

Final Report of Midwest Mandeng – Urbana Festivals 2016
CU West African Drum and Dance Collective
Jamie McGowan, Mara Thacker, Susan Ogwal

Thanks to the City of Urbana Public Arts Grant, Midwest Mandeng – an African Drum and Dance Festival is not only possible but a great and growing success in this community! In 2016, our organization advanced the festival further with seven first-class artists, more supporting partners, and a wide and enthusiastic attendance from across the region and locally. In short, we were absolutely thrilled with the event. What's more, attendees report their great respect and enthusiasm for the event, too. (See attached evaluation—submitted confidentially from participants.)

Held from Oct. 7-9, 2016, the festival was held largely at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts but additional free performances were held at The Urbana Free Library and the University Library, and we held our evening drum and dance party at Pizza M in downtown Urbana.

Our partnership with the Krannert Center was essential, as our options for a suitable venue were limited both by budgetary realities and the closing of Urbana's downtown hotel. Fortunately for us, Krannert offers superb space, support, and credibility for our festival, and as a result we greatly benefited from this fortunate partnership. Our attendance increased substantially this year, particularly attracting many more local attendees, we think due in part to our location and affiliation with Krannert, but also thanks to greater media coverage. This year over 275 people attended our workshops, demonstrations, and party.

We had strong attendance again from across the Midwestern region, including: Missouri (St. Louis, Columbia), Illinois (Chicago, East St. Louis, Champaign, Urbana, Mahomet, Savoy, Richton Park, Granite City), Wisconsin (Madison, Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Oshkosh), Indiana (Indianapolis, South Bend, and Bloomington), Kentucky (Louisville), and Michigan (Detroit, Lansing, Ann Arbor), and Virginia (Virginia Beach)! While we do not collect demographic information on our attendees, the diversity of the event is very notable, and we make every effort to support an inclusive, accessible event. We do this by making all events free to children under 13 and seniors over 65. We had numerous people take advantage of this access, as well. Additionally, we offer opportunities for attendees to earn free access to all events by volunteering at our events. Students and lower-income people reach out to us on this possibility, and we always have offered opportunities and free access to them on that basis. Lastly, we offer volume discounts to groups registering with multiple people.

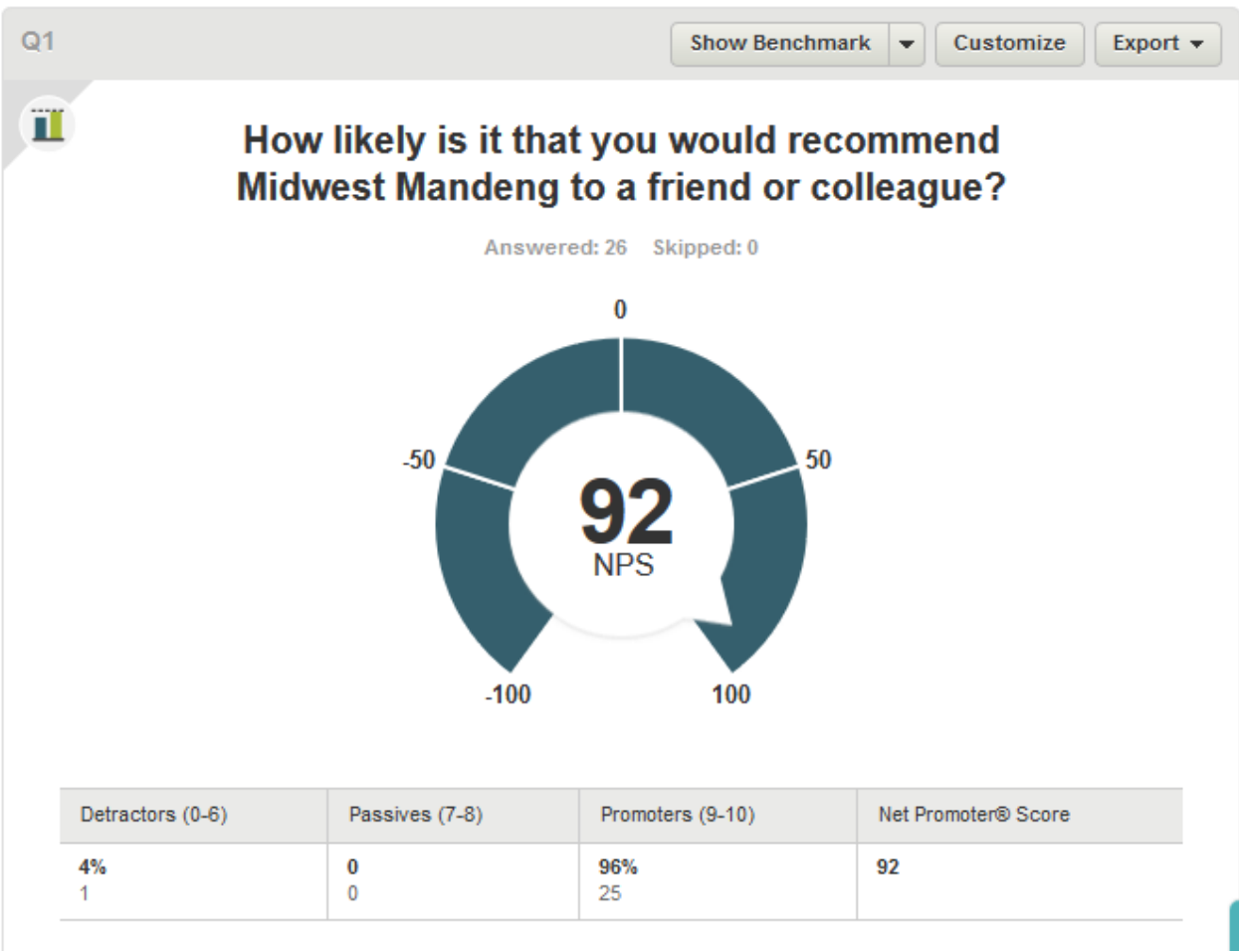
Due to higher expenses for travel and housing and the reduced funding received, we reduced costs this year by eliminating some of our print advertising and made an even more concerted effort to bring in advertising partnerships. For advertising, we concentrated on our electronic media (Facebook, email, listservs, our website), media outreach (*The News-Gazette*), liaising with strategic organizations (the Urbana Business Association, The Urbana Free Library, Krannert Center, Krannert Art, the Folk and Roots Festival, U of Illinois' School of Music, the Department of Dance, Center for African Studies, Center for Global Studies, Center for World Music, and the University Library). As noted, we also reached out to local businesses again, offering advertising options to them. These businesses include: H2O Salon and Spa, Manolo's Pizza and Empanadas, Maize, Weiskamp Screen Printing, and The Common Ground Food Coop. We also had two private donors, one of which was a provision of a frequent flyer airlines ticket.

