to all ages, but they aren't actively promoting their events to school-aged participants.

Approximately 20 Affiliates noted that they either offered programming for school-aged participants in the past but aren't now, tried and it didn't work, or would like to but don't know how or don't have the volunteer capacity.

A handful of participants noted that they visit schools or colleges to provide workshops, with almost all noting that they do so when they are approached by the school.

### ACTIVITIES THAT INCLUDE SCHOOL-AGED PARTICIPANTS

Affiliates were asked two questions about the programming that they offer for school-aged participants.



As with Q21, Q22 and Q23 weren't as effective as we would have liked. For instance, there was overlap between the two questions. In addition, Q22 asked participants to answer 'if they organize for school-age participants' and then the first option in the question was that they 'do not include school-aged participants.' 29 Affiliates didn't answer this question which begs the question – do they not organize events with school-aged participants or did they simply skip the question for other reasons?

In order to gain a better sense of how our Affiliates engage with school-aged participants, we looked at Q22 and Q23 responses together. Table 7 lists the number of Affiliates organizing various activities

Table 7: If any of your activities include school-aged children and/or college students, please identify the type of events. (select all that apply)	#
Our events do not include school-aged children and/or college students	13
Host family dances	19
Host community dances	32
Host a dance series (e.g., contra; square dance) that attracts school-aged children and/or college students	55
Work with elementary schools (e.g., school residencies; supporting teachers)	5
Work with secondary schools (e.g., school residencies; supporting teachers)	8
Work with colleges and/or universities	11
Offer programming in libraries	6
Work with home school families	10
Other (please specify)	48

Looking further into this data, 40 Affiliates identified as organizing family and/or community dances. In addition, 18/111 Affiliates are working with elementary and/or secondary students through schools, libraries (assumption that the vast majority are for elementary/secondary students), and/or homeschooling families.

When considering events that are open to all, 56/111 Affiliates noted that their event includes school-aged participants. For some groups, there clearly was no special recruitment or attention provided to youth but they were included if they attended. In other cases, Affiliates tried to reach out to youth. For instance:

- Free attendance for college students arranged through the college.
- Work with home-school families to include them.
- Offer discounts to children and students, to different levels of success.
- Promotional material states that children ages 8+ are welcome.

Our dances are always family-friendly. Some of our dancers bring their kids. We have developed a contingent of college-aged kids who seem to be getting hooked. So while there is nothing special specifically for this group, our dance is geared towards making them feel welcome and included. Jean Gibson-Gorrindo, Central Coast Country Dance Society

We have a 50% discount entry fee for dancers younger than 26. It doesn't seem to have much of an audience-building effect, but is a nice surprise for youth when they arrive. Linda Nieman, Phoenix Traditional Music & Dance, Inc.

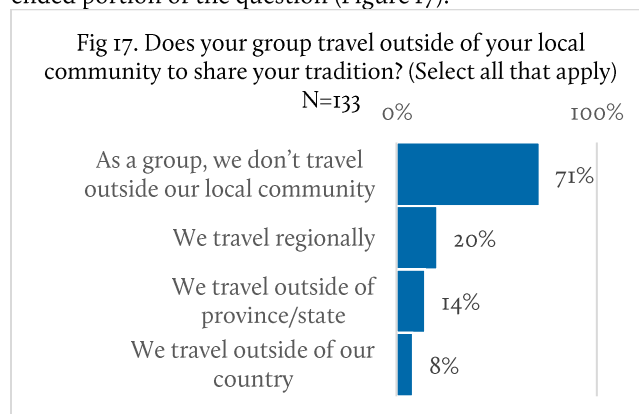
Affiliates identified a number of other ways that they engage with school-age participants. For instance, approximately one dozen wrote about doing one-off dances in schools when asked. Others wrote about doing one-off events for girl scouts, museums, weddings, family zones at festivals, and more.

One or a few Affiliates mentioned each of the following:

- Including students in open bands.
- Including youth team in morris ales.
- Have youth members on all-ages morris teams.
- Organize a family-friendly camp.
- Monthly teen contra.
- Musicians bring their music students and parents to perform.
- Run recreational activities for children.
- Support an after-school fiddle teacher at the school.

## Q24. GROUP TRAVEL

This survey question was added just prior to the survey being launched based upon feedback from a survey tester. The goal was to get a sense of whether Affiliates travel outside their region. However, the question was a little vague as to whether it referred to the whole group travelling or whether it might also include a few members of the group travelling. Therefore, it's hard to derive much meaning from the closed-ended portion of the question (Figure 17).



However, Affiliates were also given the opportunity to provide written comments on this question. These responses provided more clarity.

The most common written response was that while whole groups tend not to travel together (except morris teams!), some members of Affiliate communities travel together informally.

Many of us go to many other communities for weekend events, but not as a formal group. Because we're in Seattle, some of us regularly go to Canada, including Vancouver and Victoria, as well as Portland, OR. Karen Shaw, Seattle English Country dance

Some of our callers and dancers travel to events in British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, California and elsewhere in the U.S. and Canada; also overseas from time to time. Jenny Fraser, Victoria English Country Dance Society

Only one organization relating to social dance noted that they had travelled as a group to dance elsewhere.

We have gone as a group to Victoria BC. Ruth Haring, Washington Regency Society

Approximately one dozen ritual dance teams wrote about either organizing large events or travelling outside of their region for ales/similar events. A few also noted that they participate in regional events like folk festivals.

We annually get together with Orion during the Fall and dance at local farm stands in Massachusetts. Additionally, Half Moon has traveled many times to England and performed at Sidmough, Whitby and Scarborough. Joan Scire, Half Moon Sword

Participants come from all over the Midwest and sometimes beyond, to attend [our] annual event. Meg Dedolph, The Midwest Morris Ale Association

A handful of other groups wrote about having a demonstration team or making demonstrations outside their local community.

We have recently established an ECD "demo team," that performed at a local production of P&P, and will be performing at the NY State Fair. David Smukler, Syracuse Country Dancers

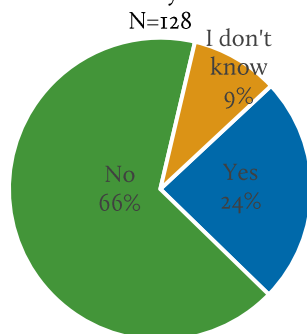
Individual Affiliates wrote about producing events at colleges or in various communities within their region, that their 'local community' extends for 120 miles, that they organize special events at a distance, or that they have a dance theatre that performs internationally.

## Q25. GROUP ORIGINS AND CONNECTIONS

Like Q24, this survey question was added just before the survey went public based upon feedback from one of our survey testers. The goal of this question was to get a sense of whether the activities of our Affiliates participate in were founded/emerged from their local area or were imported (e.g., southern Appalachian squares evolved in one region of the US prior to spreading elsewhere).

Only one quarter of survey respondents noted that their group's activities originated in their geographic region.

Fig 18. Did your tradition historically emerge/was founded in your geographic region? (e.g., contra dance is considered to have initially evolved in New England)



We asked a few follow-up questions relating to how the groups learned their traditions. In many cases, groups were founded by one/a few people who had participated in the tradition elsewhere and then moved to a new region. These individuals brought the traditions with them, founding the local group.

Our group was founded by one of the Dartmouth college students (John Wheeler), who started going to the Nelson dance in the 1960's. He started teaching contra, squares, and English in our town back in 1972. Beverly Seng, Albemarle Chapter, Country Dance and Song Society, Inc.

For others, their founders had travelled to an event and had enjoyed the activity so much that they wanted to bring it back to their home community.

Thus did the conceptual dream emerge from the mind of Ed Stern [...] Ed had been introduced to Morris Dancing in Chicago some years previously when a group of international and English folk dancers organized an ephemeral group to learn dances which had been taught at the Pinewoods Camp. That original Chicago Morris team did not last long, but the thrill of learning a wholly new form of dance, and the interactive energy of six dancers moving and acting in unison made a big impression on our founder. Later, a reunion of the Chicago Morris dancers at the Stockton Folk Dance Camp in California triggered in Ed a minor satori, and he resolved that life would not be complete unless he could recapture that feeling and maintain it with an active Morris team. Arthur Knowles, Minnesota Traditional Morris

[Our contra community] evolved from participating in contra dancing when traveling to Morris Ales in the US and other parts of Ontario. Catherine Burns, Old Sod Folk Music Society of Ottawa

In other instances, Affiliates were launched based upon a more local experience. For instance, a few individuals visited nearby communities and then wanted to bring those activities to their own community while others had participated in local events but wanted something slightly different or more frequent and so founded their own groups.

Our particular group started as a lesbian/gay alternative to the straight contras in the Bay Area. These days we continue to be rooted in the queer community but our monthly dance is no longer advertised as such and attracts a wide variety of dancers. Margaret Pigman, San Francisco Bay Queer Contra Dance

Members of our group were part of another group but the meeting area was not central to people we knew. So we started a more local, centralized group. Jessica Atkinson, Tummas Dance Group

A small handful of groups wrote about their traditions evolving over time (e.g., started as a local southern repertoire and then expanded to include contra dance) or that they created their own tradition. A few others wrote about how their events started as jam sessions and then expanded to include dance.

Approximately 30 respondents wrote that members of their communities have travelled to learn or participate in their tradition. For instance, a number of ritual dance and ECD Affiliates wrote about dancers travelling to England.

Pokingbrook Morris emerged from exposure to visiting teams from England in the early 1970s and evolved through workshops, individual team members' attendance at camp

sessions, visiting teachers, etc. Many members have danced with other ritual teams in different parts of the country, and many have travelled to England and/or Wales to learn and/or perform, though the team has not done so as a group because of money and logistics. Ruth M. Olmsted, Pokingbrook Morris

Many others wrote about members of their communities travelling to various camps and learning opportunities.

