

Dance & Disability

*A research on inclusive dance education & training
in Greece, Netherlands, Sweden & the UK.*

Dr. Betina Panagiotara



I DANCE



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ONASSIS
STEGI

SKÅNES DANSTEATER

holland
dance
festival

Stopgap
DANCE
COMPANY

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ABSTRACT

This study is an outcome of the iDance educational project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, which has been initiated by the Onassis Stegi (GR) and delivered in partnership with 3 more European institutions: the Holland Dance Festival (NL), the Skånes Dansteater (SE), and the Stopgap Dance Company (UK). The study examines and discusses inclusive dance as practiced principally in these four countries, outlining, and comparing core cultural and educational policies, aiming to map current conditions and to articulate possible future strategies. It starts first with the theoretical background that examines definitions, and challenges stereotypical notions of dance and disability, to continue with researching the cultural and educational conditions in each of the partnering countries, mapping and examining how iDance contributes to the educational landscape, and it finishes with conclusions and a best practices guide that aims to indicate what is effective, and thus to contribute to the development of the field. Methodologically, the study uses bibliographical research, socio-historical approaches, and ethnography as valuable tools in attending and participating in relevant workshops and interviewing key-members of the programme.

In some ways, disability and dance can be seen as a microcosm of dance itself. As dance is made of many genres and approaches, so is disability dance; as dancers struggle to gain visibility and understanding, so do disabled dancers. Dance is often seen as less important than other art forms; however disability dance does not appear to be seen as less important at the present time.

Verrent, 2007: 3

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to outline, examine and discuss the existing educational infrastructures, professional networks, and available practices of inclusive dance focusing primarily on the four European countries participating in the programme iDance, co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The intention is to delineate existing realities in the field of contemporary dance and disability – especially the educational status– so as to form alternatives to the status quo, and articulate a best practices guide. The objectives are to:

- Map existing conditions and structures as a method of recording relevant realities and producing alternatives to the dominant status quo.
- Outline and discuss a basic set of methodologies and practices in relation to inclusive dance.
- Consolidate a best practices guide focusing on education.
- Propose a set of bibliographic references for further research.
- Bring to the fore the various legislative and socio-political structures that define dance practices in the four countries in question.

The scope of the research

This report will focus primarily on the participating institutions and their practices in specific European countries. It will however be informed by institutional practices and structures from other European and North American countries as well, aiming to highlight what works best in the field of inclusive dance in relation to educational methods, artistic practices, and institutional structures.

Methodology

In order to do so this report employs theoretical approaches; a combination of bibliographical research, historical and social approaches; along with ethnographic methodologies such as interviews with key members of the programme, teachers and students; and field study as in participant-observation of educational programmes.

1. Theoretical Axis

Theoretical approaches aim to define the terms dance and disability, and their accompanying terms, such as inclusive dance, so as to set the context of the research, bring forth the most significant issues, and highlight the major topics of discussion. The theoretical contextualisation will provide the necessary lenses through which we can study the topic. In particular, it will:

- Define the terms dance and disability, discussing their connotations and significance.
- Map and examine the fundamental theoretical approaches.
- Name the theoretical context of this particular report, its reasoning, and main framework.

2. iDance: setting the contexts, discussing the outputs

A brief description of the institutions participating in the programme, focusing on their aims, objectives, and practices, so as to examine and discuss their working structures and methodologies as applied in different contexts will be provided. Thus, this research will examine separately –for each participating institution– the cultural policy in relation to dance and disability; the country’s legislation; the primary private and public structures; the existing working practices; the available educational opportunities; the professional frameworks and networks; the overall accessibility; and, finally, the flexibility of these structures. These partners are listed and examined in alphabetical order according to the country of origin:

- Partner A: Greece — the Onassis Stegi
- Partner B: Netherlands — the Holland Dance Festival
- Partner C: Sweden — the Skånes Dansteater
- Partner D: UK — the Stopgap Dance Company

This research will also briefly present how each institution operates in relation to educational programmes and professional training for inclusive dance; the effects of each programme; and the ways in which the partners worked together, exchanging

valuable information and necessary practices, giving feedback and forming a best practices guide that can be useful beyond this particular programme.

3. Experience from the field: inclusive educational methodologies

This part is an overview of the practices and methodologies that have proven beneficial in the course of the programme, as they were recorded by the researcher while she observed and participated in the programme, and as they were discussed in interviews held with participants and organisers. The aim is:

- to delineate the educational principles characterising inclusive dance teaching approaches;
- to include and share the experience and voices of the ones participating; and
- to associate inclusive dance training with the mainstream dance scene.

4. Best practices in lieu of a conclusion

The paper ends with an indicative best practices guide that aims to act as a stepping-stone for further research, networking, and enrichment of the theoretical and practical discourse of dance and disability.

1. THEORETICAL AXIS

On December 3rd, 2017, on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Onassis Stegi in Athens organised a colloquium on dance and disability. One of the guests was the dance artist and researcher Kate Marsh from the UK. She opened her speech emphasising the problems stemming from the terminology employed to discuss and practice dance and disability. She pointed out how the term ‘dance and disability’ divides between the art of dancing and the condition of disability, so that this labelling is not useful in overcoming stereotypes about dance or disability. The alternative terminology to ‘dance and disability’ is ‘inclusive dance’, which she also found challenging since it is not very clear who or what is included in this form of art. As an example, she recounted a personal experience from when she was creating a new choreography. She sent out an open call for her audition using the term ‘inclusive dance production’, thinking that the term will be more inviting for disabled dancers and less dividing than ‘dance and disability’. However, she received plenty of personal emails from artists with disabilities asking what she means by the term inclusive, and wondering whether they could be included in her dance work. Their responses reveal the vagueness of the term.

Similarly, her colleague from the USA, Carmen Papalia, opened his speech identifying himself as a social practice artist instead of using more common terms such as blind artist or visually impaired artist. As he recounted, it was a conscious choice, since being a social practice artist emphasised his work rather than his disability. He considered terms such as blind artist to limit the understanding of his way of working and living, while also acting as signs of difference. In his own words, the terms social practice artist and non-visual learner point to other modes of understanding, discussing, and communicating artistic practices, which deviate from the orthodox model that relies solely on eyesight. Thus, Carmen Papalia also brings forth the significance of terminology and how it sometimes reproduces dominant discourses instead of enabling alternatives.

This research opens with these episodes from a public conference held in Athens, to point out the complexity and the diversity of the topic of dance and disability focusing primarily on the terminology used and on how naming is a political act. As such, it is

indicative of a rather dominant discourse that differentiates between able and disabled bodies, constructing stereotypes that can be very limiting. According to sociologist Carolien Hermans ‘the term disability is associated with disease, illness, tragedy and loss. The term is not value-free’, and this is exactly why it needs to be re-thought and re-examined (2016: 160). She goes on to argue that ‘the disabled body is marginalised within the predominantly able-bodied dance community’ something that will be further discussed in the following pages, when the way dance as an art form challenges existing stereotypes will be examined (Hermans, 2016: 160).

1i. Models of Disability — Models of Understanding

According to sociologist Carol Thomas the vast increase in research and publications on sociological approaches of disability should not be considered an indicator of different perspectives on how we understand disability. For Thomas the sociology of disability is divided into:

- a) the disability studies that argue that disability is informed by social exclusion, and
- b) medical sociology that argues that disability is ‘caused by illness and impairment’ (2004: 570).

Thus, she argues that there is no one way to understand disability but there are rather ‘sociologies of disability’ that coexist but don’t really engage with one another most of the times (Thomas, 2004: 570).

Aiming to decipher differences and to pinpoint similarities between different approaches, she examines a number of theorists, and she focuses on the social and the medical model of defining disability. The 1970s’ social model ‘holds that disability is the outcome of social barriers that restrict the activities of people with impairments’ (Thomas, 2004: 570). Activist and academic Vic Finkelstein and sociologist Mike Oliver, who set up the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) in the 1970s, are seminal in disability studies, and especially in configuring the social model of disability. According to Finkelstein cited in Thomas, there are two possible ways to examine disability; one is as a personal tragedy, and the other is as a social oppression that excludes particular people from employment, benefits etc. In the second case, the aim should be to change society in a revolutionary way. For Finkelstein ‘disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society’ (Finkelstein in Thomas, 2004: 572).

On the contrary, sociologists Tom Shakespeare and Nick Watson support that the social model described by Finkelstein is obsolete nowadays, and that it fails to acknowledge that disabled people are restricted by both social constructions and their bodies (Thomas, 2004). They argue that ‘disability is a complex dialectic of

biological, psychological, cultural and socio-political factors' (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001: 22 cited in Thomas, 2004: 574). Thus, they argue for a wider understanding of disability as a complex product of different conditions.

In this debate about what constitutes disability and how it should be framed, some researchers and sociologists react to Finkelstein's social model, arguing that it is inadequate as it separates impairment and disability. However, Finkelstein's social model was not intended to be a theory. It intended to highlight the significance of social factors in understanding disability. According to Thomas, Finkelstein tries to redefine the term disability in a way that is revolutionary compared to the other authors who examine disability solely as reduced physical or mental capacity (2004). Therefore, Thomas holds that disability is a specific form of social oppression associated with restriction imposed socially rather than biologically (2004). Concluding, she praises Finkelstein's social model and supports that disability is 'a form of oppression on a par with other forms of oppression in our society associated with gender, race, class and sexuality' (Thomas, 2004: 581).

Overall, the medical model is criticised for isolating medical reasons from social realities, while it also sets a normative type of body against everything which is different. The consequence of such an approach is that it labels people with disabilities as differing individuals that operate individually outside of given communities. On the contrary, the social model implies that social structures are of significance because they can either cause discrimination and make people socially disabled on top of their physical disability, or support and empower people with disability so that they are active members of society. For example, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), signed in the UK in 1995, was monumental for the rights and the visibility of disabled people in the UK as it prohibited the exclusion of disabled people on the basis of their disability, and, in effect, acted against discrimination. The social model is being criticised for over-simplifying its approach to impairment and disability, and examining only the social factors. However, the social model has been proven very effective in leading the way towards socio-political changes that empower people with disabilities within society.

Apart from the two contrasting theories described above, there also exists the affirmative model of disability as defined by scholars Sally French and John Swain who discuss the positive experiences and benefits of disability (French & Swain cited in Marsh, 2016). Their model is quite revolutionary in suggesting that people with disabilities feel good in their own bodies, taking into consideration individual experience of impairment. If the social model was a response to the medical one, then the affirmative model is a response to the personal tragedy attached to the notion of disability. Contrary to victimisation, the affirmative model advocates for a positive consideration of disability, that takes into account personal experience, and proposes alternatives to a viewpoint of disability as lacking or as being less. However, this model is relatively new and under debate, being mostly a philosophical approach that aims to reflect differently on disability.

All in all, the dominant models for studying and understanding disability are the medical and social ones, that are, in my view, complementary in that the social one does not doubt the medical classification of disability, but rather points out the socio-political implications, how they affect notions of disability, and how they shape social realities.

1ii. Disability as Identity

Drawing from the fact that disability has not been studied in depth in an academic context and basing his arguments on the dominant perceptions about disability, cultural theorist Tobin Siebers aims to develop a disability theory that will enable a discussion that considers bodies and their potential for critical thinking (2010). His main objective is to reveal how an ideology of ability has dominated the social and political discourse in Western societies, aiming to rethink disability as an identity, and to introduce an embodied approach. His study is critical for associating dominant socio-cultural ideologies with the fear of disability as a condition of precarity that can happen to anyone.

Contrary to the medical model that defines disability as an individual defect that needs to be addressed, disability studies rely mostly on the social model that affected the Disability Rights movement and challenged existing stereotypes. Disability studies examine how systems, beliefs, and ideas about disability construct social and political realities that in turn define the life of disabled people. According to Siebers 'disability studies names the states of social oppression unique to people with disabilities' (2010: 4). He argues that disability is not about the defects one might have, but about the identity of a minority (2010). However, the term disability triggers certain important contradictions of which we need to be aware when discussing and examining the field.

