

PRESS RELEASE –

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Introducing Extend – Developing Dancer’s Skills

Akademi is delighted to have been selected as one of the projects for support from the 2012 London Cultural Skills Fund, funded by the London Development Agency and managed by Arts Council England.

Extend – Developing Dancers’ Skills - is designed to equip aspiring South Asian dance artists with the creative, technical and management skills needed in the cultural sector to deliver events and help them to prepare for work on the bigger stage - dance and performance programmes for the 2012 Olympics.

Extend participants will be drawn from four established South Asian dance companies each nominating aspiring artists who will significantly benefit from the programme. The companies are: ANKH Dance Company; Beeja; Mudralaya Dance and Shristi Dance Company.

Extend will increase the number of skilled cultural workers in the dance/performance sub-sector and build capacity in companies producing South Asian dance events to extend participation to as wide an audience as possible in the lead up to and during the Cultural Olympiad.

Founded in 1979, **Akademi** is a pioneering organisation that works to encourage excellence in the practice of South Asian dance in London and the UK.

We are particularly pleased that the 2012 London Cultural Skills Fund will enable **Akademi** to build on our current professional development work to shape an accredited programme giving an employer-relevant qualification to the cultural workers we are targeting. Christina Christou, Akademi’s Education Lead, said of the programme: “A particular asset of **Extend** is the offer to take up an extended work placement with a major cultural venue or event in the city. For example, we are very excited that Big Dance, London’s Legacy Trust UK regional programme has agreed to become one of our placement hosts.”

Notes:

Extend is a partnership delivered by lead partner Akademi in collaboration with Central School of Speech and Drama and the South Bank Centre.

Big Dance is funded by the Legacy Trust UK and delivered in partnership by the Greater London Authority and Arts Council England. It is one of the keynote projects in the run up to the Olympic & Paralympic Games in 2012. For more information click on the link to the Big Dance programme on the LTUK site:

<http://www.legacytrustuk.org/programmes/london>

About London Development Agency:

The London Development Agency (LDA) works to improve the quality of life for all Londoners and drive sustainable economic growth.

Its role is to bring together the right people, skills and resources to deliver real results in the long term, responding to the needs and ambitions of communities and businesses.



About Arts Council England:

Arts Council England works to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives. As the national development agency for the arts, we support a range of artistic activities from theatre to music, literature to dance, photography to digital art, and carnival to crafts. Great art inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves, and the world around us. In short, it makes life better.

Between 2008 and 2011, we will invest £1.3 billion of public money from government and a further £0.3 billion from the National Lottery to create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk>

About the 2012 London Cultural Skills Fund:

The 2012 London Cultural Skills Fund is worth £1.2m over two years with award grants ranging from £25,000 - £50,000 to projects across London. These could be anything from multi-media skills gained through a film project, to set design or set construction skills gained through work in a theatre.

About Akademi:

Akademi has been evolving continually since 1979. We are currently celebrating our 30th anniversary year.

Our passion for encouraging excellence in the practice of South Asian dance in contemporary Britain burns as bright as ever. As a dynamic, future-facing organisation our priorities for action change in response to developments in dance and the society in which we live.

We are a local organisation with a global perspective and worldwide connections. Our pioneering work contributes to Britain's international reputation for innovation in South Asian dance. We actively push the boundaries of where dance can appear by producing performances for unusual places. Our productions embrace and are inspired by extraordinary architecture and public spaces.

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