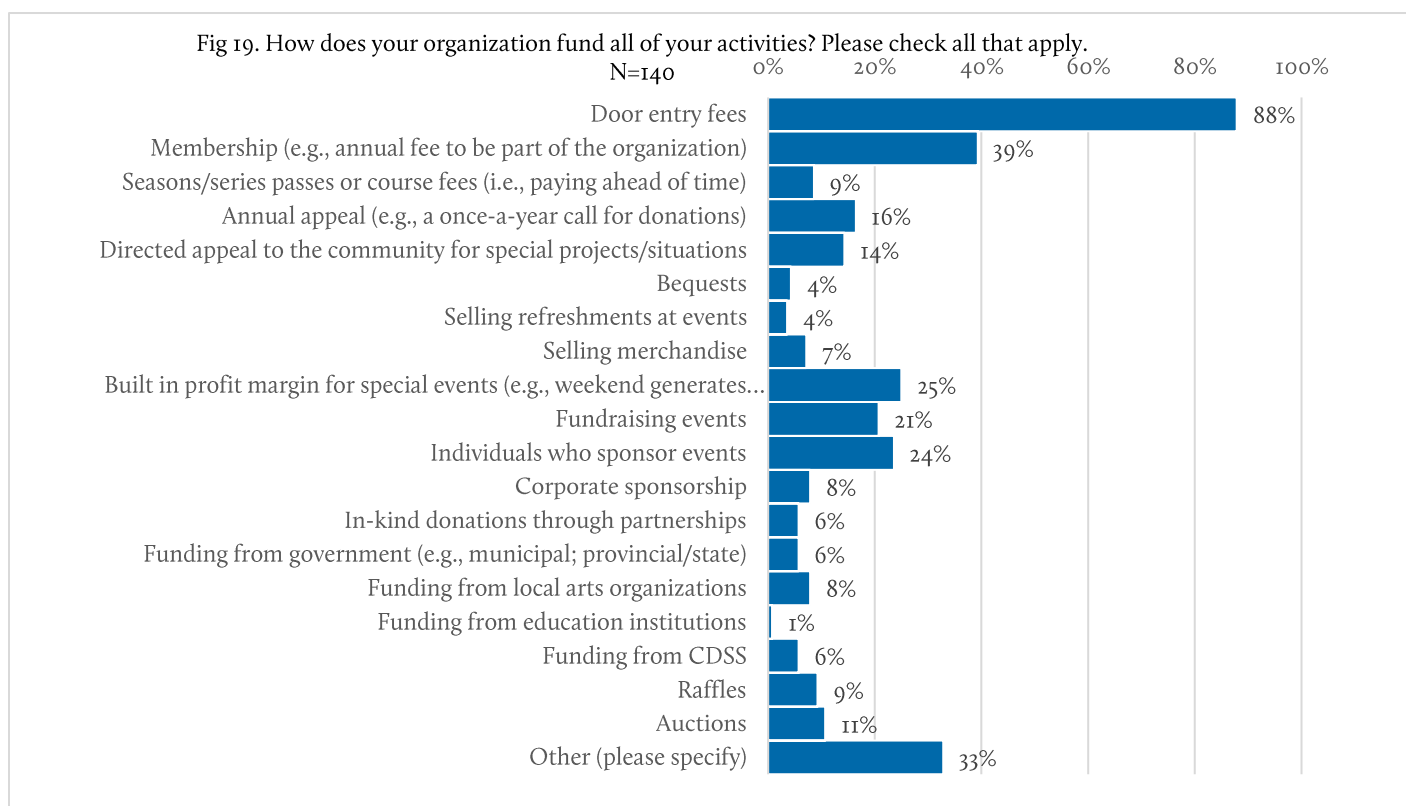
Learned rapper from other rapper dancers; can generally trace the fountain of knowledge to CDSS camps. Some dancers have been to England. Carl Friedman, Charm City Rappers

In 1996 a number of contra dancers decided we wanted to begin an Appalachian clogging group. Many of us have taken workshops in Appalachia and New England. Peggy Leiby, FiddleKicks Clogger

## Q26. SOURCES OF REVENUE USED BY AFFILIATES

Our Affiliates raise funds through a wide variety of sources. Not surprisingly, well over 80% collect fees at the door. However, 84% of those same groups also use at least one other method for generating revenue. 64% of Affiliates who responded to the survey reported having at least three different sources of revenue.

As illustrated in Figure 19, other common sources of revenue include membership fees, built-in profit margins for special events, and individuals sponsoring events. Even strategies that aren't used as commonly (e.g., annual appeals; merchandise), can be extremely effective when implemented well.



46 Affiliates provided written responses regarding other sources of revenue. Approximately 20 of the respondents wrote about donations that were collected in various ways. This included:

- Unsolicited donations.
- Donation jar at the door / asking for donations at the door - it was noted that 'people are generous!'
- Soliciting donations through a monthly newsletter.
- Endowment left to the organization by a participant.
- Donations provided at special events (e.g., balls and weekend workshops).

Approximately one dozen respondents wrote about entry fees to events. Comments included:

- The entry fee being by donation.
- Using a sliding scale.
- Passing the hat.
- The local college funds the students' entry fees.



A handful of Affiliates wrote about receiving money from corporations, government, and/or non-profits. Two respondents noted that individual donations and/or volunteer time are matched by employers. Other individual Affiliates wrote about receiving funds from arts groups, community development organizations, and CDSS. One Affiliate wrote that they wanted to learn how to 'go after corporate and government funding'.

Other sources of funds were mentioned by one, or a few Affiliates:

- Receiving money for performances.
- Charging for hall rental.
- Individual organizers covering the loss.
- Selling food at NEFFA.
- Regular bake sales at dance events.
- Having a festival support the regular dance series.
- Talent donating their time.
- Lowering costs (e.g., moving to a cheaper hall).
- Selling retailer cards/coupons with a percentage coming back to the group.
- Running an auction and raffle - although the Affiliate noted that it wasn't worth the effort so stopped.

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## Q27. WHAT AFFILIATES WOULD DO WITH UNLIMITED TIME AND RESOURCES

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128/140 Affiliates answered the survey question that asked what their organization would like to do if they had unlimited time and resources.

### AFFILIATES WANT TO BROADEN THEIR REACH AND INCREASE ATTENDANCE

Almost half of the question respondents (approximately 60) wrote that they wanted to broaden the reach of their events. This included wanting to reach out to schools/colleges, include other communities, increase attendance generally, and improve promotion.

Approximately three dozen Affiliates noted that they/their group wanted to work with schools, colleagues, and/or school-aged participants. (Note – Almost all of the respondents wrote about engaging students in dance with very few mentions about music and song.)

A handful wrote generally about doing outreach to elementary/secondary schools, colleges or homeschoolers. However, others provided more specific descriptions of how they wanted to engage these communities. For instance, approximately 20 survey respondents wanted to organize dances or classes at schools/colleges.

If it were up to me, I'd start having family dances at the local schools as fun fundraisers, then teach/train people how to hold their own. The skills we teach at a dance are vital to our community health. Barb Smith, North Texas Traditional Dance Society

Offer dance classes for local schools and homeschoolers...Sponsor a thriving dance at every local university. Barb Smith, North Texas Traditional Dance Society

As the following quote illustrates, sometimes the Affiliate organizing team may be interested in this type of engagement, while in other instances, it may be one or two members of the community who are interested in these types of initiatives.

...reach out to schools and Hood College (I have tried, actually, and failed to connect with the right people). I'd love to offer events to school/home-school groups. This is just me talking; the group isn't focused on anything other than our monthly dance and having it continue. Sharon McKinley – Mid-Maryland Folk Arts Council

In addition to organizing actual events at schools or colleges, some question respondents wrote about other ways that they/their organization want to engage school-aged participants:

- Spend more time promoting their current events to college students.
- Provide scholarships for high school students to attend festivals and camps.
- Organize an ongoing family dance.
- Launch a youth contra dance orchestra.
- Build a partnership with the college to provide internship opportunities (e.g., committee work; sound tech).
- Sponsor a scholarship in the college music program.

Approximately one dozen respondents wrote about wanting to reach out to other communities such as:

- Churches
- Community organizations
- Other/more locations
- Low income populations
- Seniors centres
- Members of YMCAs through continuing education
- Women, the TQIA+ community, people of color, and individuals with disabilities
- More diverse communities generally

Approximately one dozen respondents wrote specifically about wanting to increase attendance, grow membership, or recruit more participants.

Approximately two dozen respondents wrote about wanting to improve marketing and publicity. This included creating/improving website, creating a marketing plan and marketing better/more, and organizing outreach/demo events (beyond school outreach).

### AFFILIATES WANT TO HAVE ACCESS TO BETTER FACILITIES

Approximately 40 Affiliates (1/3 of question respondents) wrote about wanting to make changes to the space that they use. This included over 20 Affiliates who wrote about wanting to build or own their own facility. A few Affiliates acknowledged that the idea of owning their own building would be an incredibly big endeavor.

Unlimited, really?? We would build our own dance facility in that case. Peter Turner, Gainesville Oldtime Dance Society

Interestingly, two Affiliates who already own their buildings wrote about the extensive work they want to do to on their facilities.

Make the building fully accessible. Insulate the walls and roof. Install a more efficient heating system and install energy efficient windows. Provide some way to cool the building in the summer. Address the moisture and mold issues in the basement. (Do you really want me to go on? This could take a while!) Christian Wise, Friends of Montague Common Hall

Actually, I don't think that the Grange would like to do much more than it does. If we had unlimited resources, we would bring the building into ADA compliance, and we could hire a manager to run the rentals, pay for mowing in summer, and do the constant maintenance that the building needs. Then we might have the energy to work on more programming. Ruth Scodel, Pittsfield Union Grange

Many of the other Affiliates who wrote about facilities seemed to want to secure a more appropriate rental. This included one Affiliate who suggested finding space within a facility dedicated to similar events.

Have access to a dance hall in a building housing traditional dance and music events/organizations, including a welcoming and appropriately sized hall with a piano, a wood dance floor, separate space for pre-dance beginner workshop and comfortable/welcoming space for admissions. Janet Nardolillo, Capital English Country Dancers

Affiliates wrote about the characteristics they wanted in building, buying or renting a more appropriate facility. These included:

- Having the sense of a space that was permanently secured.
- Many mentions to having a better dance floor, often identified as being a sprung wooden floor.
- Many mentioned being in a better location (e.g., close to places to eat and stay; close to public transportation).
- More parking
- Good acoustics
- Stage
- Bigger space
- Better/commercial kitchen
- Welcoming entrance
- Piano
- Air conditioning
- Natural lighting
- Multiple rooms for dancing, workshops, concerts, meetings, and storage.
- Making the hall accessible (e.g., wheelchair lift).

### **AFFILIATES WANT TO PAY TALENT MORE AND HAVE ACCESS TO HIGHER QUALITY TALENT**

Approximately thirty Affiliates wrote about wanting to either pay the talent more and/or attract higher quality talent. In some instances, Affiliates wanted to pay their talent more period, demonstrating a feeling that their group isn't able to currently provide as much remuneration as they would like to callers and bands.

Approximately twenty of the question respondents wanted to specifically attract higher quality talent. They referred to wanting more out-of-town, travelling, or bigger names for callers and bands. A handful mentioned wanting 'better' bands and/or callers.

### **AFFILIATES WANT TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CALLERS, MUSICIANS, AND SOUND TECHNICIANS**

Two dozen respondents wrote about wanting to support talent development including callers, musicians, and sound technicians. As part of this, Affiliates referred to mentoring programing, workshops, scholarships for camp, and increasing training and support generally. A few Affiliates specifically mentioned supporting young talent and also providing training to experienced talent in addition to emerging talent.

I would like to support young/new callers and musicians.  
Margaret Pigman - San Francisco Bay Queer Contra Dance

### **AFFILIATES WANT TO HOLD MORE FREQUENT EVENTS**

Two dozen Affiliates wrote about wanting to have more frequent events as part of what they already offer. For instance, Affiliates who offer dances once a month want to organize dances every two weeks or even weekly.

Hold dances on a weekly instead of monthly basis... Mady Newfield - Chicagoland English Country Dancers

A few Affiliates mentioned that they had recently reduced the number of events and that they would like to increase back to what they used to have

### **AFFILIATES WANT TO OFFER MORE VARIED PROGRAMMING**

Approximately 20 Affiliates wrote about wanting to offer additional dance and/or song programming that is not currently part of their programming.

Examples include:

- Wanting to start an ECD series.
- Offering advanced dances or weekly advanced classes.
- Organizing workshops to improve dancer skills.
- Sponsoring a morris or long-sword team (group currently organizes ECD).
- Organize techno contras.

### **SPECIAL DAY-LONG EVENTS, WEEKENDS, AND WEEKS**

Approximately one dozen Affiliates wrote about wanting to organize weekends, balls, or other special day-long events. Three Affiliates expressed interest in organizing week-long events, one mentioning the idea of creating a camp in western Canada.