Siebers points out that 'the use of disability to disparage a person has no place in progressive, democratic society, although it happens at present all the time' highlighting how disability used to be and still is a factor of discrimination (2010: 4). What I find very interesting in Siebers' approach of disability is the association he makes with the term precariousness that implies human vulnerability, fragility, ageing, change, sickness and overall qualities of being human. In particular, he highlights that 'disability often comes to stand for the precariousness of the human condition, for the fact that individual human beings are susceptible to change, decline over time, and die' (2010: 5).

For Siebers, disability studies need to account for both negative and positive aspects of disability, and to make evident that disability as an identity is quite unstable and can at any time affect anyone (2010). He considers disability as an identity of several minority groups and discusses how a disability is often a sign of inferiority. He mentions that 'disability marks the last frontier of unquestioned inferiority because the preference for ablebodiedness makes it extremely difficult to embrace disabled people and to recognise their unnecessary and violent exclusion from society' (2010: 6).

What exactly is this preference for 'ablebodiedness' or for what Siebers names 'the dominant ideology of ability' (Siebers, 2010:6)? The body is a field of contradiction in Western culture as it is at the same time not as important as the mind and the self, but still quite important in a culture that promotes perfecting the body by all means possible, via medicine and medical procedures, exercise, nutrition etc. Also, while history is a record of human finitude –of war, death, sickness– the future is envisaged as a victory over this reality, a winning over death through science and the perfection of the human body. However true, these contradictions are not usually challenged. According to Siebers, this occurs because of a shared ideology that brings these contradictions together smoothing their ambivalences. For Siebers, one such ideology is that of *ability* which is in essence the preference for able bodies that in turn masks a mentality of measuring humanity primarily by individual ability (2010). This is why, as Siebers outlines, disability triggers fear, is unwanted, contradicts the hopes for a future without fragility and vulnerability, and in essence challenges the dominant ideology of ability (2010).

The ideology of ability that Siebers examines produces stereotypes by viewing disability as an individual issue that marginalises people and makes them less able and thus less useful in a society. However, he counter-argues that disability must be claimed as an identity even if such an approach is now considered outmoded in critical theory. Identity for Siebers is very important in social terms and can be politically productive for a variety of groups that are excluded from the norm. He states that 'identity politics remains in my view the most practical course of action by which to address social injustices against minority peoples and to apply the new ideas, narratives, and experiences discovered by them to the future of progressive,

democratic society' (2010: 15). Moreover, he highlights identity not as an individual property but as a structure with which to enter social realities, norms, myths, realities and ideas, and thus to identify and to be identified (2010).

Siebers argues that knowledge is situated in social settings and is also embodied, giving the example of how femininity is enacted in the phrase *she throws like a girl*. Embodiment is pivotal for disability studies as is the need to develop a complex theory of embodiment that will consider disability as a 'form of human variation' (2010: 25). For Siebers, this theory of embodiment will take into consideration the body as part of the discourse whereas the social model focuses primarily on the social conditions.

He examines how the ideology of ability masks the properties of the fragile and ageing body, and how because of its weakness it is less acknowledged as a source of knowledge. A body that always fights for perfection is at the core of ability excluding any form of disability. Contrary to other minority groups, disability might affect everyone. Hence, while a racist cannot wake up being black instead of white, an athlete can become paralysed or disabled from one day to the other. In this perspective, disability studies should offer a counter-model of embodiment where difference is accommodated instead of concealed (Siebers, 2010). In that case, disability becomes an evident part of everyday reality, instead of a source of exclusion and discrimination.

His contribution to the discussion is critical in that it examines how, besides social structures, there is also a prevailing culture of ability that goes unnoticed but has serious consequences for society and for people with disabilities who are always deficient. This dominant culture can be disputed only if acknowledged and discussed as such, while disability theory according to Siebers should be able to bring forth disability as identity, to point out the commonalities between disability and precarity as a shared human condition, and to articulate the advantages of a thinking and acting body (2010).

1iii. Dance and Disability

Disability studies and theories are articulated primarily by cultural theorists and sociologists, but the input coming from the field of dance is very significant for this study given that its focus is dance and disability. Moreover, dance is a field that nurtures contradictions in relation to the body and as such constitutes a fruitful ground for further investigation on disability theories.

Dance theorist and choreographer Ann Cooper Albright examines the topic of disability, arguing that the relation between dance and disability is rich in order to explore social constructions about the body, issues of physical ability, subjectivity, and cultural visibility (Albright, 2013). Recounting her own experience of being disabled for a short period, she reveals how the disabled body is usually hidden from view and thus any performative aspect is a radical act that subverts expectations.

As a dancer, I am a body on display. As a body on display, I am expected to reside within a certain continuum of fitness and bodily control, not to mention sexuality and beauty. But as a woman in a wheelchair, I am neither expected to be a dancer nor to position myself in front of an audience's gaze.

Albright, 2013: 95

Her text *Moving across difference* is paramount regarding the discussion of the relationship between dance and disability, especially in examining how an ideal body type was shaped early on in the history of theatrical dance (1997). In her research, she draws from historical sources, like the writings of theorist Theophile Gautier and well-known ballerinas such as Marie Taglioni, to disclose how the normative body in dance was shaped during the 19th century romantic era. Thus, during the romantic era the exemplar of the dancer was female, ethereal, highly skilled, abled, tall, thin, white, flexible, and mystical. In other words, Albright examines how dance has constructed an ideal body type and along with it an ideal version of the dancer, making evident the socio-historical background of existing stereotypes that are nowadays questioned by many professionals in the field (1997).

Her aim is to 'challenge the prevailing vision of professional dance that equates physical ability with aesthetic quality' and to bring forward the gaze that accompanies

viewing bodies on stage (Albright, 1997:2). Albright supports that watching disabled bodies on stage forces us to acknowledge that even though dance is based on physical abilities it is not necessarily defined or limited by them. As most theorists and professionals in the field –as discussed in the opening of this chapter–, she also takes issue with the term disabled and disability considering its connotations and discussing how ‘the politics of naming are...fraught through and through with the politics of identity’ (1997:3).

Besides examining how this notion of the ideal body has been constructed, and how it results in exclusion, she also brings forth how the discourse on dance and disability has been restricted in such a way that it further disqualifies dancers with disabilities. In particular, she outlines how dance critics have been reluctant to examine the topic of dance and disability, as the realities of disability tend to disrupt ‘not merely cultural representations or theoretical precepts, but ways of living as well’ (Albright, 1997:4). By the same token, feminists have also been reluctant to examine issues of disability as they associate the disabled body to the passive thus reaffirming stereotypical notions of disability instead of making links between common realities that have to do with social exclusion, as well as with stereotypical notions of the self and autonomy (Albright, 1997). That is, the discourse on and the practice of dance and disability remain limited and marginal due to established aesthetic preconceptions and the dominant ideology of ability that theorist Siebers has analysed.

Adding to this discussion, theorist and artist Petra Kupperts discusses disability through specific performative works arguing against notions of normativity when considering the human body (2005). She argues that the body of the disabled performer is both invisible as an active, empowered agent, and hyper-visible as a passive, unable agent in society and claims that ‘when disabled people perform, they are often not primarily seen as performers, but as disabled people’ (Kupperts, 2005: 49). Therefore, the disabled body is ‘*naturally* about disability’ and is marginalised due to its disability [emphasis in the original] (Kupperts, 2005: 50).

She further argues that being disabled is a label, a particular identity that deviates from the normal, the common sense perception of the world (2005). According to her, this labelling needs to be undone as has happened in the past with issues of race and

gender. She emphasises how disability as a social construct has severe implications for the disabled as they identify and position themselves through this labelling. In other words, she maintains that ‘the status of disability demarcates a way of life, a social position and a way of being that isn’t easily abandoned, given the ideological and institutional anchoring of the concept in everyday life’ (Kuppers, 2005: 51).

Kuppers further claims that the dominant cultural norm denies disabled people choices, and imposes a valorisation that derives from particular body images that provoke exclusion (2005). She illustrates how ‘disability functions as a master sign in our culture by dominating other discourses of identity. Its connotations cannot be escaped –to be disabled thus means to be profoundly excluded from self-representation’ (Kuppers, 2005: 54). For her, the counter-proposal is to make political interventions and to work with subversive aesthetics that emphasise on the presence of the body. She insists that the aim should be to destabilise given identities and labels so as to make room for alternatives.

Focusing on dance, the artist and researcher Kate Marsh recently completed her doctorate research on dance and disability. Her research highlights the lack of leadership from disabled people in the dance field, discussing the implications of this (2016). Her arguments are relevant to what dance scholar Sarah Whatley describes as a lack of role models in education that will inspire, guide and support both disabled and non-disabled dance students. Marsh argues that ‘disabled dance artists are valued, assessed and critiqued within an existing epistemological framework in dance that is based on normative bodies’ instead of building alternative frameworks suited for different bodies (2016: i). Her research is significant in examining the participation of people with disabilities in key-positions in the dance sector. It is often referred to in this paper, as it originated from both her personal experience as an artist with disability, as well as from her theoretical work.

Being herself part of the dance scene as a disabled artist, she uses an ethnographic approach that incorporates hers and other artists' experience as students and professionals in the field in the UK. She describes how the disabled dancer became more visible in the UK as a professional through the work of key companies such as the Candoco Dance Company and the Stopgap Dance Company though it happened

without the essential educational framework to support disabled artists. On the contrary, dance artists were learning on the job due to the limited educational options, while many others were excluded, as access to education for disabled dancers is still limited. Even though Candoco ran an educational programme from 2004-2007, the LSC (Learning and Skills Council) terminated its funding due to changing policy arguing that disabled students should participate in wider educational structures. However, such structures, as for example universities and other schools, were not prepared for such courses and the individual needs of disabled students were not addressed (Marsh, 2016). Moreover, in terms of leadership and equality most of these educational structures only employ non-disabled teachers, reinforcing already existing leadership stereotypes.

In addition, Marsh observes that prominent disabled dancers in the UK, such as David Toole and Welly O'Brien, never undertook leadership roles, regardless of their popularity and experience (2016). She uses them as a powerful example to showcase how disabled artists are excluded from leadership roles. As she describes:

When dancers do not see 'themselves' represented in the wider dance infrastructure they are subsequently left questioning if they 'belong' there. This applies to training (lecturers, professors, peers) and practice (producers, managers, performers, choreographers).

Marsh, 2016: 8

She uses the term gate-keepers to talk about agents, programmers, artistic directors, policy-makers, and other professionals who hold positions of power in the field and who are usually non-disabled people (2016). Her aim is to reveal the exclusion of people with disabilities that takes place in key-positions that shape the future of dance and to bring forth their mis-representation.

To conclude, Albright examines the socio-historical perspective of how the ideal body of dance has been constructed analysing its consequences, the limited discourse on dance and disability, while at the same time arguing that dance remains a dynamic field where bodies are re-considered and put on stage subverting expectations and norms. Petra Kuppers highlights how the identity of disability has been associated with notions of weakness and helplessness, while what is needed is an empowered

identity along with subversive aesthetics. Finally, Marsh highlights the lack of leadership by artists with disability, examining the consequences and arguing for radical change in dance structures and practices. In a nutshell, most researchers and practitioners involved in dance and disability focus on how the dominant discourse has been shaped by the notion of the ideal body and on how inclusive dance is a way to untangle such notions, to reconsider the body and its potential making the dance field an experimental, shifting, and diverse artistic discipline.