We learned important lessons again this year, and we intend to revisit these lessons in planning for our next festival. We would like to work very closely with Krannert Center in planning the next event and the Department of Dance. Both are critical and crucial in our success, and both have had very positive input on the unfolding of the event. We believe we have created strong and solid good will between our group and these entities, but we suspect they will continue be helpful in future events. We need to develop our board further. With individuals moving away and changes in the board, we would like to create great involvement and

investment of time with our board, through better board management and outreach. This takes both time and some commitment of money, which is in short supply for any fledgling group, but we are optimistic about the investment. Lastly, we aim to create a 501(c)3 organization, so that we can be involved in other fundraising efforts over time. This goal also takes money, expertise, and time to execute, but the long-term pay off will be worth the investment.

<u>A: Personnel</u> <u>(Project Related)</u>	<u>Amount</u> <u>Requested from</u> <u>City</u>	<u>Matching</u> <u>Funds</u>	<u>In-Kind</u> <u>Donations</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Expenditure Notes</u> <u>(if applicable)</u>
Artistic		\$7000			Honoraria for 7 artists
Administration			\$5000	\$5000	Estimated leader time volunteered time to organization of event and during the event.
Technical			\$2500	\$2500	Estimated volunteered time at Krannert Center
Other		\$500		\$500	Paid staff – staffing admissions, moving equipment
Total Personnel Expenditures		\$7500	\$7500	\$15,000	
<u>B: Implementation</u> <u>(Cost of Project)</u>					
Supplies/Materials			\$50.30	\$50.30	Printing, tickets, wristbands, office supplies, water for artists
Promotion/Printing	\$1149.45	\$177.22		\$1326.67	Flyers, programs, t-shirts
Postage					
Artistic Services			\$500	\$500	Design work for publicity
Other Professional Services		\$181.00		\$181.00	Insurance
Space/Equipment Rental		\$354.00	\$5000	\$5354.00	Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, AirBnB
Travel/Transportation	\$1850.55		\$434	\$2284.55	Air travel for artists, mileage for one driving, checked luggage fee, local transport
Other		\$864		\$864	Per diem for 7 artists and group meals
Total Implementation Expenditures	\$3000.00	\$1576.22	\$5984.30	\$10560.52	
Total Expenditures (A+B)	\$3,000	\$9076.22	\$13,484.30	\$25,560.52	

SURVEY MONKEY EVALUATION OF MIDWEST MANDENG – 2016
Conducted with attendees, providing emails – Anonymously collected feedback



Q2

Export ▼

What did you like most about Midwest Mandeng 2016?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

Showing 26 responses

the authentic African dance/drum instruction

10/31/2016 2:37 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

good teachers, friendly staff - the party was fantastic.