### **AFFILIATES WANT TO MAKE THEIR EVENTS FINANCIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO PARTICIPANTS**

Approximately one dozen Affiliates wrote about wanting to make events more financially accessible. This included:

- 3 Affiliates wanting to offer free dances.

- 1 Affiliate wanting to offer a free festival.
- 1 Affiliate wanting to offer free programming to schools.
- 2 Affiliates wanting to lower fees for dances and classes.
- 5 Affiliates wanting to offer scholarships (e.g., for musicians/callers to attend camp; for high school students to attend camp; for morris team members who can't pay to travel).

One Affiliate spoke about wanting to support members of various communities.

...We would love to financially and organizationally support women, TQIA+ folks, POC, disabled people and young leaders/organizers as they start new communities or influence current dance communities... Dela Murphy, Form the Ocean

### **AFFILIATES ARE INTERESTED IN TRAVELLING**

Eight Affiliates wrote about wanting to be able to travel more with their groups. Five of those groups are morris teams while the others are involved with regency, ECD, and clogging.

Travel to the home of Cotswold Morris dancing more often to share the history and living tradition with newer younger Team members. David Fields – Minnesota Traditional Morris

### **AFFILIATES WANT TO INVEST IN EQUIPMENT**

A handful of Affiliates wrote about wanting to invest in equipment. Two Affiliates mentioned wanting to buy or improve their sound system. Other equipment mentioned each mentioned by one Affiliate included:

- Updating costumes.
- Investing in a dance floor that could be installed, removed, stored and shared.
- Buying a piano.
- Invested in shared gear such as a maypole.

### **AFFILIATES WANT TO INVEST IN ORGANIZERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

A handful of Affiliates wrote about wanting to invest in organizers and volunteers. For instance:

- Offer volunteer training.
- Develop skill leadership.
- Organize a Board retreat.
- Improve volunteer recruitment.
- Offer online and in-person educational support that helps leaders identify and deconstruct racism, sexism and ableism in their communities.
- Offer conversations in facilitating change management in communities struggling through cultural shifts.
- Organize regional summits for dance organizers.
- Find training for the treasurer on how to keep books for a non-profit.

### **AFFILIATES WANT TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO**

Approximately one dozen Affiliates wrote that they are either happy with what they are currently doing or that they are at capacity in terms of what they can manage. Many of these Affiliates self-identify as thriving or being stable. A few Affiliates pointed out that they haven't explored questions like this before.

### **AFFILIATES HAVE YET MORE IDEAS!**

Individual Affiliates identified other ideas such as:

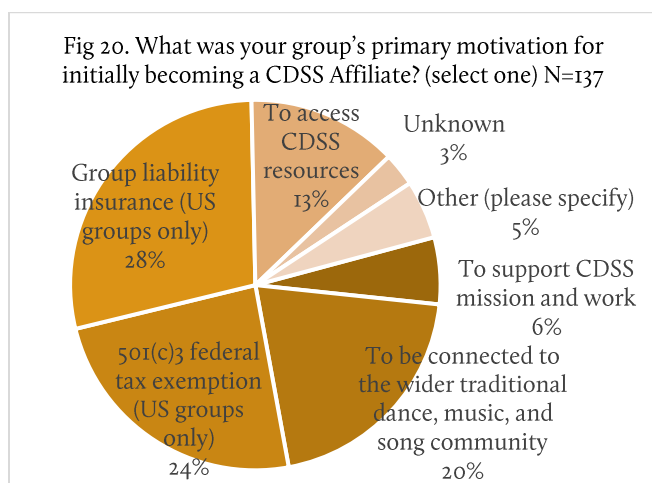
- Organize a bigger raffle.
- Offer catered food.
- Build a resource library.
- Launch a companion foundation.
- Practice more and expand repertoire (rapper team).
- Hire an executive director.
- Perform at events and develop a performance group.
- Have shuttle systems to/from public transit.
- 'Fix the culture at our dance' so that everyone feels safe and respected.
- End the year without financial losses from dance events.
- Launch a historical costuming academy.

## 4: QUESTION FINDINGS - EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CDSS AND OUR AFFILIATES

### Q28&29. THE REASONS FOR BEING A CDSS AFFILIATE

We were very interested in learning why Affiliates become, and remain, members of CDSS. We had our assumptions but wanted to have those assumptions tested. We were excited by the findings!

While over half of our Affiliates joined CDSS to access a particular service (e.g. group liability insurance; non-profit tax exemption), we were pleasantly surprised about how many Affiliates identified other reasons for joining (Figure 20). For instance, 20% of survey respondents cited that their group became an Affiliate to be connected to the wider TDMS community, illustrating the power of being part of a larger network. Note: Affiliates could only choose one reason for joining so 20% is impressive!

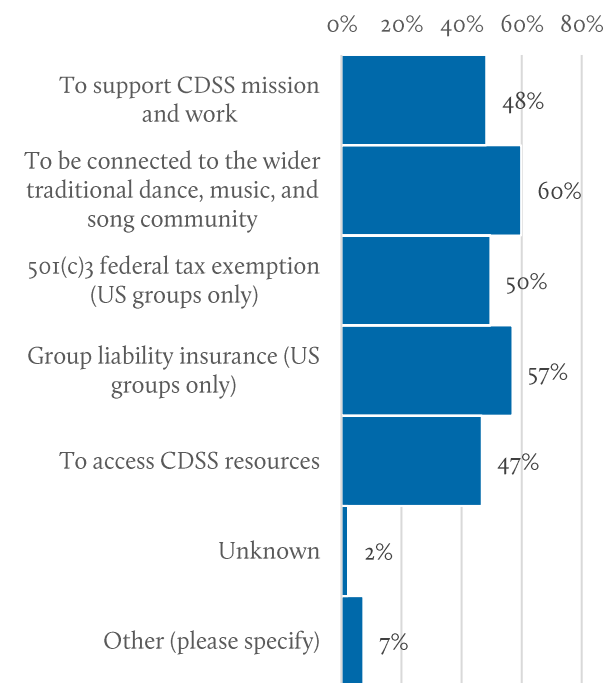


Affiliates had the option of providing a written response to 'Other – please specify'. Most of the seven written responses referred to some of the items above (e.g., three mentioned insurance). Others stated:

- Insurance and tax exemption equal.
- Founders not available to answer.
- Inspired by Gaye Fifer to join.

We also asked Affiliates about why they are currently a member (Figure 21). Respondents could select as many of the answers as they wished and many did, illustrating that the reasons for remaining an Affiliate are complex. However, the most common response was to be connected to the wider traditional dance, music and song community. This speaks strongly to the shared value of being part of a large network of like-minded groups and organizers whether it be for inspiration, support, sense of belonging, or otherwise.

Fig 21. Why is your group currently an Affiliate member? (select as many as apply) N=137



Affiliates had the option of listing additional reasons through providing a written response. 10 survey participants did so, stating that one of the reasons their group remains an Affiliate is due to:

- Matching scholarships.
- Discounted ads in the CDSS News.
- Callers insurance.
- Advertising.
- Non-profit status (until get it themselves) – two groups.

We like CDSS and think you do good work, but liability insurance is by far the most important thing for us. And when we could briefly get this insurance cheaper a different way, we did that instead and let our affiliate membership lapse. Jeff Kaufman, Boston Intergenerational Dance Advocates

### Q30-32 & Q34-35. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CDSS COMMUNICATION TOOLS IN REACHING OUR AFFILIATE COMMUNITIES

We asked a number of questions to learn about the effectiveness of our communication tools in reaching Affiliates.

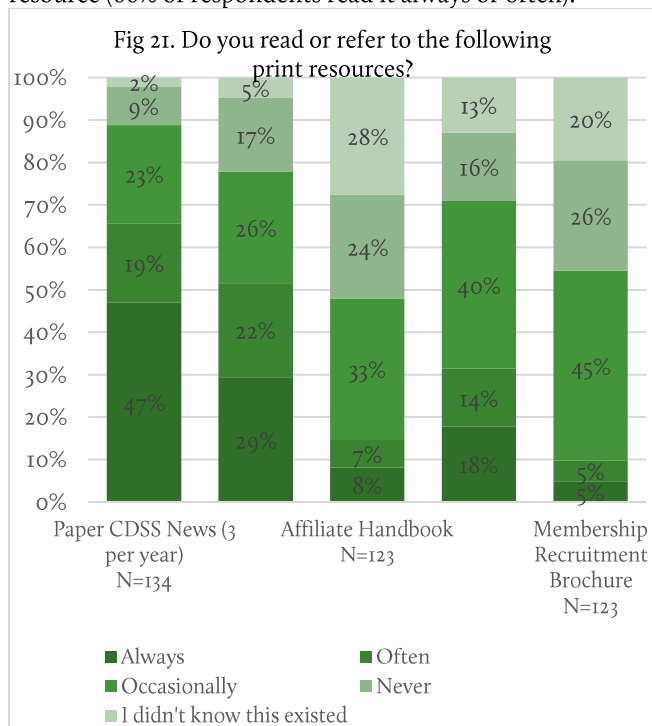
Note: 77% of survey respondents identified themselves as the designated CDSS contact for their organization while 16% cited that they are not and another 7% were not sure. This is important to keep in mind as those who aren't the Affiliate contact won't have received Affiliate messages directly and will have relied on their local contact to share our information. We know that sharing doesn't always happen (Q34) which might explain some of the lack of awareness of our communications directed towards Affiliates.

### THE EXTENT TO WHICH AFFILIATES READ CDSS PRINT MATERIAL

Survey participants were asked whether they read/refer to various CDSS print resources (Figure 21). There were some surprising findings including the fact that more than 1/4 of respondents didn't know that there is an Affiliate Handbook and a full half haven't looked at the handbook.

Another surprising finding was that almost half of the survey participants didn't know about or had never looked at the membership recruitment brochure. This is interesting given that we send copies to our Affiliates each year as a way of promoting individual membership in CDSS.

Not surprisingly, the CDSS News is the most read print resource (66% of respondents read it always or often).

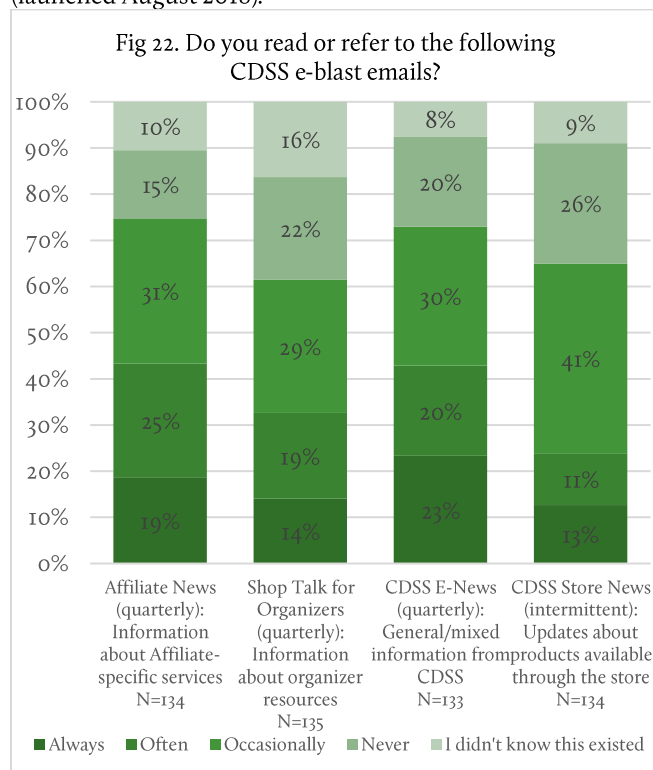


As an interesting side note, while 11% of survey respondents said that they have never read or didn't know the CDSS News existed, that number doubled to 22% for the Online CDSS News issue (one per year).