1iv. Disability, Dance, and Education

The notion of the ideal body is also present in educational structures, making it even more difficult for dancers with disabilities to participate. The topic of education is crucial for the next generation of dancers with and without disabilities, and thus for the future development of inclusive dance at large. While specific educational realities in different countries will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, it is imperative to highlight that in all the countries under discussion, the available educational frameworks are limited. As will be shown, most of the theorists and researchers examine and discuss the educational infrastructures in the UK, as the UK is a leading example in inclusive dance. However, the core issues studied in the UK are true to variant degrees in most European, if not most Western, countries. That is, stereotypical notions of what constitutes dance, lack of appropriate educational frameworks, untrained staff, reluctant participants, limited or no funding for inclusive dance, and a lack of a specific educational policy are common occurrences.

In her article *Dance and disability: the dancer, the viewer and the presumption of difference* scholar Sarah Whatley examines available educational structures and how they operate in the UK context (2007). She focuses on education, arguing that while several professional dance companies have done significant work with disabled dancers since the 1980s, the educational framework has not been modified to address shifting needs. Thus,

training for the disabled dancer remains at the margins and therefore the disabled dance student is marginalised within a predominantly able-bodied community of teachers, individuals with disabilities tend to be defined by difference.

Whatley, 2007: 5

Her article is based on research held at the University of Coventry, where she teaches, with the participation of disabled students. Students committed to participating in the research for nine months and then shared their experience through questionnaires and discussions (Whatley, 2007). The programme had four goals:

- to develop good practice for individual learning in dance technique;
- to examine traditional approaches to technique;
- to make more visible and empower the disabled dance student;

— to raise awareness concerning issues relating to politics of difference and disability through debate and discussion.

On the one hand, partial results of the research showed that a number of teachers were anxious about inclusive dance due to their lack of knowledge on how to accommodate students with disabilities, which was a recurring issue in this study. Moreover, the teachers acknowledged the necessity of changing the university curriculum so as to suit shifting educational needs and priorities. On the other hand, the research showcased how dancers with and without disabilities experienced the learning methodologies differently proving the importance of a reconsideration of the teaching approaches. A list of the different ways disabled and non-disabled students experienced teaching is the following:

1. The non-disabled viewed learning as a process of identifying mistakes, while the disabled students as a liberating process.
2. Non-disabled students considered physical discomfort a necessary part of learning while dancers with disabilities associated pain with everyday life outside the dancing classes.
3. Students with disabilities felt safer in smaller groups contrary to non-disabled dancers who enjoyed larger classes.
4. Repetition was tiring for students with disabilities, who preferred the use of imagery as a teaching method, while non-disabled students consider repetition part of the learning process that helped them progress.

This list is indicative of the complexity of inclusive dance classes and reveals how teachers need to be educated accordingly so as to be able to lead such a class, using a toolkit of alternative pedagogical approaches and bringing together a variety of needs but also preoccupations and understandings (Whatley, 2007).

What is really important when discussing inclusive dance in any geographical context, is that it is addressed to all. As Whatley highlights, developing a successful inclusive framework with a variety of teaching methods means to organise a class that functions well with or without people with disabilities and form a **‘best practice for all students’** (my emphasis, Whatley, 2007: 15).

Whatley also argues that one of the most significant issues for dancers with disabilities is the notion that a professional career in dance is impossible. This impossibility is associated with existing educational structures and frames of mind about professional dance. In specific, the concepts of excellency, virtuosity, and technical perfection address a specific aesthetic of dance that is restricted and excluding. While relevant initiatives do exist, like for example the collaboration between Trinity Laban and the Candoco Dance Company, they do not yet foster inclusivity within the teaching framework. Therefore, Whatley proposes that universities have to address disabled students, invite them to auditions, and then discuss the curriculum with them so that they have an insight on how to rethink their syllabus and teaching methodologies (2007).

Moving Matters, Supporting Disabled Dance Students in Higher Education by Whatley is another concise publication that sums up two conferences held at the University of Coventry in 2007 that invited teachers, dancers, institutional representatives, and practitioners to discuss and share educational strategies, as well as ways to enable disabled dancers to participate in higher education. The aim of these conferences was to support teachers in creating an inclusive curriculum in dance education and to become aware of shifting needs. The publication consists of a summary and a transcript of events of the conference that took place at the University of Coventry. The first part is very useful as it shares experiences from students and teachers, it examines feedback methodologies, it outlines aims and intentions, it summarises qualities that make up good practice for all, and it examines the role of Learning Support Assistant. Additionally, the second part maps and discusses the challenges of inclusion such as the need for role models, the different pedagogical approaches, the notion of translation as a tool in teaching, the access to higher education and dance, the available teachers, the problems of the profession once students graduate, and the core issues relating to education and professional networks. Carolyn Bowditch, a well-known performing artist and choreographer, shares her experience and her background explaining how when she arrived in the UK from Australia she was presented with more opportunities to become a professional dancer. The paper contains more such stories describing difficulties, as well as opportunities,

in the field of dance and disability, forming a list of key issues in relation to dance education that can be applied to contexts outside the UK. These are:

- In order to achieve the learning outcomes it is necessary to adapt classes to participants' needs.
- Dance teachers also need support and special training to ensure they can lead inclusive dance classes.
- Feedback is very important for students.
- Integration means rethinking the criteria and the ordinary teaching models for dance.
- Issues of prejudice still arise even though there has been progress in legislation and communication.
- Role models for disabled students are essential.

Another key issue concerning dance and disability, besides the ones related to accessibility and teaching methodologies, is the limited participation and the hesitancy of people with disabilities to join the field of dance. In a research on dance and disability conducted by Jo Verrent for the Scottish Arts Council, she argues that the educational options are indeed insufficient and dependent on specific companies and their educational programmes (2007). However, she also points out that even though inclusive dance is much more visible nowadays, people with disabilities are very reluctant to practice dance. In particular, she argues that 'resistance to the idea of disabled people wanting to work in the arts is one of the most impenetrable barriers still in place' (Verrent, 2007: 17). This difficulty does not only originate from people with disabilities but also from their parents and carers, as dance is considered a less advantaged profession, with the lack of role models and the restricted information on the available options not helping the matter. Apart from the above factors, other issues, such as financial difficulties, transportation, non-accessible venues, and the unfamiliarity with the dance culture, make access to dance even harder. Issues of accessibility are also associated with class and financial realities, while dance is also often considered an elitist art that features ideal bodies so that it makes sense that access is limited and that it is difficult to motivate disabled people to participate (Verrent, 2007).

On a more practical note, an important text in relation to inclusive dance and education is *Making an entrance: theory and practice for disabled and non-disabled dancers* by Adam Benjamin, founder of the Candoco Dance Company. The book, published in 2002, focuses on sharing techniques and teaching skills that are crucial in inclusive educational frameworks and as such it was one of the first texts to pin down the practice of inclusive dance. It shares specific examples, tasks, and ideas, while it also highlights the importance of improvisation as an essential element of inclusive dance. Since then, the Stopgap Dance Company has also compiled the IRIS – Inclusive Teaching Syllabus, which is a comprehensive and detailed handbook on inclusive dance teaching methodologies. It entails guidelines, set exercises, the company's teaching philosophy, and it is the outcome of many years of experience and practice within the company.

In conclusion, when exploring inclusive dance and educational structures most practitioners and scholars agree that there are limited educational options for people with disabilities; that there is a rising need for educating the educators to alternative teaching methodologies and educational aims, and that role-models in key-positions are lacking. Moreover, they all argue that it is crucial for universities and other institutions to open up to people with disabilities not only as students but also as co-workers who are invited to co-shape educational curriculums and challenge dominant stereotypes about dance and disability. Although the examples in this chapter stem from researches conducted in the UK, as I have mentioned, the core issues examined in relation to education are found in most European countries, to varying degrees. In other words, education is vital for dance, and it is imperative that initiatives take place so as to ensure the development of inclusive dance education and practice, and to make the field of dance as diverse and open as possible.

1v. The artists' voices

In 2017 the British Council, in collaboration with the IETM professional network, published a collection of letters by artists on dance and disability, curated by Kate Marsh and Jonathan Burrows (2017). This publication contributes to fostering visibility and giving voice to artists who commence a public dialogue on the terminology used; the realities encountered in the field; their personal feelings as indicative of a common struggle; and the restricted educational and professional opportunities that exist, making their exclusion from the mainstream noticeable and their voices heard. As the curators note, most of the examples come from the UK since dance and disability is a rising field in the UK for some years now, becoming an example for other countries in the European region (2017). Their aim is twofold: to pose questions in relation to dance and disability and to empower artists that are usually filtered through some kind of gatekeeping. The reason this collection is examined in this study is that it brings forth the voices and emotions of artists who have been excluded in the past.

The narratives and anecdotes shared in this publication are personal, straightforward, emotional, but all the same sharp, addressing major issues that have to do with politics, policies, and education. For example, artist Annie Hanauer discusses how she prefers to name herself a cripple rather than disabled, and how she considers the UK a fertile ground compared to other European countries (in Marsh & Burrows, 2017). Practitioner Elisabeth Loffler describes her efforts to become an artist in a hostile environment and shares her thoughts on the exchange between politics and arts, making a valuable association that highlights the links between the arts, society and politics (in Marsh & Burrows, 2017). Moreover, Vicky Malin expresses her anger at those staring at her and expresses her right to experiment with her own body, echoing Ann Cooper Albright's argument that the disabled body is usually hidden and any act of performing is thus subversive (1997). Artist Dan Daw looks inwards, worrying about the loss of a community, and the oversimplified approaches to complicated topics such as dance and disability (in Marsh & Burrows, 2017).

In the context of this research, the letter by the artist Nadia Adarajah is the most relevant as it recounts her educational experience (in Marsh & Burrows, 2017). In

particular, she narrates how, to her disappointment, she was discouraged from dancing by her first ballet teacher and was ultimately excluded from her class. That experience devastated her and it was her mother that insisted and found an Indian dance class where she was accepted and where she was able to learn how to dance. Her experience is significant in relation to the theoretical discussions on prevailing notions about the ideal body in the dance field, as well as in relation to the limited educational structures available that make it even harder for people with disabilities to enter the dance community. Finally, artist and theorist Saša Asentić is more political in discussing inclusion in relation to politics, arguing for an ‘aesthetics of responsibility’ so that each one is committed to a socially engaged artistic practice, emphasising the importance of personal responsibility (Marsh & Burrows, 2017: 24). Overall, artists share their experiences and opinions on available educational structures, professional conditions, and everyday obstacles that make inclusive dance an upcoming practice but still one excluded from the mainstream.

In conclusion, this chapter looked at terms used in the field of dance and disability and their limitations; it examined different models of defining and understanding disability in medical and social terms; it pointed out how Western societies are structured on notions of ability and independency excluding, hiding and fearing disability; it studied how dance is a field where notions of the ideal body and normativity have long prevailed, while at the same time being a field of reconsidering and renegotiating the body; it highlighted how artists with disability do not have access to key roles in the dance field so that there are no role models; it studied educational realities, listing a set of issues occurring in different contexts that need to be addressed; and, in closing, it briefly examined the voices of artists who by sharing their experiences, share existing realities.

2. iDANCE: SETTING THE CONTEXTS, DISCUSSING THE OUTPUTS

iDance is an educational project that aims to develop existing and create new pedagogical approaches in the field of dance and disability, addressing people with and without disabilities, creating open educational resources and e-learning tools that will be accessible to all. The objective is to provide dance educators with an effective methodology that can be further developed, which was the result of four intensive workshops held by the partnering institutions with the participation of people with and without disabilities. It focuses on mixed groups of dancers, dance teachers, choreographers, and emerging professionals while also creating a European network of dance educators and professionals who share their expertise.

The iDance programme comprises the following four partners in alphabetical order according to the country of origin:

- Partner A: Greece — the Onassis Stegi
- Partner B: Netherlands — the Holland Dance Festival
- Partner C: Sweden — the Skånes Dansteater
- Partner D: UK — the Stopgap Dance Company

This chapter will first introduce each institutional partner and outline its objectives. It will then study each country's cultural policy in relation to dance and disability, as well as the available structures as for example educational opportunities, professional and amateur networks, and companies. The aim is to map the context and examine how dance and disability as a field is being practiced in each setting, highlighting differences and similarities between the four European countries. As performing arts' theorist Ana Vujanović argues –discussing the art world– it is crucial, when researching a field, to zoom into the local context, advocating for a contextual approach that challenges homogenisation and brings forth both similarities and differences between alternate milieus (2012). Locality is therefore addressed as an important feature in this research in order to study socio-political conditions within their own framework.