10/24/2016 11:09 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The teachers, the interaction with drum and dance, the Dundunba party.

10/23/2016 6:46 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The teachers who were there

10/22/2016 9:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Although 2 out of the 3 days were not very profitable the vending was a great idea the Marketplace

10/21/2016 7:35 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Dance classes and the party

10/21/2016 10:02 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The instructors. All of the instructors were very talented, very knowledgeable, from the African Continent (so they know the journey, very passionate about the dance, history, and countries. (2) Registration was very organized. (3) the area, building and neighborhood was very appropriate for dancing, obtaining meals, rental of drum, and sparking interest of the school, and its activities. LOVED the WORKSHOP!!!

10/21/2016 9:43 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

classes - drum AND dance! The Festival was AMAZING and the few comments in #3 really pale in comparison to how lovely it was. I would attend this twice a year no question.

10/21/2016 9:39 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Everything!

10/19/2016 1:36 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I loved it all! I attended the Saturday classes taught by Moussa, Bolokada, Djeneba and Marietou.

10/18/2016 8:59 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

non-pressure leisure to pace myself

10/18/2016 6:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The drumming the dancing and all the friendly people met

10/18/2016 12:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The high-energy dancing and amazing instructors.

10/18/2016 12:41 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

the teachers

10/17/2016 5:10 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Great teachers and great participants

10/17/2016 12:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Reconnecting and making music with old friends. The venue is great too. Krannert is a good venue, but I wonder if it might be possible to have drum classes in a less reverberant room, like the drama rehearsal room down the hall.

10/17/2016 12:53 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The organizers are awesome! Yay! The teachers are awesome. Yay! and The new space rocks!

10/17/2016 11:48 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Enjoyed the location, staff, and instructors. The energy of everyone in attendance was electric and AMAZING!

10/17/2016 9:29 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I liked learning different djembe patterns.

10/17/2016 9:07 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Everything

10/17/2016 8:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Location, great teachers, good community of learners, ease of finding accommodations close, friendliness, vendors, and wonderful classes! Great party also!

10/16/2016 11:08 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Bolokada!

10/16/2016 10:53 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The dancing rocked my world!

10/16/2016 10:51 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The artistd

10/16/2016 10:31 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The great artists. You had the best artists.

10/16/2016 9:44 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I love the drum classes from Bolo, Moussa, and Fode Bangoura. I felt the drum teachers challenge me to work on my sound, technique, and solo phrases.

10/16/2016 9:41 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q3

Export ▼

What did you like least about Midwest Mandeng 2016?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 3

● Responses (23)

☁ Text Analysis

👤 My Categories

Showing 23 responses

n/a

10/31/2016 2:37 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

room was "boomy". hard to understand instructions from teachers.

10/24/2016 11:09 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

High percentage of reflected sound in venue - difficult to hear. Held on a football weekend so hotel prices high.

10/23/2016 6:46 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

Early start and late finish on Sunday. Start later or end earlier

10/22/2016 9:42 AM

[View respondent's answers](#)

Lack of attendance and customers for the market which may had to do with the location

10/21/2016 7:35 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

Sometimes you can't see in class because of too many people around teacher while demonstrating moves

10/21/2016 10:02 AM

[View respondent's answers](#)

The dance teachers taught some steps slowly facing the mirror and then sped up the pace considerably AND changed the sequences when dancers started dancing towards the drummers. This made it confusing, very difficult to follow and embarrassing for some. Also, it would have been appreciated if onlookers entered from the back or from the side rather than right at the front as it was distracting for dancers. Also, the dundunba party was in a location that was a bit too small to allow the entire audience to dance. Although I appreciated seeing master dancers perform, it would have been nice for the whole audience to get up and experiment without being "on show"

10/21/2016 9:39 AM

[View respondent's answers](#)

NA

10/19/2016 1:36 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

The date!