### THE EXTENT TO WHICH AFFILIATES READ CDSS EMAIL BLASTS

Survey participants were asked whether they read/refer to various CDSS E-blasts (Figure 22).

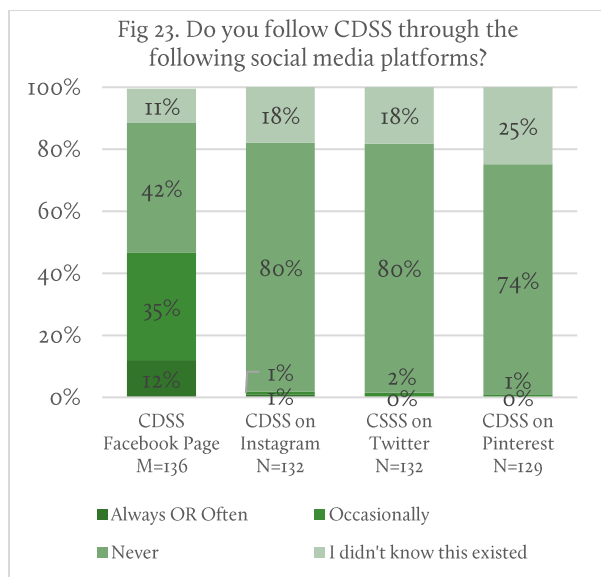
Three-quarters of survey participants read the quarterly Affiliate e-blasts at least occasionally and roughly the same number read the quarterly CDSS general e-blasts. 38% of respondents had never read or didn't know about Shop Talk, the new e-blast for dance, music and song organizers (launched August 2018).



### THE EXTENT TO WHICH AFFILIATES FOLLOW CDSS'S SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

Survey participants were asked about whether they follow CDSS's social media channels. The most commonly followed CDSS social media channel our Facebook page with 47% stating that they always, often, or occasionally follow our Facebook page. Virtually none of our Affiliates follow us on Instagram, Twitter, or through Pinterest. While this may have to do with which social media channels the survey participants use, it is likely also heavily related to the fact that CDSS staff focus primarily on Facebook posts as compared to our other social media channels.





### COMPARING THE RELATIVE SUCCESS OF CDSS'S VARIOUS COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

Looking across our print, e-blast, and social media channels, certain communication tools are more often than others.

Table 8 outlines the relative degree to which Affiliates are always/often accessing CDSS's various communication tools.

Table 8: CDSS's communication tools	% who always/often read
<b>Paper CDSS News</b> Our print newsletter mailed three times per year to the Affiliate contact	66%
<b>Online CDSS News</b> One issue of our quarterly magazine, emailed to the Affiliate contact	51%
<b>Affiliate News</b> Quarterly email with information about Affiliate-specific services	46%
<b>CDSS E-News</b> Quarterly email with general/mixed information from CDSS	43%
<b>Shop Talk</b> Quarterly email with resources for organizers	33%
<b>Camp booklet</b> Camp promotional materials including information about Affiliate matching scholarships mailed once a year to the Affiliate contact	31%
<b>CDSS Store News</b> Intermittent emails updating readers about products available through the CDSS store	24%
<b>Affiliate Handbook</b> Outlines the services offered to Affiliates	15%
<b>CDSS Facebook page</b>	12%
<b>Membership Recruitment Brochure</b>	10%
<b>CDSS on Instagram</b>	1%
<b>CDSS on Twitter</b>	0%
<b>CDSS on Pinterest</b>	0%

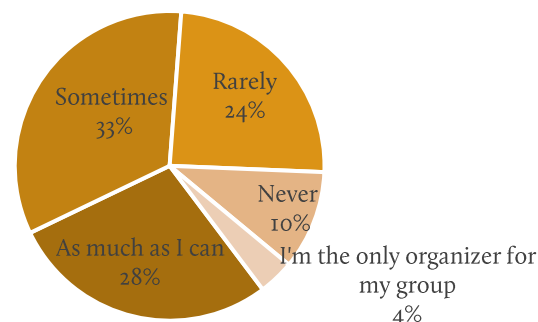
Reminder: This table does not include the 52% of Affiliates who did not participate in the survey. It's interesting to consider whether those groups might less likely to be reading material from us given their lack of engagement in the survey despite major efforts to solicit engagement.

### THE DEGREE TO WHICH AFFILIATE CONTACTS SHARE CDSS NEWS WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THEIR ORGANIZING TEAM AND THEIR WIDER COMMUNITY

We asked survey participants about the frequency with which they share CDSS news with their fellow organizers and community. (Reminder: Not all survey participants are the official CDSS Affiliate contact.) Our ideal would be that vast majority of our Affiliate contacts are sharing our news given that they are the gatekeeper for CDSS reaching the rest of their community.

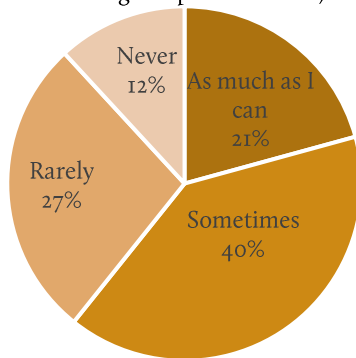
One quarter of survey respondents share CDSS news with their fellow organizers as much as they can (Figure 24). On the other hand 1/3 of respondents noted that they rarely or never share news with their fellow organizers.

Fig 24. How often do you share CDSS news with your organizing committee? (e.g., forwarding CDSS Affiliate e-blasts; sharing news about matching scholarships) N=135



We also asked survey respondents how often they share news (e.g., interesting articles; forwarding camp information) with their wider community (Figure 25). Again, our ideal would be that the vast majority Affiliates are sharing at least some information with their community members as this would support our efforts in bringing more dancers, singers, musicians, and organizers into the wider TDMS network. While 61% share information at least sometimes, 39% rarely or never share CDSS communications with their community.

Fig 25. How often do you share CDSS news with your wider community? (e.g., sharing interesting CDSSNews articles; forwarding camp information) N=135



### Q33. FEEDBACK REGARDING CDSS'S COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

In addition to asking how often our Affiliates use the various CDSS communication channels, we asked for feedback on those channels. Half of the survey participants took the opportunity to provide written comments (N=71).

#### CDSS'S COMMUNICATION REACH INTO THE COMMUNITY

Many of the Affiliates referred to the degree to which CDSS's resources reach members of their community. For instance:

- Dancers aren't aware of the larger context.
- Information from CDSS isn't reaching the board; CDSS is rarely raised at board meetings.
- CDSS representative passes on particularly good articles.
- Enjoy reading the CDSS material put out at the dances.
- Having a range of communication tools is good.
- Please send emails sent to all of our board members. In addition, one survey participant noted that they are not the CDSS contact but they want to receive messages from CDSS.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

Approximately one third of question respondents commented on social media. Most pointed out that they do not use Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram while some noted that other members of their group are engaged with social media. Affiliates seemed to be most interested in Facebook, with very little interest in other platforms. One Affiliate pointed out that they have a Facebook page for their group so "we will probably start following yours."

#### PRINT COMMUNICATION

Approximately 20 Affiliates commented on our print communications.

- Many commented that they prefer print resources over electronic communication (e.g., only read print). One respondent noted that they prefer electronic over print.
- A few Affiliates noted that they put print materials out at their events (e.g., CDSS News). A few others noted that it's hard to share print resources or that no one refers to them when they put them out.

#### E-BLASTS

Approximately five Affiliates commented on our e-blasts. Opinions varied from someone who shares the emails with their board, to someone who would like CDSS to send emails to their whole board directly, to a few who don't read the email newsletters.

#### OTHER COMMENTS

A few Affiliates comments about other communication tools.

- **Web Chats:** Two Affiliates mentioned the web chats.
- **Website:** A few Affiliates commented on the fact that they use our website. One person noted that while it's been hard to find resources, it's recently improved.
- **Blog:** One Affiliate noted that the blog seems to have been inactive since 2016 and that the RSS link seems to be broken.
- **CD+S:** One Affiliate noted that they had read the journal.
- **Print member directory:** One Affiliate wrote that they were happy with the print member directory.
- **CDSS contact:** One Affiliate noted that they don't have the time/interest to be the CDSS liaison and are trying to find someone else to do it. Another Affiliate wrote that no one in their group is assigned to be the CDSS contact.
- A few individuals noted that they will be checking out some of the communication platforms.

We put print copies of CDSS News and CDSS brochures at our registration table at our local dances. I forward emails to our group's board from CDSS that concern Affiliate News, Shop Talk, E-Blasts for Organizers, and Online CDSS E-News. Hal Southern, Urbana Country Dancers

### Q36. WHAT CDSS SERVICES ARE IMPORTANT TO AFFILIATES

CDSS offers a very wide range of services and supports to the North American TMDS community. While some of these services are only available to Affiliates (e.g. 501(c)(3) status), many are available to any group or individual who is interested (e.g., web chats). We wanted to get a sense about how our Affiliates view our various services.

Figures 26 and 27 illustrate the degree to which Affiliates value various resources and services provided by CDSS. Unfortunately, group insurance was left off of the question. However, we know that this service important to a large number of Affiliates given that many purchase insurance through CDSS.

Having one's organization appear in the Affiliate directory was the service identified as either very or somewhat important by the highest number of respondents. This response was likely influenced by the fact that launched the new Affiliate directory at the same time as we were collecting survey responses.



Other resources seen as either very or somewhat important by half or more of the respondents were:

- CDSS website.
- CDSS online store as a source of books, CDs, and more.
- Affiliate events listed in the CDSS events calendar.
- 501(c)3 tax exemption.
- Training offered at CDSS camp sessions.
- Online organizers resource portal.
- CDSS supported regional conferences.

Many survey respondents noted that they did not know about some of our services. For instance, over 1/5 of respondents didn't know about 1:1 staff advice on organizing, our online library, the CDSS archives, our scholarly journal, the organizers resource portal, and the CDSS dance map. In addition, 1/4 didn't know about the rental of ritual dance equipment – this is not surprising as relatively few Affiliates have ritual dance teams.