Hence, a sum of how each institution operates and the socio-political context within which it functions delineates European realities in relation to dance and disability, facilitates public discourse, and brings forth recurring issues.

2i. The case of Greece

Introducing the Onassis Stegi

Representative partner from Greece is the Onassis Stegi, the place where contemporary culture meets aesthetics and science with an ultimate goal of generating actions, interventions and ideas which shape and shake society.

The Onassis Stegi hosts events and actions across the whole spectrum of the arts, with an emphasis on contemporary cultural expression, on supporting Greek artists, on cultivating international collaborations, and on educating children and people of all ages through life-long learning. The Onassis Stegi runs an artistic programme from October to July each year, including works by young artists, thematic festivals, cutting-edge international productions, lectures, and public discussions on a range of subjects relating to contemporary culture and society, and an extensive educational programme that aims to reach out to a wide audience. It also supports the touring and promotion of Greek troupes and artists abroad, and is actively engaged in several networks and bilateral collaborations at an international level.

The Onassis Stegi believes in the importance of specialised access programmes as a way of broadening and deepening its presence in society. It regularly features seminal work by disabled artists with the intention of both breaking down the barriers between these artists and the mainstream public, and of creating positive role models for other, emerging disabled artists. The cultural centre is orientated towards having a socio-cultural policy that encourages and promotes alternative educational models in the arts.

Thus, the Onassis Stegi is one of the private cultural institutions in Greece and as such it supports, encourages and promotes the field of dance and disability through continuous workshops, public conferences, and international collaborations. Additionally, it hosts dance works from relevant companies boosting visibility of the field and helping with audience development in a country where, as this report shall demonstrate, dance and disability is not a flourishing domain. In this framework, the Onassis Stegi is one of the structures that make dance and disability possible.

Cultural and educational policies

Cultural policy in Greece is primarily associated with the means of preservation and promotion of ancient heritage, placing less emphasis on processes of social inclusion and diversity in a shifting socio-political context (Zorba, 2015). In other words, cultural policy has been, and still is, largely fixated on the past, resulting in culture being ‘perceived only in an extremely narrow sense, provocatively giving priority to the past instead of the present, to the elite instead of the popular, to the culture of display instead of participation’ (Zorba, 2009: 255). In this context, there has never been a targeted cultural policy for dance –with the exception of the years 1994-1996 when Minister of Culture Thanos Mikroutsikos promoted a relevant policy– other than a yearly financial support for the production of dance works.¹ Given the attachment of the cultural policy to the past, contemporary dance, as well as dance and disability, have never been a priority on the cultural agenda.

According to a research conducted in 2017 by educators Maria Koltsida and Antonis Lenakakis, in Greece ‘the participation of individuals with disabilities in the community, as well as their inclusion in the educational context, and their contact with cultural events and arts are deficient and, often, minimal’ (2017: 339). Similarly, even though the educational system has seen significant progress since the 1990s, there are still plenty of challenges for students with disabilities who often end up being cared for and educated by their families at home. The issues encountered in educational policies about people with disabilities are indicative of the dominant perception of disability, and mirror the realities of accessibility and visibility for people with disabilities.

Nonetheless, the focus of this report is dance and disability and to this effect it is crucial to note that according to state laws, the Ministry of Education is solely responsible for the educational needs of people with disability. However, professional drama and dance schools are not affiliated with the Ministry of Education which regulates private and public education. On the contrary, these schools operate under

1. For more details see Panagiotara, B. (2017) *Dance Chronicles from Athens: Artistic Practices, Structures & Discourses in a Period of Crisis*. Unpublished PhD thesis. London: University of Roehampton.

the auspices of the Ministry of Culture which is responsible for the promotion, support, and preservation of culture and the arts. This is also the reason why professional dance schools are considered vocational schools excluded from higher education. As dance theorist Katia Savrami points out ‘dance has not yet established an independent undergraduate degree among the academic institutions of Greece’ (2012: 100). Thus, contrary to other European countries where dance studies have been included in academia since the 1990s rethinking and reconfiguring the field, in Greece, professional dance schools have a practical orientation that reaffirms long-standing body stereotypes. In particular, these schools strive for technical excellence and promote ‘a particular concept of the dancer as first and foremost a disciplined body that has mastered several techniques and has the necessary technical proficiency in performing’ (Panagiotara, 2017: 175). Hence, the aim and objectives of these schools encourage a narrow understanding and definition of contemporary dance that excludes difference and diversity. In other words, these schools resemble most conservatoires operating in the UK and other countries that, as artists Laura Jones and Siobhan Hayes from the Stopgap Company mention in an interview with the researcher, do not practice inclusive dance (2018). Rather, these schools have an elitist approach to dance that is grounded on exclusion rather than inclusion. This notion of exclusion derives from what sociologist Tobin Siebers has named the ‘ideology of ability’ that is dominant in Western societies, as discussed in the first section of this research (2010). This ideology admires able bodies, encouraging fitness and independency, in an effort to overshadow the vulnerability of the human body and overcome the fear of disability (Siebers, 2010).

Furthermore, people with disability are legally excluded from studying dance professionally in Greece. In particular, according to the state law 372/83, dating back to 1983, candidates for professional dance schools have to undergo a health examination to verify they meet the criteria required to be eligible for admission, but also to ensure that dance students can cope with a demanding artistic practice in terms of their health. The criteria are for the candidate to be healthy, diligent, and to have the appropriate physical fitness. The examination committee can disqualify candidates

that have serious physical defects or a disease that prevents them to become a dancer or a dance teacher, without however naming specifically what these defects are.²

Considering the language used by the law, but also the legal precedent it sets, people with disabilities are *a priori* excluded from professional dance schools. Notions of inclusivity and diversity are eradicated through a legal language and a stereotypical definition of dance that limits the dancer to a set of physical capacities and techniques. Hence, the overall philosophy of these schools is based on exclusion. In addition, the fact that dance studies are not part of universities creates a differential context that makes it almost impossible to develop diversity, to provide access to dance education to people with disability, and to include dance and disability in the schools' curriculum.

The exception to this rule has been the private college *Deree*, the American College of Greece, which in 2016 initiated the first BA in Contemporary Dance Practice under the direction of dance theorist and choreographer Ana Sanchez Colberg. Being a higher education institution, and the only one with a professional dance curriculum, it was in a position to include in its courses students with disabilities. For instance, Demy Papathanasiou was the first dancer with a disability to graduate in 2018 with a Bachelor degree in dance from an institution in Greece. She has now won a scholarship from Axis Dance Company in the USA, while she intends to continue her studies with a Master's degree either in the UK or in Sweden. Unfortunately, the particular department at *Deree* will shut down in 2019 and thus educational opportunities for dancers with disabilities will remain practically non-existent in the local context.

To sum up, people with disability in Greece have limited visibility and access to cultural and social life, while educational policies and structures are very restricting, especially when the focus is dance. Outside formal structures, there are only very few opportunities for people with disability to engage with dance through private institutions that will be hereafter discussed.

2. However, even if the committee in charge allowed a candidate with a disability to participate in the dance examinations, the syllabus in place and issues of accessibility would exclude him or her. An exception to the rule has been the admission of a deaf dancer at the Greek National School of Dance in 2018.

Available structures

Myrto Lavda, head of educational programmes at the Onassis Stegi, asserts that the Onassis Stegi has had an educational policy about arts and disability from the very beginning, aiming to be accessible to all, focusing at the socio-cultural and political dimensions of the arts, and overall abiding by an ‘aesthetics of responsibility’, as theorist Saša Asentić argued in the first chapter of this study (2018). Since its opening in 2010, considering arts and disability a significant part of its programming, the Onassis Stegi consulted with experts so as to better devise the content, the aims, the communication of its programming, as well as the accessibility of its building (Lavda, 2018). Accordingly, the Onassis Stegi incorporated in its programme several performances and projects on arts and disability, as well as targeted workshops. For example, in 2014 it hosted a workshop by the artist Christine Sun Kim for deaf, hard of hearing, and also hearing artists coming from a variety of disciplines. The aim of the workshop was for participants to come together forming a community of people who become familiar with each other; to foster experimentation as a way of working; and to explore notions of communication and sound. The workshop comprised of a two-week residency during which the participants worked on sounds and created sound-works that were then exhibited at the institution. Another workshop led by artist and art educator Timothy Lomas was addressed to children with and without disabilities, which aimed to create works inspired by world cultures. According to Lavda, this particular workshop fostered a philosophy of inclusion that is significant in order to learn how to be and work with one another, and how to benefit from such collaborations (2018). As Lavda argues, the Onassis Stegi has contributed to the visibility of and participation in inclusive practices in Greece (2018). In other words, the Onassis Stegi features on the one hand, performances and events related to inclusive dance, and on the other hand, builds on educational workshops and policies that support and promote inclusive practices, especially in dance where there are limited working and educational opportunities available.

Onassis Stegi has offered a dance and disability programme since 2012 through a series of inclusive dance workshops for people with different type of disabilities as well as people without disabilities, professional or not. In 2013, it took part in the “Unlimited Access” project exploring greater access to dance for disabled artists and audiences in partnership with the British Council (UK), the Croatian Institute for

Movement and Dance and Vo'Arte (Portugal), and co-funded by the European Union Culture Programme. This launched Stegi's participatory programme for disabled aspiring dance artists and inspired them to be the lead partner in the iDance project, researching inclusive dance teaching methodologies, in partnership with the Holland Dance Festival, the Skanes Dansteater and the Stopgap Dance Company and co-funded by Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

According to a research conducted by the psychologist and dancer Andreas Kolisoglou on the working and living conditions of people with disability in Greece, focusing on dancers and actors, one of the first dance companies to include people with and without disabilities was Dagipoli (ΔΑΓΙΠΟΛΗ), founded in 2004 (2014). The aim of the dance company at the time was to challenge stereotypical notions of what contemporary dance is and what makes a dancer, in order to raise awareness about dance and disability, and furthermore question the existing educational and cultural conditions. The company is still active staging performances and leading workshops both locally and in other European countries like France and Italy. However, as the company is not funded or supported by the state, it has limited access to cultural institutions with visibility.

Another dance company to include people with disabilities is *Lathos Kinisi* (Λάθος Κίνηση) founded by choreographer, dancer, and dance teacher Konstantinos Mihos who has been teaching people with and without disability since 1997. Being one of the first choreographers in Greece to lead classes and stage performances that included people with disability, his works caused heated reactions in the past from dance critics, teachers, and audiences regarding the artistic quality of the works, thus revealing the dominant stereotypes about the ideal dancing body. The company is still active today, and Mihos leads inclusive dance classes at his studio in Athens. Overall, such examples illustrate how the dominant discourse about dance and disability has been shaped in Greece since the late 1990s, even though in recent years it is shifting.

A prominent example in the field of inclusive dance is the Driades En Plo (Δρυάδες Εν Πλω) dance company, operating in Karditsa, a city 300 km north of Athens. The founder of this private dance school is Maria Karapanagioti, who has developed through the years her own educational dance framework for people with and without

disability entitled DanceDisability. It is a system that stems from principles of dance therapy combining modern dance techniques, the Dalcroze eurhythmics, colour-therapy, and choreography. Besides training teachers in the specific educational approach, in 2014 Karapanagioti established the National Dance Disability Festival, while in 2018 she inaugurated the International Festival of Dance Disability featuring performances by local and international companies. The dance school operates, as we have already mentioned, outside the district of Athens, it is supported by participants and local communities, and it provides access to people with disability and enables their participation in dance.