10/18/2016 8:59 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

vendor prices too high

10/18/2016 6:12 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

Paring	10/18/2016 12:55 PM	View respondent's answers
The entryway to the studio was a bit challenging.	10/18/2016 12:41 PM	View respondent's answers
it was all good	10/17/2016 5:10 PM	View respondent's answers
Acoustics of the large dance room not the best for drum class	10/17/2016 12:55 PM	View respondent's answers
It's a lot of work and stress	10/17/2016 11:48 AM	View respondent's answers
No complaints	10/17/2016 9:29 AM	View respondent's answers
I didn't like who taught them.	10/17/2016 9:07 AM	View respondent's answers
The room is very LOUD. Not sure what you can do about it, though.	10/17/2016 8:42 AM	View respondent's answers
I wish I had come for Friday, not just Saturday, Sunday. Next year I will take time off work to get there on Friday afternoon.	10/16/2016 11:08 PM	View respondent's answers
AWFUL acoustics in the rooms! I wore earplugs thru every class to avoid actual pain, but then I couldn't hear spoken instruction.	10/16/2016 10:53 PM	View respondent's answers
Nothing really. Was blown away. Such great classes	10/16/2016 10:51 PM	View respondent's answers
It was difficult finding a place to stay close to the venue. People may need a little more advance notice of the schedule so they can plan accommodations.	10/16/2016 9:44 PM	View respondent's answers
I wish they had a food vendor.	10/16/2016 9:41 PM	View respondent's answers

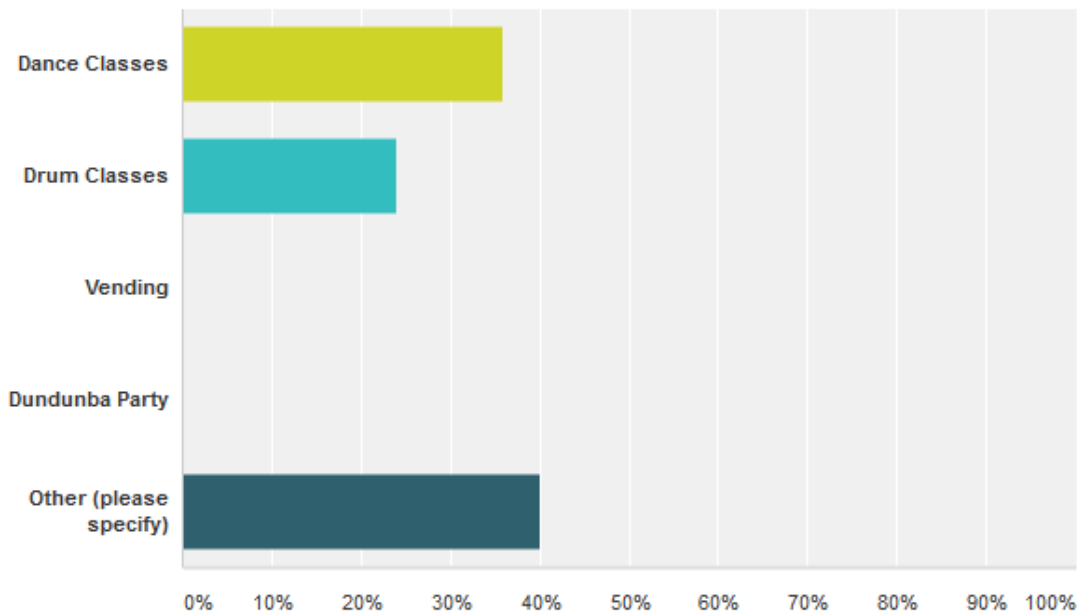
Q4

Customize

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What activities did you take part in?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices ▾	Responses ▾
▾ Dance Classes	36.00% 9
▾ Drum Classes	24.00% 6
▾ Vending	0.00% 0
▾ Dundunba Party	0.00% 0
▾ Other (please specify) Responses	40.00% 10

Showing 10 responses

I went to all the dance classes and the dundunba party.

10/31/2016 2:37 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Drum classes, vending and dundunba party (poll does not allow me to make multiple selections)

10/23/2016 6:46 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Dance and party...survey will not let you choose more than one activity

10/21/2016 10:02 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

DANCE, DRUM, Vending, and Dundunba Party

10/21/2016 9:43 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

This does not allow multiple choices, so let me say here: dance classes, drum classes, purchasing, dundunba party

10/21/2016 9:39 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

all of the above

10/19/2016 1:36 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Both drum and dance classes

10/18/2016 8:59 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Survey would only allow me to select one option, but I took part in drum classes, the dundunba party and watched dance classes.

10/17/2016 12:53 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

drum classes and party

10/17/2016 8:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I took 6 drum/dance classes on Saturday, 4 on Sunday. Dundunba party also.

10/16/2016 11:08 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Total

25

Q5

Export ▾

Any other comments or suggestions?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 7

Showing 19 responses

n/a

10/31/2016 2:37 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

great job. thanks for all your efforts. Hope you can do it again.