Fig 26. How important is it to your group that CDSS offer these services/resources? N=129-133

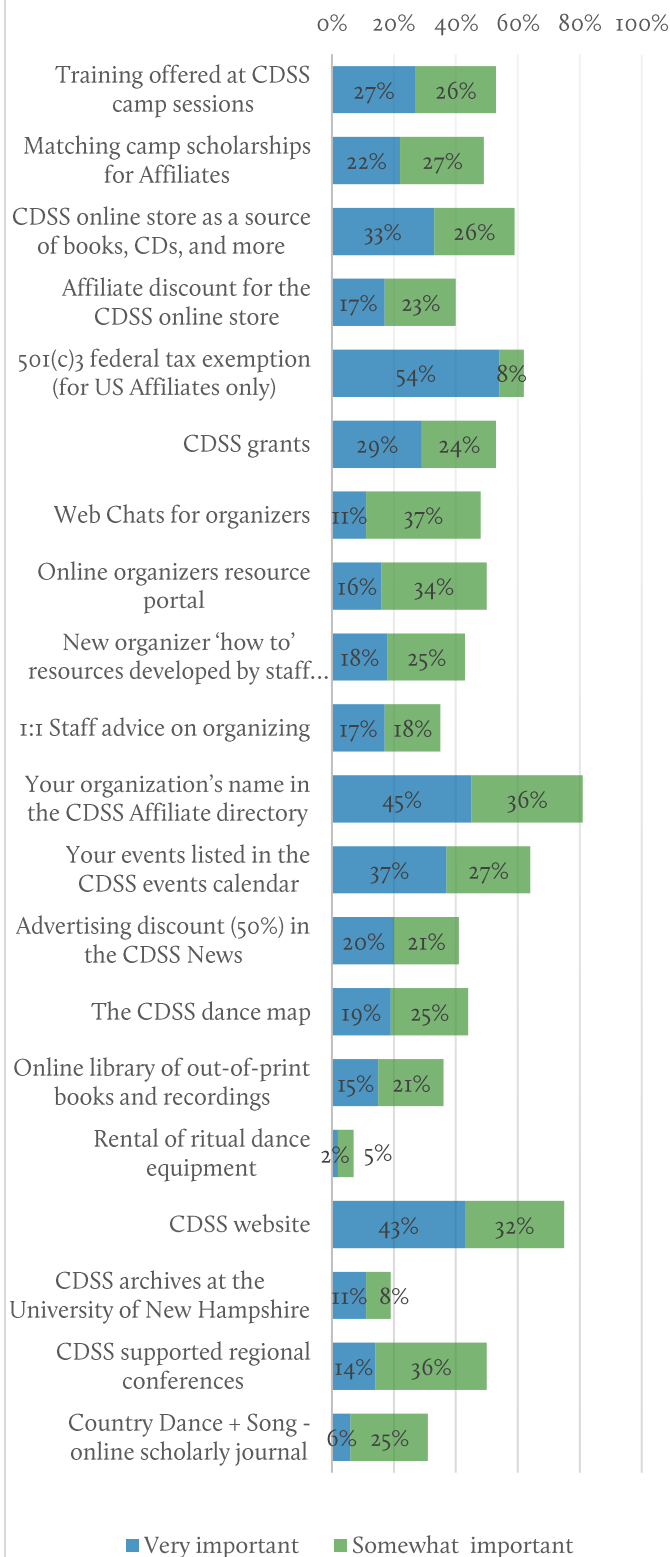


Fig 27. How important is it to your group that CDSS offer these services/resources? N=129-133



Note: Liability insurance should have been listed as one of the services/resources – it was left off by accident.

As part of Q36, Affiliates were given the option of writing about other services/resources. A dozen Affiliates noted that liability insurance was very important. (As noted above, liability insurance was accidentally left off the list of resources/services.)

Not seeing here is access to Group Liability Insurance, which is very important (may be missing it somehow). Barbara Ramlow, Lexington Traditional Dance Association (Traditional Dance Association, Inc.), Kentucky

Other services/resources that were mentioned by individual Affiliates included:

- Grants.
- Address lists for brochure mailings.
- Camp priority.
- Corporate (non-profit?) status through CDSS.
- One Affiliate noted that they appreciate the online journal and the UNH archives and hope to see the latter grow.

### **SUGGESTIONS/ITEMS REQUIRING FOLLOW UP**

A few Affiliates provided suggestions for CDSS staff to consider. These included:

- That it is difficult to access or add items to the CDSS event calendar and map.
- Affiliate dance camps, weekend camps, and special events should be listed in the CDSS News for free.
- CDSS doesn't seem relevant with regards to the location or programming of some groups.

A few Affiliates pointed out that it's important that CDSS maintains their various services even if their particular Affiliate doesn't use some of the services.

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## **Q37. THE CDSS SERVICES & RESOURCES THAT ARE OF MOST VALUE TO OUR AFFILIATES**

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In Q37, Affiliates were given the opportunity to list up to three of CDSS services/resources that are of most value to their organization. 117 Affiliates listed at least or exactly one resource, 109 listed two, and 95 Affiliates listed three resources.

### **501(C)(3) STATUS**

Half of the question respondents identified 501(c)(3) status one of the three most valuable CDSS services/resources. Affiliates noted that receiving the 501(c)(3) status through CDSS has afforded their group with the following:

- Avoid paying taxes on multi-thousands of dollars, and in some cases remain solvent (e.g., "taxes would strain our budget").
- Conduct fundraising.
- Pursue grants.
- To 'be legal' with the least amount of effort and hassle (e.g., 'we don't like paperwork and knowing regulations').
- To rent certain venues.
- Generally 'act as a qualified non-profit'.
- Not worry about logistical details.
- Receive certain discounts (e.g., access to the Google GSuite Tools).

### **CDSS PROMOTION OF LOCAL AFFILIATES**

Half of the question respondents identified promotion of Affiliate organizations and events as one the CDSS services/resources they most value. Affiliates mentioned:

- Advertising in the CDSS News including the Affiliate discount.
- Affiliate directory including reference to travelling dancers attending events.
- The events calendar.
- The dance map.

### **INSURANCE**

A third of question respondents identified insurance as one of the three most valuable CDSS services/resources currently offered to their organization. This is despite insurance being left off Q36 and therefore not having the same prompt/reminder as other CDSS services. Affiliates noted:

- CDSS offering insurance alleviates the worry and time of obtaining insurance. 'It's convenient!'
- The price is good; the price is cheaper elsewhere.
- Insurance is hard to find elsewhere.

The most important service that CDSS provides us is insurance. It is what made us aware of CDSS and has led to our use of other resources. Linda Nieman, Phoenix Traditional Music & Dance, Inc., Arizona

### **CDSS CAMPS**

A third of question respondents identified camp as one of the three most valuable CDSS services/resources currently offered to their organization. Comments focused either on the value of matching scholarship and/or on the training offered at camp. A handful of Affiliates noted that their group had underutilized or not yet tapped into matching scholarships but that they hoped to in the future. There was one mention of priority registration.

CDSS Camp Training Sessions - Members have attended camps to expand our organizing and musical abilities. David Fields, Minnesota Traditional Morris, Minnesota

### **RESOURCES & DIRECT SUPPORT**

A third of question respondents identified resources and/or direct support as one of the three most valuable CDSS services/resources currently offered to their organization. This included:

- General access to resources.
- The online organizer resource portal.
- Access to out-of-print books and historical materials
- 1:1 staff advice.

### **TRAINING**

One quarter of question respondents identified training as one of the three most valuable CDSS services/resources currently offered to their organization. For instance:

- Approximately one dozen Affiliates mentioned training available at camp for callers, musicians, and dancers (including ritual dance).
- A handful of Affiliates mentioned the value of regional conferences for training, connecting with other organizers, and building community among organizers.

- Approximately 10 Affiliates mentioned the web chats as a good way to gain new information and encourage discussion.
- A few Affiliates mentioned organizer discussion groups.

## STORE

Approximately one quarter of question respondents identified the store (or Affiliate store discount) as one of the three most valuable CDSS services/resources currently offered to their organization. This included five morris teams who completed the survey. They specifically mentioned the discount, morris bells, other equipment, and resources. In addition, a number of English country dance Affiliates mentioned the store.

## CDSS WEBSITE

Approximately 1/6 of question respondents identified the CDSS website as one of the three most valuable CDSS services/resources currently offered to their organization. Affiliates referred to finding resources, getting information about 501(c)(3)/insurance, connecting to the wider community, finding out about camps, and more.

## GRANTS

Approximately 1/6 of question respondents identified grants as one of the three most valuable CDSS services/resources currently offered to their organization. Interestingly, a handful of the comments were Affiliates saying that they would like to look into or learn more about CDSS grants. A handful of Affiliates mentioned that they had used grants to support training for talent, classes, and to create new programming.

## OTHER SERVICES/RESOURCES

One or a few respondents mentioned the following resources:

- Networking; communication with other dance organizers.
- Learning about other dance camps across the country.
- Affiliation with a larger national organization.
- CDSS News - this participant pointed out that the newsletter wasn't listed as a resource or service (we included in communication rather than resources).
- Increased communication from CDSS on organizer resources over the past year.
- Email information and newsletters.
- Being connected to the larger traditional dance and music community.
- Address labels for brochure mailings.
- Rental of ritual dance equipment.
- CDSS Archives at UNH.
- Online journal.

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## Q38. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING CDSS'S CURRENT SERVICES & RESOURCES

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We asked survey participants to provide suggestions for improving any of the services/resources we currently offer (Q36). Relatively few participants took the opportunity for comment 40 Affiliates provided one suggestion. Of those, 12 provided a second suggestion and of those, 8 provided a third suggestion.

## COMMUNICATION

Two dozen Affiliates wrote about how we could improve our communication tools.

Regarding communication generally:

- A handful of Affiliates mentioned the lack of awareness regarding CDSS services, that Affiliates want more information, and that more communication is needed about the various services (e.g., list of the resources currently available).
- A few participants noted that CDSS should communicate directly with all board members rather than through the Affiliate contact.
- Have staff call Affiliates to ask how they can help.
- Send more information via email.
- Keep the print version of the CDSS News – want to display at the dances.

Regarding communication about camp:

- Provide Affiliates with better promotional information on how camp training can support the next generation of talent and relate that to scholarships.
- Provide pre-written emails about camps and other events directed towards the wider community so that the Affiliate contact can forward the message to promote the opportunities at camp.

Regarding the website:

- Speed up the website.
- The site is hard to navigate.
- Want more Canadian content and resources.
- Sync the logins across the CDSS website – different parts of the site require different logins.
- There shouldn't be website logins required for non-members.
- Also - see below regarding the map/events calendar.

## HOW-TO ADVICE AND RELATED RESOURCES

Approximately one dozen Affiliates wrote about wanting more how-to advice and related resources. For instance, Affiliates want:

- More information on how to find all the resources.
- More Canadian resources.
- Have all of the resources available to everyone with the exception of the member directory.
- Was not aware that staff were available for advice.
- Need more guidance on organizing.
- Need specific information about BMI and ASCAP.
- Provide out-of-print books and recordings.
- Want to be able to access music and dance descriptions online. Could be for a fee. Not everything is available in the store.

## PROMOTING AFFILIATES THROUGH VARIOUS TOOLS

One dozen survey participants noted that CDSS could improve the ways in which it promotes Affiliate organizations. This included:

- Affiliates like the CDSS dance map but it needs to be current and also easier to submit information.

- It is difficult to be added to the events calendar (e.g., could groups automatically update their information; it seems impossible to add Canadian events; one Affiliate noted that their events aren't listed despite their group existing for decades).
- There should be a calendar with events, classes, conferences.
- Visitors to the CDSS website should be able to easily look up the location of CDSS Affiliates.
- The Affiliate login needs to be easier to use.
- The directory took too long to be made available.

### TRAINING

A handful of Affiliates wrote about training. This included the following individual suggestions for CDSS:

- Support peer-based development (e.g., weekend retreats) that organizers make happen locally.
- Provide a 'common problems' answer forum.
- Offer more regional conferences (e.g., one 10yrs ago in the Southeast).
- Let Canadians pay at par for training at camp.