In addition to the above, the Exis Dance Company (Εξίς Ομάδα Χορού) and the Kyma Project are relatively new initiatives on inclusive dance. In particular, the Exis Dance Company was formed in 2015 by dance teachers, dancers, and actors aiming to promote inclusive dance and diversity, to ensure artistry in the company's works, and to create a site for dance education for people with disabilities through performances, seminars, and workshops. The Kyma Project is an artistic platform for inclusive dance based in Athens that works with cultural organisations, and dance companies, organising festivals, symposiums, and workshops, under the belief that arts must be accessible to all³.

Finally, it is important to mention here the network Motion of Artists with Disabilities that was established in 2010 and was renamed Motion of Disabled Artists in 2017. This network is an artistic initiative that aims to ensure accessibility to cultural organisations; to promote, support, and encourage artists with disability; to ensure equality; to eliminate the terms diligence and ablebodiness that frame access to professional dance and drama schools; to challenge dominant stereotypes about people with disabilities; and to foster participation and visibility for all. This network is particularly active in supporting artists with disabilities, and in ensuring accessibility and visibility to cultural organisations. For example in 2015, two major cinema festivals in Athens collaborated with Motion of Disabled Artists in order to ensure accessibility to the venues in question, but also in order to use SDH: Subtitles

3. Other significant agents in the field focusing mostly on theatre are Liminal, a cultural organisation based in Athens, and S.mou.th [Synergy of Musical Theatre] based in Larisa.

for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing and AD Audio Description software for blind people.⁴

As it has become apparent there are only few educational opportunities for dancers with disabilities in Greece since they are excluded from professional vocational dance schools, and inevitably become dependent upon private institutions and their initiatives, like the aforementioned. Accessibility and participation in the arts, equal professional and educational opportunities, awareness in the socio-cultural public sphere are issues that remain mostly unaddressed in the current educational and cultural policy that needs reconsideration. However, since 2012 many private cultural institutions such as the Onassis Stegi, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre, professional dance companies and platforms have set a relevant cultural policy by organising seminars, workshops, staging performances, and creating accessible spaces, making inclusive dance more visible, and creating a community of people that works together so that the general public becomes more aware of inclusive dance.

4. These festivals are the Athens Open Air Festival and the Athens International Film Festival.

2ii. The case of the Netherlands

Introducing the Holland Dance Festival

The Holland Dance Festival is a major and a leading national dance organisation based in The Hague with a history of over 30 years. One of its aims in relation to inclusive dance is to make dance accessible to everybody regardless of age, social or cultural background. The organisation is part of the Dutch cultural infrastructure and it initiates, produces, and presents works in collaboration with international partners. One of its best-known activities is the biennial Holland Dance Festival that bears the same name as the organisation, which hosts, for a period of three weeks, performances by internationally distinguished dance companies and artists. Moreover, the Holland Dance Festival organises a wide range of educational activities, projects, workshops, and tailor-made lessons focusing on how dance can enhance the quality of people's life.

Early on, the Holland Dance Festival recognised the need to make dance accessible to all and, taking into consideration the limited options available in the Netherlands, it started by organising a couple of pilot projects so as to create awareness and make inclusive dance more visible. Its objectives as a dance institution are first to educate teachers in dance and disability through teacher training courses, second to present world-class work within its mainstream programme and produce inclusive dance works of artistic quality, and third to offer local disabled artists the opportunity to work at a professional level. To this end, the Holland Dance Festival has taken a national role advocating best practice in partnership with local art funders and networks, already having hosted two major conferences on dance and disability, as it will be presented further on. As a result, the Holland Dance Festival has become one of the national pioneers of artist development in the Netherlands, and is still strategically working on supporting, promoting, and making possible inclusive dance practices as part of its artistic and educational agenda.

Cultural and educational policies

Martine van Dijk, director of outreach and education at the Holland Dance Festival, claims that inclusive dance is neither visible nor popular in the Netherlands (van Dijk,

2018). Rather, she argues that there are few opportunities and restricted accessibility for people with disabilities. In her own words, '[the] inclusive scene is almost non-existing. There are a few interesting initiatives now popping up which is a good thing. It is the important beginning of a direction. We are trying to make the wheel turn, to make inclusive dance visible and to make sure that inclusive dance is set on the local and national cultural agenda' (van Dijk, 2018). Her output is further evidenced by the priorities and the agenda of the cultural policy in place for 2017-2020.

The Dutch cultural policy has set specific priorities and aims for the period 2017-2020 such as 'the development of young talents, innovation and cooperation' (Leden, 2016: 4). However, youth development, participation, education, as well as innovation have been priorities on the cultural agenda for a long time, while lately the principal aims are 'participation, entrepreneurship and philanthropy' (Leden, 2016: 7). Nonetheless, the cultural agenda mostly addresses the participation of younger and older people in cultural activities without direct references to people with disabilities. In particular, the report by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science states that:

Accessibility is a driving factor in cultural policy. The Dutch government considers it important that all children should come into contact with culture. The "Cultural Education with Quality" programme is an attempt by the central government, the provinces and the municipalities, working together, to achieve high-quality cultural education within the primary school curriculum.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2017: 26

In addition, when discussing issues of cultural diversity and inclusion policies, another report on the Dutch cultural policy refers to ethnic minorities and immigrants, but not to people with disabilities so as to enable a particular cultural strategy in relation to performing arts and disability (Leden, 2016). For the performing arts, the funding criteria for the years 2017-2020 were 'artistic quality, entrepreneurship, diversity and geographical spread', while for organisations, like festivals, an additional condition was the institutions' contribution to the performing arts' development (Leden, 2016: 41). Thus, according to the official cultural policy of the Netherlands, dance and disability as part of the performing arts sector is not a priority,

even if institutions that are supported financially by the state organise and encourage such activities.

Moreover, as sociologist Mutsumi Karasaki and Joop Oonk, the artistic director of the Misiconi Dance Company describes:

Inclusive arts should be taken seriously as a potential professional activity... However, the way recognition of inclusive art on its artistic merit is still lacking in the Netherlands. This means that inclusive arts organisations are often treated as amateur performance companies providing art therapy to performers. The lack of governmental support or interest in inclusive art means that national or local funding is difficult to come by. The consequence of this is that the status of inclusive art organisations like Misiconi is unclear. In applying for government or other philanthropical and community grants, we are often categorised as a disability care organisation, rather than a professional art company’.

Karasaki & Oonk, 2016: 3

Similarly, drawing from her experience, van Dijk advocates that it is very effective and significant to invite and involve official representatives in inclusive dance platforms and activities, so that they have a better understanding and first-hand knowledge of the field in question (2018). According to van Dijk, their presence in events results in a more active interest and participation that benefits inclusive artistic practices (2018). For her, this is an effective strategy to introduce inclusive dance to state officials and make it part of the cultural agenda.

In relation to education, there are limited opportunities for dancers with disabilities even though some dance schools are keener on introducing inclusive dance in their curriculum. However, inclusive dance is a rather new field in the Netherlands and as such most of the teachers are not sufficiently educated in order to lead inclusive dance classes, while many people with disabilities prefer not to participate in classes out of fear of rejection (van Dijk, 2018). A specific example that highlights existing educational conditions and realities in the Netherlands is the case of Sander Verbeek, a dancer with disability from Holland who participated in the seminars and programmes held by the Holland Dance Festival, and actively took part in the intensive workshops of iDance. He wants to become a professional dancer and acquire professional dance training but such an option does not exist in the Netherlands, which is why he is moving to the UK where he has been accepted into a

three-year educational programme ran by the Stopgap Dance Company. In other words, there are no available educational and professional structures for him to continue his professional education in the Netherlands, even though he has been supported so far in building his career. This example is symptomatic of the limitations encountered, the difficulties in developing as a dancer with disabilities, and the restricted educational options.

However, through the continuous activities of a few institutions and companies, there has occurred a minor shift in educational inclusive practices. For example, when in 2013 the Holland Dance Festival held an inclusive dance class for the first time, there were very few participants and no dance teachers present as it was something completely unknown. On the contrary, at the moment the festival collaborates with dance schools to incorporate inclusive dance classes, and holds weekly dance classes that build on a community of people. These continuous efforts on behalf of institutions for an educational approach that supports and enables participation, accessibility, and inclusivity cannot substitute for the lack of and the rising need for a long-term cultural policy that will create sustainability, enhance visibility, foster awareness, and encourage participation.

Available structures

Even though inclusive dance is not a strategic aim included in the Dutch cultural policy, there have been a few steps in this direction through a couple of initiatives examined below. A prominent example is the DanceAble three-day festival, founded by the Holland Dance Festival in 2015. The main objectives of the DanceAble project, that has been organised twice so far, is to make inclusive dance more visible, to create awareness, to build an international network, and to develop an audience. This is achieved through staging performances by international dance companies, inviting international guests to share their expertise in the field, organising educational activities, and hosting conferences open to the audience. According to the managing and artistic director of the Misiconi Dance Company, Joon Oonk, the particular symposium was very useful for her and for the company as it generated a feeling of community, bringing together local and international companies with more experience, while in practical terms the company received fruitful feedback and was provided with a set of tools for developing further as an integrated dance company

(Disability Arts Online). Such initiatives are crucial for creating an international community of inclusive dance, while at the same time supporting and providing visibility to the local scene.

Another example of an important initiative is the Misiconi Dance Company, that we have already mentioned, which is based in Rotterdam since 2013. The company leads workshops and other educational activities, while also developing a professional inclusive dance company. They received their first funding in 2017, which was a valuable contribution for the development of the company. As in the case in Greece, there is a need for a long-term policy in relation to dance and disability, so as to create awareness and sustainability, to raise visibility, invest in audience development, and support the local scene.

Introdans Interactive is an established dance company formed in 1971 in Arnhem that occasionally engages with dance and disability. Although the company is not an inclusive one per se, it runs yearly initiatives giving a platform to differently abled dancers such as dancers with disabilities and elderly, thus raising visibility and promoting inclusive dance to mainstream audiences and scenes. For example, in 2016 the artistic manager of Introdans Interactive, Adriaan Luteijn, created the work *Cardiac Output* in collaboration with the Durban (South Africa) based Flatfoot Dance Company, bringing together four professional dancers of the company and four professional actors with learning disabilities. He advocates that inclusive dance is beneficial for everyone in ways that can be very surprising, and he tries to ‘involve as many people as possible to the art of modern dance’ (Luteijn quoted in Stelsinkins, 2017).

Overall, conventions about the dancing body and the ideology of ability as analysed at the beginning of this study are still effective in the Netherlands, especially when focusing on inclusive artistic practices. ‘If there is one specific discipline that is associated with perfect motoric functioning body, it is dance’, so breaking this long-lasting convention needs strategic planning, investment and time (DanceAble #2 programme, 2017: 3). As is the case in Greece, dance and disability in the Netherlands has become more visible as a field due to initiatives taken by a number of cultural institutions and dance companies that enable participation for all, and

promote an inclusive approach to the arts. However, without the necessary state support in terms of cultural policy and funding, inclusive dance is hard to sustain, develop, and promote, and hence remains excluded from the mainstream dance discourse, and restricted to specific initiatives.

2iii. The case of Sweden

Introducing the Skånes Dansteater

The Skånes Dansteater is Sweden's largest independent dance institution. It is a repertory company of sixteen dancers presenting works by Swedish and international choreographers. The main aim and objectives of Skånes Dansteater are to promote contemporary dance in the region of Skåne, southern Sweden. Principally this is achieved through the work of and performances by the company of professional dancers, but also through participation projects, which seek to engage the wider population of Skåne.

With its base in Malmö, the Skånes Dansteater resumes the responsibility of promoting, strengthening, and developing dance as an art form at a regional level. This strand of the company's work is achieved through producing and touring contemporary dance works of high artistic quality. The Skånes Dansteater strives above all for high artistic quality in both the work of its professional company of dancers, and the community outreach projects that work in parallel with the performances.