10/24/2016 11:09 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

This is a great event! Thanks to all who make it possible!

10/23/2016 6:46 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Perhaps women teachers could pull up their skirts more to see foot patterns. Even when you could see the teachers, sometimes their lapas were too long to clearly see movements

10/21/2016 10:02 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

THANK YOU!!! See you next year. This was the first experience of a African Dance Workshop away from ST. Louis. Our children had so much fun in class, shopping networking and the pajama parties. They are ready to get on the road again.

10/21/2016 9:43 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Above. Thank you organizers!!!

10/21/2016 9:39 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I like the new venue, many people commented on how loud it was though. On-site food options would be a plus. All the teachers were amazing, of course. Lots of positive energy. Thanks for all your hard work in making this happen!

10/19/2016 1:36 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Please move the date back to the end of September. The October date is difficult. I think that it is also in conflict with the programming of other African dance groups who might otherwise participate.

10/18/2016 8:59 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Would like Question Answer Session with Dance instructors after the class for 20 minutes

10/18/2016 6:12 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Thanks for organizing a great event!

10/18/2016 12:41 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

it was a magnificent weekend,sorry I had to leave to get to work

10/17/2016 5:10 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Loved the room for dancing! If possible a better acoustically separate room for drum class

10/17/2016 12:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I had some discussion with drummer friends about a couple things that I'd like to share. First idea: Have one featured drum artist and one dance artist for the whole workshop, on a rotating basis (i.e. Moussa & Djeneba one year, Bolokada & Youssouf the next, other pair the next). This would allow the experience to be more immersive and artistically focused over the three days. Of course, it means more work for the artists during the conference, less work for the artists not there that year, and attendance might vary by year. But, some way of making the whole experience more intensive would be great. Second, for drummers: it would be great to have the option of choosing a more advanced set of classes, and one more geared towards beginning players. Maybe a beginning track and an "intermediate/advanced", or something like that. We definitely understand the desire for a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere, but it would be great for more experienced players to be able to get a more challenging, focused learning experience from the great artists at the conference. Perhaps intermediate/advanced track would cost a bit more and include all classes? One way to do it would be to still have all three artists present, one teacher teaches all the classes in one day, one (or two) beginning or all levels, and one advanced. Fode teaches two on Friday, Bolo teaches 3 on Sat. and Moussa 2 on Sunday, along with Abass's class. Clearly it would take some thinking and planning, from the organizers and the artists, but I think folks might really benefit from having the class experiences be tailored a little more closely to their experience/skill level.

10/17/2016 12:53 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Since the festival takes place during football season, maybe trying to get a block of hotel rooms (ex. residence inn) someplace that can accommodate 4-5 in a room with a kitchen that would be available during early registration. It was difficult finding a hotel & the one we stayed in was not very clean.(Baymont)

10/17/2016 9:29 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Great job! Great classes!

10/17/2016 8:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The food onsite the previous year was really good. Is anything like that possible for the future?

10/16/2016 11:08 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

1) At dance workshops I have taken in the past, recording was disallowed, but a review video of every dance taught was made available for purchase. The same could be done for drum workshops in the form of an audio file, freeing the students to actually focus on participating, rather than on capturing the recording. I would be willing to pay additional fees for such recordings. 2) FYI: For the question about which parts of Mandeng we participated in, the survey only allowed one selection, not multiples. 3) Thank you for inviting seniors to attend free! Otherwise I could not have come for this fabulous weekend!

10/16/2016 10:53 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I actually took part in drum classes and Dundunba party as well and was only able to check one.

10/16/2016 9:44 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Make sure they are more T shirts available and also please have a food vendor.

10/16/2016 9:41 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

LOCAL

MIDWEST MANDENG

Dance, drum festival this weekend

URBANA — The third annual Midwest Mandeng, an African dance and drum festival, will take place Friday through Sunday in Urbana.

The festival will feature workshops taught by masters of Guinean and Malian drumming, as well as presentations and demonstrations.

The C-U West African Drum & Dance Collective organizes the festival, which is supported by an Urbana Public Arts grant and various businesses and organizations.

"We've had people come from near and far every year — Canadians, Californians and folks from across the Midwest," said **Jamie McGowan**, one of the organizers.

Midwest Mandeng classes begin at 12:30 p.m. Friday at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts with Malian dance taught by **Djeneba Sako** and Guinean djembe drumming led by **Fode Bangoura** at 2:15 p.m.

The classes and other events continue Saturday and Sunday, with a Dundunba Party from 9 to 11 p.m. Saturday at Pizza M, 208 W. Main St., U.



BANGOURA



SAKO

MELISSA MERLI

GEORGETOWN TOWN