### STORE

A handful of Affiliates wrote about the store. This included the following suggestions:

- More Canadian content in the store.
- Would like to be able to purchase rapper swords and clogs through the store.
- Fix the store checkout system -failed numerous times.

### OTHER

Suggestions about other services were mentioned by individual survey participants.

- Insurance should be offered at a lower price.
- Provide clearer information about 501(c)(3) on the website (e.g., all forms as well as clear instructions on where to send forms and payment).
- It should be easier to receive grants.
- Provide annual grants, especially for smaller groups.
- Focus more attention on the West Coast.
- Reach out and make CDSS more relevant to old-time dance, Scottish, Irish, and Waltz groups.

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## Q39. ADDITIONAL SERVICES THAT AFFILIATES WOULD LIKE

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Approximately 1/3 (N=47) of Affiliates took the opportunity to provide feedback on additional services, supports, and/or resources they want CDSS to offer. No particular idea stood out as being of interest to a large number of Affiliates. Instead, a wide range of ideas were suggested, each only being mentioned by one or a few respondents.

### MORE RESOURCES RELATING TO ORGANIZER TASKS

Approximately one dozen organizers asked for more resources relating to the work they do. This included:

- How-tos on: finance; publicity; board training; safety issues (e.g., guidelines for banning dancers from weekends; deal with complaints); recruiting and nurturing emerging musicians and callers; expanding programming for children and families; how to grow a dance, especially in an area which isn't that 'folky'.
- Share information from different groups on how to address common problems.
- Legal support for simple questions – someone familiar with the dance community.
- Musician directory of who is available, how far they are willing to travel, what willing to play, and their level. Even if they are new and want a chance to play.
- Online downloads of dance tunes – hard to buy albums for one dance/tune.
- A list of dance groups (Affiliates and non) including dance info and special events by state. Offer free to members and available to all for purchase.
- Flyer and ad templates.
- Dance-related clip art.

### FUNDING

Less than five Affiliates asked for funding. Very few details were provided.

### COMMUNICATION

Less than five Affiliates wrote about communication.

Comments included:

- Continue efforts for more outreach to organizers - experiment more to find out what works.
- More outreach from CDSS staff (phone) to ask how CDSS can be of help.
- Send reminders on reporting talent payments to the IRS – include information on how to do this.
- Send reminder about events that are coming up and tasks for Affiliates (e.g., renewing insurance, insurance, tax).
- Set up a chat room to ask about sound equipment for dances.

### INSURANCE

A handful of Affiliates wrote about insurance. Affiliates want:

- Director and Officer insurance.
- Better/cheaper insurance.
- Insurance for Canadian organizations and callers.

### OTHER SUPPORTS

Individual Affiliates mentioned that they want the following:

- Support with booking talent.
- Relief regarding the overwhelming nature of organizing.
- CDSS to be more proactive with Affiliates.
- More articles on the historical aspects of dancing including clothing.
- Canadians to be able to pay at par for US events.
- More scholarship and travel money for folks who live afar (e.g., Texas and Oklahoma).
- Camps earlier in the season (e.g., school starts on August 18th in Texas).
- CDSS camps on the West Coast.
- CDSS to sponsor events on the West Coast.

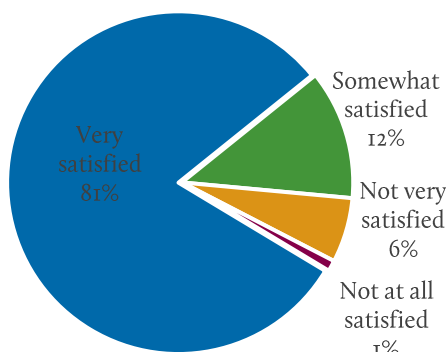
## Q40. AFFILIATE SATISFACTION WITH CDSS'S CUSTOMER SERVICE

We wanted to get the sense of how satisfied Affiliates are with CDSS's customer service in order to set a baseline for improvement.

70% of survey respondents answered the question about whether they had reached out to CDSS over the past year (Figure 28). Given that response rates to other questions after Q40 were high, we can assume some that those who didn't respond likely didn't phone or email the CDSS staff within the past year.

Of the question respondents, 81% were very satisfied and 93% were very or somewhat satisfied with the response that they received from CDSS. 7% were not very or not at all satisfied, leaving some room for improvement.

Fig 28. If you have reached out to CDSS staff over the past year, how satisfied were you with the response? N=98



40 Affiliates took the opportunity to follow-up the multiple-choice question with written responses about contact with CDSS staff over the past year. A handful said that they hadn't reached out or didn't have a comment.

Approximately 20 Affiliates provided positive comments. Somewhere specific in nature (e.g., thanking for advice on insurance) while others were more general. For instance:

Always helpful in a timely manner. Staff encounters have been excellent. Maxine Louie, Toronto Contra Dance, ON

Very satisfied with tax advice and information about news articles/calendar. Ruth Haring, Washington Regency Society, Washington

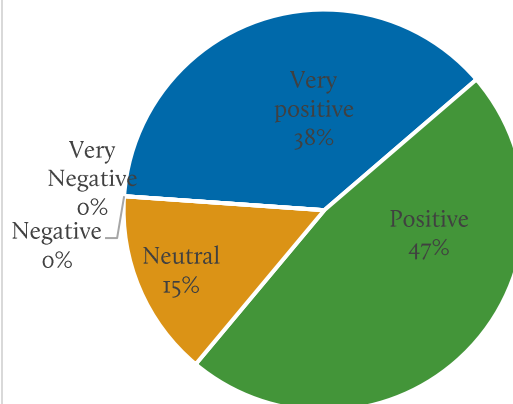
Approximately 10 comments were negative or constructive in nature including a few individuals pointing out that it was hard to reach staff or receive a response.

## Q41. AFFILIATES' FEELINGS ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO CDSS

In addition to learning about specific aspects regarding the relationship between CDSS and our Affiliates, we wanted to gain an overall sense of how satisfied Affiliates are with their relationship to CDSS.

We were quite heartened by Affiliates' positive perception. On a five-point scale (Figure 29), 85% of question respondents reported very positive or positive feelings about their Affiliate's relationship with CDSS while the other 15% were neutral. No negative or very negative feelings were reported.

Fig 29. How do you feel about your organization's relationship with CDSS? N=133



22 Affiliates followed up with written responses. There were some interesting comments that illustrate perceptions of the CDSS-Affiliate relationship: (A few comments have been paraphrased for clarity)

- CDSS is always helpful and supportive.
- CDSS provides back-end services.
- CDSS has our back when we need it but we don't generally need it as we are one of the larger dances in the country.
- We contribute more to CDSS than we get.
- Most dancers remain barely aware of CDSS's role; Most dancers don't 'get' you at all.
- We wish we weren't so far away from CDSS.
- We are not really involved with CDSS as a group.
- It makes a big difference when CDSS Board/staff show up in a local community.
- We don't take advantage of the opportunities offered by membership.
- I want our relationship to be stronger - it takes leadership on our part to get moving on that.
- We are grateful that you are there!



## 5: QUESTION FINDINGS - THE VALUE OF TDMS AND ADVOCACY WORK IN THIS AREA

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### Q42-44. THE VALUE OF TRADITIONAL DANCE, MUSIC, AND SONG

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We asked Affiliates a number of questions about the power of TDMS to transform the lives of individuals and contribute to their community and/or society at large. 105 Affiliates responded to the question about how TDMS transforms the lives of individuals, 93 responded to the question about how TDMS contributes to your community and/or society at large, and 54 responded to the question asking for specific stories that illustrate the power of TDMS.

Similarly to the 2016 and 2018 organizer surveys, participants identified a wide range of ways in which TDMS has a positive impact on both individuals and the wider society. These included:

- Providing a source of fun and joy.
- Supporting physical, cognitive, and emotional health.
- Providing unique social opportunities.
- A source of long-term and significant relationships.
- A source of community support to be counted on.
- A way to connect to history and heritage.
- Supporting the development of a wide set of skills.
- Shaping personal identity, outlook and other transformational impacts.
- Other benefits to individuals.
- Societal impacts relating to the items above.

#### PROVIDING A SOURCE OF FUN AND JOY

Many Affiliates wrote about how enjoyable and fun TDMS activities are and how it provides joy for those who participate.

It makes them smile so hard their faces hurt. Laura Hatch, Set to Music English Country Dancing

[...] Problems of the day, week, month, year are put aside while the music and the dance pattern spins us into a magical carefree moment as the caller demands our brains to engage with our foot directions and to cooperate with the other dancers. It is as if we ALL (dancers, callers & musicians) are on the same team... if we give it our all, we all win. We are all trying to make it work and make our partner look good. As a result, we all have FUN!  
[...] Linda Narisi, Arkansas Country Dance Society

#### SUPPORTING PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE, AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Affiliates cited a number of health benefits to TDMS. For instance, some mentioned the value of exercise generally while others mentioned the physical benefits of dance.

... Personally, traditional dance has played a big role in improving my physical fitness... Peter Turner, Gainesville Oldtime Dance Society

Other Affiliates mentioned cognitive and emotional benefits. For instance, there was the mention of 'brain-stimulating patterns' and that dance provides 'good brain exercise.' Others spoke of the value of TDMS (in particular dance) to boosting self-esteem and confidence, uplifting individuals out of depression, relieving stress, and being a spiritual recharge.

I notice people are happier when they are involved in a deeply felt passion, and for many people I'm around the communities connected with CDSS are their passions. Peggy Leiby, FiddleKicks Cloggers

#### TDMS OFFER UNIQUE SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Many Affiliates wrote about how they value TDMS activities as unique social opportunities. This included, but is not limited to, events being:

- A safe space.
- An alcohol-free space to socialize and experience live music
- Easy to attend on one's own find dance partners.
- Easy to make connections with other/new people.
- Places to become friends with a wide variety of people with a similar interest.
- Spaces that connect musicians and non-musicians.
- A non-competitive activity.
- Spaces that are accepting of individuals with socialization/communication differences.
- Spaces that can be more comfortable for introverts or individuals who are shy.

I feel that one of the most important benefits of supporting a thriving community of traditional dance, music and song, is the way these communities offer a safe and welcoming place for anyone to come and socialize. This is especially true for the many folks who are challenged by socialization, many of whom seem to blossom within the setting of a contra dance. Jean Gibson-Gorrindo, Central Coast Country Dance Society

Traditional dance is good mental and physical exercise and provides an opportunity for social engagement. Of course, many hobbies or other activities have similar benefits. However, the inclusive aspect of traditional dance, being on a team without it being a competition of some sort, is beneficial for everyone, but especially for those who might not be as able to join in a team sport or something similar. Jonathan Sivier, Central Illinois English Country Dancers

In addition, many Affiliates wrote about the intergenerational nature of TDMS activities. For instance, TDMS...

- Encourages interaction among participants across generational lines.
- Is appealing to a wide spectrum of ages.
- Keeps older dancers engaged while bringing in new dancers.
- Are family-friendly events where children can grow up within the community and traditions.