Another strand of the company's work is *Dialog*, a community and education initiative. Dialog aims to actively engage a wide range of audiences with dance as an art form, whether as audiences or participants. Since 2011, the company has worked together with the disabled community in the region of Skåne and the overriding question has been "who does the stage belong to?" In 2012, the company organised for the first time DansFunk, a festival and conference about dance and disability. It received such a positive response that the company was hence awarded a development grant in 2013 for DansFunk. Through international guest performances, the goal was to initiate a national discussion around dance, disability, and diversity. The main aims of this strategic festival were to continue to develop working with dance and disability, and also to inspire and empower others to work inclusively. Since then, the company has been expanding their work within the field of dance and disability. Key goals are to support emerging disabled artists, and to include disabled performers into the main repertory of Skånes Dansteater. Moreover, one of the aims is to address

limited educational opportunities by providing suitable training for dance artists with disabilities to become dance leaders.

Cultural and educational policies

According to the Swedish Ministry of Culture, culture is a dynamic field addressed to all citizens while ‘creativity, diversity and artistic quality are to be integral parts of society’s development’ (Swedish Arts Council, online). The principal objectives of the Swedish cultural policy are to foster participation and accessibility for all, to promote artistic quality, to preserve heritage, to take into consideration the rights of children and the young, and to promote international artistic exchange (Swedish Arts Council).

Concentrating on policies relevant to arts and disability, the Swedish Arts Council is clear in relation to disability, naming it as part of its agenda in terms of diversity, inclusion and participation. In particular, participation for all in cultural activities is a top priority, given that ‘promoting cultural development and making culture accessible –in every respect– are the two overriding aims of the Swedish Arts Council’ (Swedish Arts Council). Its goal is to help cultural institutions ‘to improve the opportunities for people with disabilities to access various buildings and to take part actively in cultural life on the same terms as able-bodied persons’ (Swedish Arts Council). Hence, contrary to Greece and the Netherlands where, as has been examined already, the cultural policy does not specifically address arts and disability, in Sweden cultural institutions operate within a cultural framework that defines parameters such as accessibility, diversity and participation.

However, in the context of this research, Tanja Mangalanayagam, project manager of the Skånes Dansteater, discusses how, although there is a solid policy for accessibility and participation on behalf of the Swedish Arts Council, it is not targeted to inclusive dance and to participants in artistic projects inasmuch as it refers to audience accessibility (Mangalanayagam, 2018). A relevant report conducted by the Committee on Culture on behalf of the Swedish Parliament in 2013 explains that even though extensive measures have been taken to ensure accessibility to culture for all, there needs to be ‘greater focus on people with disabilities as active participants in, and not just recipients of, culture’ (The Committee on Culture, 2013:3). Furthermore, the

report argues that ‘people with disabilities participate or are actively engaged in cultural events to a considerably lesser extent than the rest of the population’, hence affirming what Mangalanayagam supports (The Committee on Culture, 2013:8). Thus, the focus of the cultural policy is mostly on equal opportunities in attending cultural events and less on being an active agent, participating and forming these events. Furthermore, Mangalanayagam points out that incorporating inclusive dance approaches to the company’s programme and curriculum, is dependent on the short-term vision of the company, which is subject to changes. As she notes:

In the Skånes Dansteater's ownership directives, there is currently nothing that states that we should work towards increasing access for people with disabilities on stage. But it is important to us, so we are doing it anyway. In that sense, our work in dance and disability becomes vulnerable, when there is a change in leadership. We would like to see a change in our ownership directives that also recognises the legacy of the work within dance and disability Skånes Dansteater has done and a change that would support a future development. This work is important for dance as an art form to develop.

Mangalanayagam, 2018

Therefore, even though the Swedish cultural policy acknowledges people with disabilities, working to ensure participation and accessibility, it focuses mostly on accessibility and audience participation.

Nonetheless, Sweden has a strong tradition in relation to disability rights. Specifically the Discrimination Act of 2009 was an important step towards the further support of people with disabilities. In this socio-cultural context, inclusive dance might not be a set priority in the cultural agenda, but it is developing through different structures and private initiatives as will be presented further on.

Available structures

The Skånes Dansteater (SDT) is one of the leading agents in inclusive dance in Sweden. In 2012, they initiated the national festival & conference *DansFunk*, funded by the Swedish Arts Council. The event aimed at promoting inclusive dance, and starting a debate about how to renew and rethink dance as an art form. The festival included dance workshops for people with and without disabilities led by international

guests with experience in inclusive dance, performances, and lectures that fostered visibility, raised awareness, and ensured participation and accessibility for all. The positive feedback and the high participation resulted in a development grant by the state to the company so as to develop its work in the field of dance and disability, which they then presented in the second edition of the festival in 2015. Skånes Dansteater's aims are to support local disabled artists, to invite dancers with disabilities to be part of the company, and to create the necessary educational structures for both students and teachers.

However, given the limited visibility and availability of inclusive dance, along with the restricted educational opportunities, it is very challenging to convince people with disabilities to join inclusive dance programmes. An episode recounted to the researcher by Tanja Mangalanayagam and dancer Madeleine Månsson is indicative of the difficulty but also of the success of pertinent initiatives. Instead of organising the classes and waiting for participants to attend, SDT reached out to the organisation FIFH's Active Girls, inviting them to join the classes. Månsson, who had never danced before, joined with two more colleagues to dance with three professional dancers. The latter were also anxious as they had never worked with people with disabilities, thus the experience was new and challenging for all of them. Four days later, they filmed their work and named it "Don't be afraid, it's just movement" reflecting on their fears, reservations and preconceptions and how these were informed from working together. Månsson soon discovered she really loved dancing and that in the dance studio, she could explore things differently. It was for her the 'first time to try it in my own body' and since then she is an active professional dancer studying at DOCH and participating in performances (Månsson, 2018).

According to another anecdote recounted to the researcher by Mangalanayagam and mentioned by dance scholar and professor Annika Noter Hooshidar in the introductory note of the edition 'Who can dance', the DansFunk festival & conference was influential for the visibility of dance students with disabilities, and their inclusion in university programmes (2017). In particular, Annika Noter Hooshidar, assistant professor of Dance at DOCH School of Dance and Circus, was invited to participate in DansFunk and discuss how the university is accessible and inclusive (2017). The particular conference was the starting point for the university to become more aware

of students with disabilities and their needs, and to make the necessary changes such as to reshape their curriculum, and revisit their pedagogical approaches in order to be inclusive and inviting to all. She describes how in order to acquire the necessary knowledge and expertise so as to rethink and reshape their syllabus they collaborated with experienced people such as artist Caroline Bowditch, and with festivals like the ones initiated by the Skånes Dansteater, while they are still in the process of re-figuring their programme and educational methodologies (Hooshidar, 2017). Indicative of this shift is that in 2017 DOCH organised, along with Dansens Hus and the European Dancehouse Network, the two-day conference *Exchange Perspectives* inviting artists and theorists from Europe to discuss how they can challenge and then change established perspectives in dance, and how to make the possibilities generated by inclusive dance visible, hence questioning norms concerning the body. Their aim was to broaden the discourse surrounding dance and disability indicating that the field is shifting in both academia and in practice. Along with Dansens Hus, DOCH also hosted a one-day symposium examining whether education is inclusive, posing questions, and bringing forth vital issues concerning education. Overall, as Mangalanayagam states ‘things are changing very slowly. It is still quite difficult, and inclusive dance is not the norm’ but on the positive side, things are shifting (Mangalanayagam, 2018).

Besides DansFunk, SDT also runs an educational programme named *Dialog* that on the one hand engages with audience development, and on the other hand collaborates with the disabled community in its region working towards their inclusion in performances as participants. Their educational policy and community project is very beneficial, as it enables participation, empowers a population traditionally excluded from the arts, and makes people with disability visible. Dialog's main question is: who is allowed on the stage?

The same question drives the international dance company *Spinn* that was founded in 2010, aiming to challenge normative stereotypes, and to demonstrate that dance is about difference and inclusion. Spinn works with local and international artists for its choreographies, runs educational workshops, and hosts lectures creating the conditions for people to meet, discuss, and create a community. In 2014, they initiated the three-year educational project “SpinnVäxa/SpinnUnga” that was addressed to

younger people involved in dance, while in 2018 they initiated a non-profit organisation named DANSUTBILDNINGEN SPRÅNG that aims to further develop their educational branch.

The Spinn Company also collaborates with DOCH, Dansens Hus, and SDT so that all together they form a wider network of institutions that work on dance and disability. Dansens Hus is one of the most important performing art venues in Stockholm, so its involvement in presenting inclusive dance works and organising or hosting conferences, such as Exchange Perspectives, is vital in raising awareness and visibility about inclusive dance.

One more example of the growing field in Sweden is the two-year project “Moving Beyond Inclusion”, co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union and ran by the Spinn Dance Company and the Candoco Dance Company (UK). The project focuses on developing skills and expertise in inclusive dance, aiming at broadening the scope of mainstream dance, and at initiating a debate about dance and disability. Likewise, the *ShareMusic* and *Performing Arts* is a cultural organisation that hosts workshops, lectures and organises various projects all aiming to promote inclusion and participation in the arts.

Concluding, inclusive dance is a growing field in Sweden for which there is in place, already, an effective cultural and social policy, in relation to people with disabilities. It might be that the focus of the cultural policy is not on people with disabilities actively engaging with artistic practices and evolving professionally, but through specific initiatives it has become possible for artists with disability to study dance at an academic level, and to be part of the professional scene. Thus, contrary to the dominant conditions in Greece and the Netherlands, Sweden has a specific cultural framework that facilitates, enables and supports the further development of inclusive dance practices and educational methodologies, challenging established norms on the dancing body and dance as an art form.

2iv. The case of the UK

Introducing the Stopgap Dance Company

The Stopgap Dance Company, based in the UK, creates world-class productions with exceptional disabled and non-disabled dancers touring nationally and internationally. As dance education in the UK remains highly inaccessible for disabled people, the company has devised its own training framework during its twenty-year history. Since its establishment, Stopgap has successfully turned a number of young disabled amateurs from the community into internationally recognised professional dancers. Within the organisation, the company has built a professional pathway for disabled people, and is now in a position to share its expertise and instil its methodologies to partner organisations. Stopgap works with dance schools, syllabus providers, conservatoires, and professional companies to help them make their training provision accessible to disabled people. Stopgap is an agency for change with a real prospect of making dance and performing arts more diverse and accessible.

Stopgap works globally, performing its productions at prominent venues to set a benchmark for the high level of quality that inclusive dance can achieve. Then, it uses workshops and masterclasses with local artists and disabled people to share how inclusive dance practice can be developed. It provides ongoing mentoring and consultation, digitally, for global clients, which involve the clients posting videos of progress and the company providing feedback via Skype or email.

Stopgap was a resident company at the University of Surrey, and has formed a partnership with the University of Bedfordshire. The company, therefore, has relationships with a number of academics, who are interested in researching its creative and teaching processes, and in becoming part of the field of dance and disability. Consequently, the company also contributes to academic discourse. Stopgap is core funded through Arts Council England, and is registered on British Council's directory as a supported organisation.

The company is led by artistic director Lucy Bennett, who has been pioneering inclusive choreography and training methodologies since 2003. She has been working

with physically disabled dancer Laura Jones and learning disabled dancer Chris Pavia, who have contributed to the establishment of the company's methodologies in the last ten years. Finally, the Stopgap Dance Company has active working relationships with a number of academics who become part of the field of dance and disability, contributing to academic discourse.

Cultural and Educational Policies

The UK is one of the pioneers in the field of disability arts. With specific cultural policies and politics dating back to the 1970s, disability arts are a significant and developing sector of the national cultural reality. The major institutions shaping the cultural policy are the Arts Council England, the British Council, and the Scottish Council of Arts. Thus, contrary to other European countries that are now growing in this field, as examined before, the UK is the leading example in the EU when discussing dance and disability. The UK has set a firm cultural policy that supports and funds inclusive dance long-term, enabling renowned companies like Candoco and Stopgap to become more visible nationally, to tour worldwide as ambassadors of inclusive dance, to develop specific educational agendas, and to become agents of diversity and inclusion shaping the cultural policy. Indicative of the long-term commitment to dance and disability is the department of Arts and Disability for the European Region of the British Council, headed by Ben Evans, aiming to support, promote, and sustain dance and disability through various programmes, funding structures, worldwide initiatives, international collaborations, making the UK a forerunner in disability dance throughout Europe.

The next aim for the British Council is to cooperate with European partners since in the wider European region there is a rising interest in arts and disability as more and more organisations open up to new aesthetics of dance. It is thus important to support disability arts throughout the European region, to shed light on differences among countries but also to share expertise and knowledge, enriching and supporting it, bringing it into the mainstream dance field. As Ben Evans notes 'we see ourselves as having a unique role in coordinating and sharing much of the expertise in the UK' while he also adds that disability arts are often funded by social or disability organisations rather than the arts, which excludes artists from mainstream cultural institutions (Disability Arts International).

The above aim could be accomplished with the new project “Europe Beyond Access”, a four-year programme to bring disabled performing artists into the mainstream of the European cultural scene in partnership with the British Council (UK), the Onassis Stegi (Greece), the Holland Dance Festival (The Netherlands), Kampnagel (Germany), Per.Art (Serbia), the Skånes Dansteater (Sweden), Oriente Occidente (Italy), and co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

Europe Beyond Access will support disabled artists to break the glass ceilings of the contemporary theatre and dance sectors; to internationalise their artistic innovations and their careers; to develop a network of leading mainstream organisations with a commitment to present and commission at the highest level; to build European audiences interested in high-quality innovative work by Europe’s disabled artists; and to develop tools and understanding in the wider performing arts market.

In addition, Disability Arts International, a website created as an outcome of Unlimited Access in 2013, aiming to promote the work of disable-led companies, artists and organisations will be further enriched with the success stories of the newly funded project as well as seminal initiatives across Europe. The website will continue to be updated and act as an inventory of companies, festivals and conferences on disability arts, host interviews with artists, producers and policy-makers, videos and other sources. Disability Arts International is a source of knowledge about dance and disability worldwide, creating an online network and a community.

Hence, the British Council's agenda for arts and disability is not orientated solely towards national cultural policy. On the contrary, through initiatives such as Europe Beyond Access, Disability Arts International, and Unlimited Access, as well as through collaborations with international networks like IETM it aims at bringing to the fore arts and disability throughout Europe. As Ben Evans claims ‘in the longer term, we want to change the face of the arts in Europe’ (Disability Arts International).

The local framework in relation to dance and disability is not that different. Senior dance artist and head of talent development, Laura Jones, and assistant artistic director, Siobhan Hayes, of the Stopgap Dance Company, noted in an interview about

the available cultural framework in the UK, that inclusive dance has been funded by the Arts Council for the past 30-35 years, something that actually makes this field quite new (2018). In addition, they discussed that since 2008, inclusive dance has started 'to become higher in everyone's agenda' and that companies such as Stopgap and Candoco and their performances had a significant impact in changing policy and funding, acting as role models (2018). Even though, inclusive dance is much more visible in national terms and the UK is considered a leading actor, there are still limited educational opportunities for dancers with disabilities, while the level of accessibility is varied. As Jones and Hayes argued, inclusive dance is 'a long way from being the norm' but things are developing gradually and shifting for the better (2018).

Moreover, Sho Shibata, executive producer of the Stopgap Dance Company, describes that even though inclusive dance was already part of the cultural agenda for several years, the 2012 Olympic Games in London were a 'game changer' for the field as it increased visibility nationwide, it ensured funds, and led to diversity becoming a key word in cultural policy in 2014 (Shibata, 2018). Diversity however remains a key factor in 2018.

Diversity is the most important aspect for the forthcoming cultural policy through the Creative Case for Diversity initiated by the Arts Council England aiming to provide access and participation, visibility and promotion for artists with disability among others. According to the Arts Council England 'the Creative Case for Diversity is a way of exploring how organisations and artists can enrich the work they do by embracing a wide range of influences and practices' (2017). Describing its priorities for the next four years, the Arts Council England argues that 'diversity and creativity are inherently linked' and that diversity 'is an integral part of the artistic process. It is an important element in the dynamic that drives art forward, that innovates it and brings it closer to a profound dialogue with contemporary society' (Arts Council England, 2017: 3, 7). In this context, the UK's cultural policy for the next four years is shaped by diversity as understood and practiced through three principles that are equality in the arts, recognition of diverse artists, and a new vision that will bring diversity to the core of the art world.

Similarly, since 2003 inclusion and diversity have been key factors in shaping the cultural policy in Scotland, which is considered to be exemplary in disability arts and, especially, in inclusive dance, with renowned artists in the field such as Caroline Bowditch, Marc Brew, and Claire Cunningham to name only a few. Creative Scotland in particular is the organisation that promotes and supports culture and the arts in Scotland, setting the cultural agenda and distributing the available funding. From early on the Scottish cultural programme aimed at promoting access, participation, inclusion, and visibility for artists with disability, emphasising the important role sociocultural structures play in shaping perceptions, and challenging stereotypes in accordance with what has been hereby examined as the social model of disability. In a 2007 report on dance and disability in Scotland conducted by Joe Verrent on behalf of the Scottish Arts Council, she notes that ‘within Scotland, disability dance clearly has significance’ (2007: 3). The outcomes of her research identify the importance of a field like dance and disability, and discuss the success of the strategy in Scotland as well as the areas that need further development (Verrent, 2007). Success results from companies staging works, state awards focusing on dance and disability and on new and innovative work. According to the report, however, Scotland still needs to make vocational training more accessible and possible for all, and to enable leaders in the field.

In response to this particular research and its suggestions, the Scottish Council of the Arts launched several initiatives such as the Dance Agent for Change post at the Scottish Dance Theatre. Caroline Bowditch was appointed as Dance Agent for Change from 2008 to 2012, creating work and making disability dance visible through a mainstream institution, aiming to challenge stereotypes, and invite new audiences. In her own words ‘in this country, we have been able to develop artists to a really high standard, and there has been an understanding of the support that requires and of the investment and of things like how the political perspective towards disability has shifted that as well’ (Arts and Disability in Scotland, Disability Arts International). Since then, Scotland remains an active agent and a forerunner in dance and disability even though in 2018 Creative Scotland announced the cutting of funds that were allocated to some disability-led organisations, provoking intense reactions from the art world. In some cases reactions led to the reinstatement of the funding to some companies.

All in all, disability arts, and, as a result, inclusive dance are an integral part of the cultural policy in the UK that has developed valuable experience through years of researching, practising, and reshaping its cultural landscape. Still, however advanced the UK in the field may be, especially in terms of artistic excellence and diversity, educational opportunities for artists with disabilities and in specific for dancers with disabilities, remain few within the UK. Companies such as Candoco and Stopgap become educational hubs as they have the incentive, the will, but also the necessary expertise to teach inclusive dance, and to develop effective educational programmes. However, outside the scope of these companies and the valuable structures offered by community dance, which are mostly targeted to therapeutic rather than professional dance, options are limited for dancers with disabilities who wish to be educated and to enter the professional arena.

As Laura Jones and Siobhan Hayes describe, the issues encountered are accessibility to old buildings without the necessary infrastructures, reluctant teachers who have no experience in leading mixed groups and have never been trained in inclusive dance, dance institutions with conservative approaches to the notion of dance, and a considerable hesitancy on behalf of dancers with disabilities who risk facing a possible rejection (2018). They claim that ‘most of the available dance classes are not designed for students with disability, so even if a teacher is very welcoming, the class is not designed for inclusive dance and can be quite daunting for new dancers with disability that don’t have the necessary experience’ (2018).

Accordingly, Sho Shibata and Lucy Bennett, explain that there is a disparity in opportunities between dancers with and without disabilities in education that is evident from grassroots up to higher educational levels (2018). Nonetheless, even if there are limited educational opportunities, established dance institutions such as ISTD and RAD are in a process of refiguring how to include in their assessments and curriculums bodies that differ from the normative balletic ones and to reconstruct their working framework. Similarly, some British universities are much more open to re-assessing and re-shaping their dance curriculums so as to accommodate different needs and become more inclusive and diverse. Such cases are the University of Coventry, as examined by scholar Sara Whatley in the first chapter, the University of Bedfordshire, and the University of Plymouth, among others.

As discussed, in the UK, the cultural policy and its representative public bodies are adamant in promoting and supporting diversity and inclusion in numerous ways, but the educational agenda is decided and implemented by the Department of Education (DfE) which is not as resolute in relation to dance and disability. A characteristic example is the case of the Candoco Dance Company that was funded to run an educational programme which was then terminated. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) terminated the funding in question claiming that disabled students should be disseminated in wider educational structures, without however taking into consideration that such structures did not have the expertise, accessible infrastructures, and trained staff to be able to accommodate students with disabilities.

These are some of the reasons –in addition to the wider picture as examined in the first chapter– that make the existence of experienced dance companies such as Candoco and Stopgap even more crucial, as they become sites of education, community, and networking. Both companies have an educational agenda: the Candoco Dance Company has a learning programme that varies from teacher training, intensives, and mentoring, to single workshops, and masterclasses, while the company participates in presentations and panels to discuss diversity, inclusive dance, and relevant challenges. Similarly, Stopgap runs weekly classes of inclusive dance while it has been funded by the Arts Council to initiate the Sg2 course, which is a three-year educational programme for four dancers with and without disability. The aim of the course is to ‘guide the dancers to become a working inclusive dance company giving them the skills to grow into exceptional inclusive artists’ (Stopgap Dance Company, 2018). In other words, professional companies are significant agents in shaping educational and cultural policy for inclusive dance working with and being supported by the Arts Council England and the British Council, that strive for diversity, participation, accessibility, and difference.

That said, the report from Verrent on Scotland indicates that access and participation in dance training is very limited throughout the UK, but, as she notes, even though the Scottish Arts' Council is not responsible for educational strategies, it understands the importance and value of access and choice in education (2007). Overall, it is very difficult for dancers with disabilities interested in vocational training to enter mainstream courses while it is more common to enter disability training through

specific companies and community projects, as the ones hosted by the Candoco and the Stopgap dance companies who substitute for the missing educational framework. To sum up, education still depends on specific structures such as private dance companies rather than official educational policy, and even though the Arts Council England and the Scottish Arts Council support inclusive dance, the latter is not part of the country's educational policy so the appropriate structures that would enable access and participation are still lacking.

Available Structures

One of the key companies in the UK is the Candoco Dance Company founded in 1991 by Adam Benjamin and Celeste Dandeker working with dancers with and without disability in a professional context that differed from community dance, aiming to enter the mainstream dance scene. Since then, Candoco has staged several dance performances, has collaborated with numerous artists, has toured around the world, and has become a cultural ambassador for dance and disability. Also, the company has a solid educational profile aiming to educate younger dancers, to mentor artists, and to support the particular scene having as a motto that inclusive dance is beneficial for and useful to all. The company is active in supporting and promoting access and participation for everyone in all of its activities.

The Stopgap Dance Company was founded in 1995 as a community dance project, and developed into a professional dance company only two years later. Soon, Stopgap became one of the key players in dance and disability both in professional and educational terms. Since 2012, and under the artistic direction of Lucy Bennett, the company is one of the first in the field to create its own choreographies instead of commissioning work by and collaborating with visiting artists, while in 2018 it relaunched, for a second term, the three-year educational programme "Sg2" supporting young professional dancers. Stopgap hosts several educational projects and classes, contributes to academic and other publications, while it has also developed the IRIS syllabus, an indicative teaching guide of inclusive dance stemming from their practical experience in the field. Both the Stopgap and Candoco

dance companies are National Portfolio Organisations⁵ funded by the Arts Council England on a four-year basis.