Social interaction, physical exercise; connections across multiple generations are positive and create trust; we have seen examples



of lives changed with dancing and engagement in our activities; we have seen young people grow up with the Footmad community and are now active participants. [...] Paul Carruthers, Birmingham FOOTMAD

This is probably not what you're primarily looking for, but over the years we have had many, many couples who found each other through morris dancing! Similarly, we've had some generational pass-through, primarily children continuing to dance but sometimes parents starting to dance because their children are enjoying it. [...] Ruth M. Olmsted, Pokingbrook Morris

Many Affiliates also wrote about how TDMS activities are inclusive in many ways beyond age. For instance, Affiliates wrote about the accepting nature of their community, how diverse it is, and how connections are made across a range of individuals who otherwise might not connect/become friends.

Some Affiliates wrote that their community is welcoming to individuals with physical and social abilities including those less skilled. Others wrote that their community includes individuals from different cultures, politics, gender identities, as well as ethnic, economic, and educational backgrounds.

[...] Sharing an interest in these activities, personally, has allowed me to become friends with a wide variety of people that I don't know if I would have met otherwise. It's allowed my kid to meet a wide variety of people that I don't know if he would have met otherwise. It's been a great way to broaden my own experiences through shared familiar activities. Meg Dedolph, The Midwest Morris Ale Association

It brings together strangers from all walks of life and makes them friends! Jessica Atkinson, Tummas Dance Group

There seems to be a special bond that develops among folk dancers in general. We form a wide community of diverse individuals who all experience dance & music in their own ways as well as in shared ways that open us up to each other. Gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, politics are all set aside on the dance floor and we come to depend upon each other for the enjoyment of the moment as well as for long-term friendships. Joyce Eyler, Nashville Country Dancers

One other unique social opportunity cited by a handful of Affiliates was the way in which TDMS activities encourage social connections to be made across large geographical regions. For instance, survey respondents wrote about being able to dance in different parts of North America (and beyond!) and feel welcome. Also, some noted that they have strong friend connections over a wide geographical range due to TDMS. Others wrote about choosing where they take holidays given those social connections.

The morris community is a tight knit international community in the truest sense of the word. We can travel nearly anywhere and find a place to have a pint and a conversation, get a little dancing in and generally to feel safe. Dan Sabath, Sound and Fury Morris

Affiliates pointed out that the structure built into TDMS activities encourage connection and a positive sense of community.

Traditional dance, music and song give people joy and connection to others. There is nothing like hand-in-hand and merry eye contact to give one a feeling of belonging. Beverly Seng, Albemarle Chapter, Country Dance and Song Society, Inc.

I believe the dance space is an important civic venue - a place where Right and Left are the hands we extend rather than the labels we wear. Our community's transition toward Larks/Ravens has left me astonished at the courteous and

community-minded response of our most traditional male dancers, who seem to have taken the term change as a nudge to never sit out. David (Tavi) Merrill, Penobscot Country Dancers

In contra dance you take hands, give weight, and dance with who is coming at you. You don't ask their political party or religion or gender identification before you dance with them. I believe that builds community through basic human interaction below the intellectual filters that are dividing our country at the moment. Heitzso, Atgaga Incorporated

Many of the concepts in this section relate to the idea of community. And indeed, Affiliates wrote extensively about their group being a community, that participants find community within their group, or that participants co-create community.

It gives them a joyful activity that is part of a community experience! Linda Lewis Lieberman, Central Iowa Traditional Dance

It gives us a place to leave our daily troubles at the door and just be happy with other people through music and dance, creating community. Jamey Hutchinson, Conestoga Dance Association

ECD is one of two dance communities that I participate in. The ECD community feels much more like a community. People look after each other when they're sick, get together for non-dance events, work happily together to host dance events. The ECD community also intersects with many other traditional arts communities and we attend each others' events. Jenny Fraser, Victoria English Country Dance Society

## **TDMS AS A SOURCE OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS**

In addition to TDMS activities offering a positive social space, many Affiliates wrote about how individuals develop significant long-term friendships or partnerships through TDMS. Respondents wrote about how they had found 'their people', that their friendship network is their TDMS community, or that they/others had found their romantic partner at a TDMS event.

Community, life-long friendships, innumerable marriages all resulting from participation in traditional dance and music. Carol Mazza, Round Hill Country Dancers

My dance community is my primary community. It has been a vibrant, warm, and welcoming space which has nurtured and transformed me as an individual and others as well. [...] Shoshana Silverman, Country Dance New York

## **AS A SOURCE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO BE COUNTED ON**

In addition, some Affiliates wrote about how their TDMS community supported individuals through challenging times (e.g., house emergency; partner passing away) or how new participants often find solace by joining TDMS activities.

A widow in one of our groups was in despair, and very lonely after the loss of her husband. Invited by a friend to come join the dance group, she soon found many new friends, and a lively activity that soon dispelled her depression and filled her life with new brightness and hope. Darrell Hancock, Boise Valley Square Dance Hall, Inc.

## **TDMS ACTIVITIES AS A WAY TO CONNECT TO HISTORY AND HERITAGE**

A number of Affiliates wrote about the value of TDMS in terms of connecting people, especially youth, with a rich tradition and history. There was a clear value in passing on traditions, along with the occasional mention of also looking forward.

[It] connects us with our roots in early America and with English, Irish, Scottish, French dance roots [...] Charlene Heaton, Louisiana Contras and Squares

Traditional dance, music and song enriches our community by exposing people to the rich history of this art form. We are sharing our country's past, and it is a living history. Contra dancing is a relatively easy dance to learn, and the joy of dancing to music can be exhilarating. Hal Southern, Urbana Country Dancers

## **SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WIDE SET OF SKILLS**

Affiliates wrote about participants developing a wide range of skills through their participation in TDMS activities. These included:

- Learning how to dance – even for those who felt that they couldn't dance or who might not be naturally inclined.
- Developing leadership and organizational skills through volunteer work.
- Developing social skills (e.g., how to cooperate; better understand others; children learning how to interact with adults).
- Learning how to play instruments.
- Learning how to perform.

We've seen people who never danced before and had no sense of rhythm become interested in dance and become very good dancers. Tom Mack, Shenandoah Valley Civil War Era Dancers

The power of traditional music, dance and song is that it builds community and personal growth in a healthy environment. As a Morris Dancer with frequent practices and performances, I and fellow dancers grew together as a team, gained confidence and learned organizing, dance and performance skills. It was fun and connected us to our own group and many others when touring. Nancy Yule, Capital English Country Dancers

I literally helped a new jammer unpack her first banjo, had her take some lessons, attend our jams, and she has just blossomed. Did I mention that she is probably in her 70s? [...] Patricia McCollom, The Living Tradition

## **SHAPING PERSONAL IDENTITY, OUTLOOK AND OTHER TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACTS**

In addition to participants building skills, making friends, etc., TDMS can have a profound impact on one's self identity, outlook and life direction. For instance, Affiliates wrote about participants gaining self confidence and overcoming shyness through TDMS.

[...] As a student and then starting work I was shy and didn't have much money, but I could afford to go to traditional music and dance events. There I could enjoy the music, enjoy the dance, and meet people easily while participating in an activity we all enjoyed. I moved to the NYS Capital District by myself for a job, and dance was a way to meet people and feel comfortable going out as a single person. Due to my love of traditional dance and especially English CD, I overcame my shyness to join organizers who put on dances. [...] Nancy Yule, Capital English Country Dancers

Others wrote about defining a sense of self, exploring different aspects of who their personality, or developing a broader outlook on life.

It specifically gives people a place be themselves and to be more than themselves. Daniel Sabath, Sound and Fury Morris

We have a sense of being a community when we come together to dance. We listen together, learn, make mistakes, laugh about it, etc. You can see changes in folks over time as they gain

confidence, express themselves more freely, are honest with each other. Charlene Heaton, Louisiana Contras and Squares

Not only are the dancers connecting with diverse people across our local community, but the larger connection with others regionally and even nationally truly expands their social horizons and opens their minds and hearts to welcoming strangers and making many new friends. Darrell Hancock, Boise Valley Square Dance Hall, Inc.

Still others wrote about individuals finding a sense of belonging through TDMS.

When someone finds the dance world that welcomes them it is like finding your "people" and can change your whole outlook on life and give you a place to belong. Catherine Bishop, New England Vintage Arts Society

Traditional dance, music and song has the power to transform the lives of individuals by inspiring a sense of belonging, allowing cultivation of aspects of the self that were under the surface, and being a source of sustainable wellbeing. Dela Murphy, Portland Intown Contra Dance

In addition, the following quotes illustrate the huge transformational impact that TDMS can have on one's life direction.

One William & Mary undergraduate stopped by to try our ECD. She was so nervous her hands were shaking. She kept coming back, stayed here for graduate school, took a low-paying job just so she could continue dancing and she is now our best dancer. John Millar, Williamsburg Heritage Dancers

"An individual recovering from addiction, once stabilized with 12-step community support, found another community through which to experience belonging, the joy of shared music and dance. Made life-long friends, developed passion, became an active volunteer and organizer, became a caller, participated in dance events in and outside of the region -- developed a life outside of work built around traditional music and dance." ... "An individual whose social skills aren't a strength became a dancer and found community." Barbara Ramlow, Lexington Traditional Dance Association

There are several people in our community who danced as children, raised their own children in camps and family dances, and now that their kids are grown, they return to dance for themselves. Lifelong love affair. Donna Hunt, Phila Area Trad Music and Dance

It was a revelation to me to attend my first contra, to come solo, to dance either role, to have the custom of changing partners. From that dance I was exposed to ECD, Irish set dance, modern squares. I discovered whole world of travelling to events. Truly life changing. Maxine Louie, Toronto English Country Dance Assembly

ALL music, dance, and song is transformative and essential for the "complete" person. Traditional music is especially wonderful in that it is extremely accessible for all, and for all ages. Carl Friedman, Charm City Rapper

Our slogan is "the Folk School changes you" and our motto is "I sing behind the plow". Ted Cooley, John C. Campbell Folk School

## **OTHER BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUALS**

Other benefits to individuals that were identified include:

- Some TDMS activities are affordable.
- Flips the common relationship with arts – everyone can be a participant in TDMS rather than being an observer.
- Pulls people away from screens and provides authentic connections.
- More accessible than couple dancing (e.g., ballroom; tango).

- Encourages cooperation as compared to competitive or ego-driven activities.
- Supports seniors who might be at risk of loss of connection and/or loneliness.
- A channel for lifelong learning.
- Non-commercial event organized by volunteers.
- Sanctioned and appropriate physical contact which can often be fraught.
- Adds consistent rhythm to life over months and years.

### TDMS'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO CREATING A HEALTHIER SOCIETY

All of benefits described above have focused primarily on individuals. However, out of those arise a wide range of benefits to the wider society (e.g., physically healthier individuals put less of a strain on the health system).

In addition, some broader societal benefits were mentioned. For instance:

Any community-building activities we participate in are for the greater good. "Working" and playing together as you do in contra/square dancing can't help but make the surrounding society better. Sharon McKinley, Mid-Maryland Folk Arts Council

By providing a fun kind of recreation that fosters appreciation for music, and emphasizes gracious social interaction and cooperation. Mady Newfield, Chicagoland English Country Dancers

[...] Getting to know people in a personal way to help us to all get along and understand each other better. David Fields, Minnesota Traditional Morris

In our context, it teaches individuals how to connect, cooperate, and have fun. It helps build connections that are hard to come by in a very modern and rapidly changing social scene. Celia Ramsay, Lark Traditional Arts

Each dance builds community because it is clear to all who come that not one of us is doing it for the money! We have to charge money, yes, but the event is not a commercial event. It is clear to all who come that the organizers, musicians, and callers, all do what they do for the love of dance and music and from the desire to contribute to others' well being. Because we are all volunteers in this enterprise, we model community involvement and we offer hope for the future in these troubled times. Beverly Seng, Albemarle Chapter, Country Dance and Song Society, Inc.

By helping to create joy and community, we contribute to the social glue that holds us together as humans. Movement together to glorious music brings calm, comfort, exuberance in shared experiences as an antidote to the sorrows of the world. Mary McConnell and the Sun Assembly Steering Committee

We had just enjoyed the annual "skit night" and the dance hall was filled with two kinds of chairs, each having a different kind of rack to stack them on. One of the dancers stood up and explained the two kinds of racks and how to stack the chairs. And then we put them all away. She commented afterwards that she was very surprised at how quickly everyone did this, and I said that I wasn't surprised -- for a group of people that spend their time learning how to do things together in small groups (Morris dance), why would we not be good at a cooperative task, such as cleaning up chairs? Cleaning up chairs isn't the most exciting thing to talk about, but I think that activities that bring people together in the arts also shows them how to work in the larger world at mundane, but important, tasks. Meg Dedolph, The Midwest Morris Ale Association

I believe it makes us better people. We learn to get along and that we are truly all connected. We learn to share

space/ideas/hopes. Its hard to explain. Pamela Weems, Traditional Austin Area Dance Association

"It brings people together across social barriers." "By creating communities that transcend the usual factions of politics, gender, race, generation, and urban/suburban/rural. By creating something we can share and delight in." "I believe sharing rhythm and movement with a group contributes to overall mental health and positive belief in community." Barbara Ramlow, Lexington Traditional Dance Association

We need the transformative power of music and dance more than ever right now in these very polarized times. It is amazing to me that we, who are most likely at the opposite ends of the political spectrum, can come together for a wonderful time of playing music and dancing together. Patricia McCollom, The Living Tradition

Good music, good caller, good venue, gathering friendly folks together for healthy exercise. Sounds the foundation of world peace. Walker Banning, Tallahassee Comm Friends Old Time Dance

More happy people = a better world George Marshall, Dance-a-Rama

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### Q45. COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF TDMS TO PARTICIPANTS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

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CDSS is in the early stages of identifying Affiliates who want to work collaboratively on issues of shared interest to our network. Our goal is to grow the number of interested Affiliates over time so that we can leverage the expertise, ideas, and efforts of our Affiliates and expand our collective impact throughout the continent.

The collaboration will involve some advocacy work. To get a sense of Affiliates' experience and interest, we asked Affiliates whether their organization has communicated the value of TDMS to their participants and/or the wider community. 124/140 survey participants responded to this question with 68% saying they had and 32% saying they hadn't.

72 Affiliates provided written comments as a follow-up to the close ended question – their responses highlighted the fact that the question was unclear (i.e., some of the respondents wrote about the ways that they promoted the value of TDMS while others wrote about how they promoted their particular activity to gain more participants).

Many wrote that organizing TDMS events illustrates the value.

[...] The communication of value is very direct, that is, comes primarily in the doing of it. Michael VanBuskirk, The Waltz Project

Approximately one dozen respondents wrote about submitting articles to newspapers or using flyers, beginner handouts, websites, and other communication tools. Again, it seemed that most respondents were writing about how they promoted their event rather specifically promoting the value or benefits.

Other respondents wrote about:

- Callers talk about the history of a dance prior to teaching it.



- Making announcements at dance about the value of the tradition.
- Having one-to-one conversations among community members and with potential new participants.

A few Affiliates seemed to directly speak to advocacy work. This included:

Museum exhibit about 5 years ago. In 2019, we're a nominee for a Community Engagement award and have been talking up the power of participatory arts as part of that. Lisa Sieverts, Monadnock Folklore Society

We talk about the dance and music community as a community, both local and regional. David Hamlin, The Portland Roadhouse

We stress that everyone who participates contributes to our dances. We welcome newcomers and teach our participants the importance of newcomers and how to help them feel comfortable as they learn English CD. We emphasize the contribution callers and musicians make by including BIODs in our emails and PR. In turn, we ask our participants for feedback about our dances to foster a sense of partnership and to stay in touch with what they value about our dances. We are affiliated with Dance Flurry Organization and CDSS, and participate in their activities and organizing as we can. Nancy Yule, Capital English Country Dancers

Through the stated and practiced values of our dance community. Jamey Hutchinson, Conestoga Dance Association

This value is always emphasized during our beginners' lessons and our website gives a brief history of contra & ECD traditions. Joyce Eyler, Nashville Country Dancers

A few Affiliates pointed out that maybe they don't communicate the value enough and that it is hard work.

Maybe not enough - it's hard to post a blurb that can adequately spell out the abject joy we see on the faces of dancers as they spin around each other to exquisite live music. Linda Nieman, Phoenix Traditional Music & Dance, Inc.

#### Q46-49. CURRENT AFFILIATE CAPACITY FOR ENGAGING IN NATIONAL ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

We followed Q45 by asking three direct questions about more national-level advocacy work. Not surprisingly, many Affiliates aren't currently engaged with or thinking about advocacy engagement on a national level.

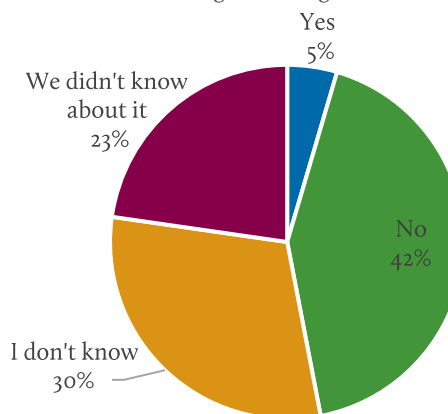
##### PAST ENGAGEMENT WITH ADVOCACY

For instance, only 9% of respondents noted that their organization had ever engaged politicians, funders, or other decision makers to advocate for their tradition (e.g., benefits; funding; legislative changes; the need for space) (Q46, N=130). As a follow-up to this question, 19 Affiliates provided written responses. 13 Affiliates wrote that they have done at least some advocacy, with the most common reasons being for space or funding (e.g., to stop the closure of a recreational facility; to ask for lower rental cost). Two Affiliates noted that as a 501(c)3, they either feel that they are prohibited to engage in political activities, or they aren't sure how to engage.

Being a 501(c) (3) we are not sure how to bring in public figures without looking like we are campaigning. We could use a political outreach group to take our community message public. Not too sure how to proceed. Linda Nieman, Phoenix Traditional Music & Dance, Inc.

We followed up Q46 by asking Affiliates if they or anyone in their organization had acted in response to CDSS's call to action about the US federal budget funding for the arts (Q47). 132/140 survey participants responded, with a very small percentage saying yes to participation (Figure 30). Many of the participants weren't sure if their group participation while 1/4 noted their group didn't know about the call to action. (We had sent out an email to Affiliates as well as posted on social media around June 2018).

Fig 30. Did you or someone in your group take action in response to CDSS's call to action about the U.S. federal budget funding for the arts? N=132



The 11 written to this question suggests that individuals are more likely to respond than organizations (e.g., Affiliated cited that various individuals wrote to their representatives; Affiliated city that they individually support federal funding for the arts).

#### ENGAGING IN FUTURE NATIONAL ADVOCACY WORK

Q48 asked survey participants to share their ideas for national level (Canadian and/or US) advocacy work around traditional dance, music and song. 33 participants responded.

A dozen survey participants wrote that they didn't have any ideas. A few mentioned that they aren't interested in national initiatives while others noted that they are too busy or that they are interested but don't have any ideas.

A handful of survey participants suggested incorporating dance into the schools either through the curriculum or through dance clubs. (All of these Affiliates were solely social dance organizers.)

A few survey participants suggested performances at large fairs and festivals. For instance, at the Mother Earth News Fair.

A few Affiliates suggested a focus on promotion. This included:

- A national ad campaign on a variety of media which highlights the traditions tailored to regional interests.
- Partnering with a radio show like 'Live From Here' to promote local events and groups.

One Affiliate pointed out that the US is a diverse country and that certain populations are more amenable to contra than others.

Regarding the U.S. (can't speak for our neighbors to the north), this is a diverse country. Prescott has many elderly, a problem for organizing. I don't think contra would fly where I grew up, Amarillo, a very conservative place. Places with greater educational levels are usually more contra friendly (but there is some interest among homeschoolers). [...] Bruce Hardwick, FolkHappens! Arizona

Individual Affiliates suggested the following ideas:

- A network of contra dances so that contra dancers could support each other.
- Focus on state level work (e.g., Maine celebrating bicentennial).
- Blog about various ideas for national advocacy work.
- Holding a dance at the White House - the Affiliate noted that the East Room was intended for ECD before it burned down.
- Advocate for halls as we are losing them to development and no one is building new halls.
- Broaden scope to include international folk as many also dance contra and English.
- Support the spread of ECD in Canada and promote ongoing publications.
- Organize/offer dance classes for contra, English Country, or waltz.

When asked if they or anyone in their group would like to help with this kind of work, 117 survey participants responded with only 6% saying yes (Q49). Another 46% said maybe while 48% said no. This may be because the survey participants themselves are not interested in advocacy or engaging in projects outside of their local community. However, it may also be that this type of work in a new concept for Affiliates and that it hasn't been well-enough defined in their minds in terms of what is involved and how they could participate.

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## Q50. FINAL COMMENTS

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44% of the survey participants wrote a response to the last survey question which asked for final comments. 1/3 of the respondents thanked CDSS, either generally or for the survey. For example:

Thank you. I'm glad you are there. I know it's a big country and you can't get to all of it but we are here... dancing... and making joy. It's great to have your resources available for our

community! Darlene Hamilton, The Historical Tea and Dance Society, California

The survey was useful in bringing awareness of possible growth opportunities with CDSS and CDSS resources. Enabling the idea of a possible closer relationship with the larger community so that OCTDS does not continue to exist in a silo.

Unfortunately, the existing problems with OCTDS and most of the boards lack of the participation in this survey or CDSS, may prevent that. Tim Downing Oakland County Traditional Dance Society, INC., Michigan

Two dozen Affiliates provided more information about their group. Highlights include:

- A few participants pointed out that their group is too busy with local organizing to engage on the national level.
- A few participants noted that they are having success in certain key organizing areas such as fundraising and governance.

A dozen participants each had specific requests or comments. These included:

- CDSS should hire talent from the West Coast for camp.
- CDSS correspondence should be sent to more than just one contact per Affiliate (e.g., all Board members).
- Print material should be sent directly to event organizers rather than the Affiliate contact.
- Concern that CDSS doesn't have a positive perception on the West Coast.
- The CDSS Board members should visit Affiliates.
- Acknowledgement that Affiliates could do a better job of tapping into what CDSS offers.
- Affiliate renewal, 501(c)(3), and insurance should be aligned.
- A morris team wanting help in organizing, and potentially funding foreign travel.
- More CDSS swag such as bumper stickers, t-shirts, water bottles and more.
- A request for address files for mailings.
- CDSS should help dance groups stabilize as a primary focus prior to working on expansion.

There were a handful of comments about the survey, most either very positive or commenting on how they filled out the survey (e.g., filled out on their own as weren't having a Board meeting prior to the due date.)

There were a few other random comments that are not summarized here.