The Scottish Dance Theatre has been very active in inclusion and participation with initiatives such as Dance Agent for Change that allowed the collaboration with several experienced and acclaimed artists, such as Benjamin Adams and Caroline Bowditch. Another company that has been working in the field in Scotland is Indepen-Dance, formed in 1996, aiming to facilitate accessibility and participation for all, to make dance an open art addressed to everyone, and to encourage a diverse society. They stage performances working with people with and without disabilities, run educational workshops and programmes, and also hold weekly inclusive dance classes that create communities of people.

Besides professional dance companies, the UK is rich in community dance projects dating back to the 1960s and the 1970s, building a network and a supporting community for people with disabilities in a local context that has been of paramount importance. An organisation that started as community art and has since then developed into a key agent in diversity and inclusion is Shape Arts. It is a disability-led arts organisation founded in 1976 based on and influenced by the social model of disability. It aims at enhancing participation and access to culture by creating opportunities for artists with disabilities. It also collaborates with cultural institutions so as to improve access, participation and visibility for artists with disabilities, and it hosts several programmes in all the spectrum of the arts, not only dance. Inspiring Futures is the organisation's youth programme hosting workshops, offering mentoring opportunities, and inviting the young to be part of the cultural life. Shape Arts and ArtsAdmin are the two organisations to deliver the third Unlimited programme.

Unlimited is an arts commissioning programme that intends to support disabled artists to produce work; to encourage, promote and include work by disabled artists in mainstream national and international cultural scenes; to increase visibility of inclusive art practices; to create new audiences; and to challenge normative perceptions about people with disabilities. The first Unlimited programme was

5. National Portfolio Organisations are organisations from the field of the arts being funded by the Arts Council England as part of the latter's cultural policy.

launched as part of the Cultural Olympiad of 2012 with funding by the Olympic Lottery Distributor in partnership with London 2012, Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and the British Council. The programme aimed specifically at commissioning and funding new works, mentoring and training artists with disabilities, staging inclusive works, and creating networks through collaboration nationally and internationally. The programme has been in effect since then as it met its aims and is considered to be effectively supporting the arts and disability sector. Specifically, between 2010-2016 the Unlimited programme has supported plenty of performances and exhibitions by disabled artists, symposiums, and festivals such as the Tramway Unlimited Festival, while it has also worked with the Southbank Unlimited Festival. For 2017-2020 the Arts Council England has awarded £1.8m to the Unlimited III programme to keep on supporting and promoting arts and disability.

Southbank Centre's well-known Unlimited Festival, which takes place every two years, started as part of the first Unlimited commissioning programme. However, since 2013, even though the Southbank Centre collaborates with the cultural institutions running the Unlimited programme, it curates the festival on its own featuring not only works commissioned by the programme, but also a wide variety of performances and other events, funded by the Arts Council England.⁶ In particular, it hosts exhibitions, panels, and performances focusing mostly on UK artists and companies, along with selected art works commissioned by the *Unlimited* programme. Similarly, the Unlimited Festival Tramway in Glasgow also takes place every two years, featuring performances of disabled artists, but it is curated and supported by the *Unlimited* programme. Another distinguished festival is the award-winning *DaDaFest International* that takes place in Liverpool every two years, and presents high quality works in major art venues of the city. Its aim is to question stereotypes in the arts and in society, and to promote and support diversity through disability art. Additionally, the festival runs the Young DaDaFest that showcases the work of disabled and D/deaf

6. According to the official website of the Unlimited programme 'Southbank Centre make the final decisions on which work is included in their programme' (n.d). For more: <https://weareunlimited.org.uk/faq/will-commissioned-work-be-shown-at-southbank-centres-unlimited-festival/>

artists aged between 12 and 30, supporting the young and enabling accessibility and visibility for all.

According to a report conducted in 2017 by the Arts Council England the percentage of disabled people in dance is in a better state than in other art forms. In particular, ‘some areas such as dance have greater numbers of disabled people than might be expected, while others could be said to be unrepresentative in their workforces’ (Arts Council England, 2017:18). Thus, taking into account how the UK is a pioneer in dance and disability, as well as in educational frameworks, there are plenty of structures doing work in the field that are not mentioned in this research.

In conclusion, contrary to the countries examined in this chapter, the UK is a leading example in dance and disability. As studied, it has become a pioneer in the field through years of experience and through a consistent and long-term cultural policy that prioritises diversity, participation, and accessibility. Via the relevant organisations, such as the Arts Council England, the British Council, and Creative Scotland the state shapes the cultural policy, funding, encouraging, and promoting inclusive dance as part of a wider support framework of the arts and disability, not only locally but also internationally. Moreover, although educational opportunities are described as limited in the UK, there are more choices than in other countries, and more expertise coming from the community of disabled artists and professional dance companies that make education possible. Therefore, the UK is exemplar of how public structures and support lead to inclusive dance becoming more visible and sustainable, acquiring a professional status, entering mainstream stages and building on education.

2v. Conclusions

This chapter examined the professional and educational conditions in the four European countries participating in the iDance programme, concluding that there are evident similarities in what is needed for the dance and disability sector to develop and become visible and sustainable, but also differences in the status-quo, the state support, and the existing cultural policies on inclusive dance practices in each country. In particular,

- 1. Regarding education:** although in all of the countries studied there is a need for development of educational policies that are inclusive so as to offer students with disabilities a range of opportunities, there are major differences. Specifically, in Greece there are legal restrictions and practical difficulties for a disabled dancer interested in studying dance. In the Netherlands there are very limited options for a disabled dancer to study dance professionally in academia or in a vocational dance school. In Sweden some steps have been made towards academic dance studies for people with disabilities so there are more opportunities than before. Finally, in the UK, where opportunities are still limited compared to mainstream dance structures, there are educational programmes for disabled dancers lead by professional companies that have the necessary expertise and support, and academic dance departments that work to become more and more inclusive.
- 2. Regarding cultural policy:** cultural policy is core to the development, visibility, and sustainability of dance and disability and through this research it becomes evident that the UK is the leading example in that sector. Sweden is also effective in terms of cultural policy even if its policy is primarily orientated to audience participation rather than artistic participation. The Netherlands have in place a cultural policy for diversity and inclusion that needs to specifically address arts and disability so as to enable inclusive dance practices. While on the contrary, in Greece the cultural policy is mostly focused on heritage rather than contemporary art, while diversity and inclusion have not been priorities in the cultural agenda.
- 3. Regarding private initiatives:** as examined throughout this chapter, private initiatives in relation to dance and disability stemming from specific cultural

institutions and dance companies are important and necessary assets for the development, visibility, and audience awareness of the field. They are key agents in shaping the landscape of inclusive dance, in addressing existing needs, and in challenging the dominant status quo in mainstream dance scenes that exclude dance and disability. Such agents are active in all of the countries examined, building European and international networks; communities of people working together; hosting festivals, performances, symposiums, conferences, and special events; organising educational workshops, and year-long inclusive dance classes; aiming to bring forth dance and disability, to promote diversity and inclusion for all, and to challenge dance stereotypes.

Overall, the lack of accessible dance spaces, the limited visibility of inclusive dance in mainstream dance venues and discourses, the few or non-existent educational structures, the preoccupations in relation to the ideal dancing body, and the significance of a long-term cultural policy are identifiable in all of the countries under discussion to varying degrees, and, as we will examine in the last chapter, are fundamental issues for dance and disability.

3. EXPERIENCE FROM THE FIELD: INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL METHODOLOGIES

3i. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the vitality of education for inclusive dance as discussed in chapter one, examining educational methodologies developed and employed during iDance. Through ethnographic approaches that involve the researcher and the participants into the knowledge and experiences shared during the iDance workshops, this chapter enables a description along with an in-depth analysis of the core issues of education, the fundamental principles of inclusive dance, and their relation to theoretical debates that take place in mainstream contemporary dance scenes. Moreover, this part of the research aims to give voice to the ones participating in the programme so that real time experience will form part of the research enabling the formation of educational and professional structures that are responsive and flexible to different needs.

As examined in previous chapters, education is vital for inclusive dance, even though in most cases it is reliant on the work of professional dance companies and on initiatives taken by particular institutions and representatives. When discussing inclusive dance education in different countries the basic outcomes and issues arising, even though with some variations, are:

- limited visibility of inclusive dance;
- limited or non-existent public educational structures and policies for dancers with disabilities;
- reluctance, fear, and minimal participation of people with disabilities to classes of inclusive dance;
- low awareness of the field and insufficient representation in mainstream cultural scenes;
- ideology of ability and the perception that the dancer has to be diligent and able-bodied dominant in the field of dance (Siebers, 2010);

- inexperienced and hesitant educators who lack the appropriate education and expertise in inclusive dance;
- low priority in governmental agendas (with some exceptions such as the case of the UK);
- issues of accessibility;
- professional hardships in the field of dance.

The participation of people with disabilities in relevant workshops has been on the agenda of all the partners taking part in iDance. From the interviews conducted with representatives it became evident that even though efforts to address issues of accessibility and participation are being made through hosting yearly dance classes, workshops, and performances, the participation is in many cases still minimal, making their sustainability more difficult. The strategies employed to address the issue were principally the following four:

1. The institutions were actively involved and invested in communities representing disabled people in order, first, to fully communicate the aims, intentions, and overall vision; second, to build trust and confidence between the cultural venue and these communities; third, to invite, include, and actively involve people from these communities in the strategic planning of the cultural venue so that it targets their needs in the best way possible; fourth, to ask for feedback, and to reshape the programmes according to it; and, fifth, to continuously train the staff so as to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. Most of these strategies were practically employed by the Onassis Stegi according to Myrto Lavda, head of educational programmes at the venue (2018). She argued that personal engagement, communication, and time investment had a huge impact on generating trust, and, consequently, on rising participation (Lavda, 2018).
2. The institutions had to think outside the box, reaching out for participants for inclusive dance classes not only in cultural venues or organisations for people with disabilities, but also in varied groups such as sports communities as did the Holland Dance Festival (van Dijk, 2018). Such an approach creates diverse

hubs of people participating and coming together, contributing to further visibility of inclusive educational methodologies.

3. In order to raise awareness, visibility, and create new audiences, while also building a community and a network for all, the institutions hosted festivals, created platforms, organised conferences and produced performances.
4. To ensure that there is a constant reminder on issues relating to inclusive dance, and contributing to policy making aiming to put inclusive dance on the cultural agenda, the institutions actively involved public officials, inviting them to conferences and performances, and submitted applications and proposals for collaboration.

These being the core issues and strategies employed, iDance sought to address the restricted educational opportunities by producing new pedagogical approaches for inclusive dance, setting an open educational resource, making the findings available, designing educational programmes, building international coaching opportunities, and educating the next dance educators.

All of the partners and hosting countries designed dance classes throughout the year, inviting people with and without disabilities to participate, hence cultivating an inclusive dance culture and introducing more and more people to inclusive dance. Drawing from the workshops taking place at the Onassis Stegi, the core elements that will be examined further on are:

- using improvisation techniques;
- working in smaller groups of people;
- using exercises that build trust and confidence between the participants, thus building a team;
- being aware of the shifting needs of participants, and hence being able to adjust the class design according to needs;
- using translation as a fundamental method of teaching and communicating.

3ii. Notes from the field

During iDance there were four intensive workshops in different countries leading to a final outdoors performance held in Malmo, Sweden, in 2018. The aim of these workshops was for the participants to meet and work with each other, to exchange their experiences, and for each country to design a class for the others as indicative of different ways of working. iDance workshops aimed at educating the next teachers of inclusive dance. While the last workshop, which was held in Malmo, was principally focused on choreographing collectively aiming to present a dance work by the end of the seven-day intensive, the rest of the workshops were focused on teaching methodologies. This chapter examines, in depth, a workshop held in The Hague in as indicative of the educational approaches and methodologies employed during iDance.

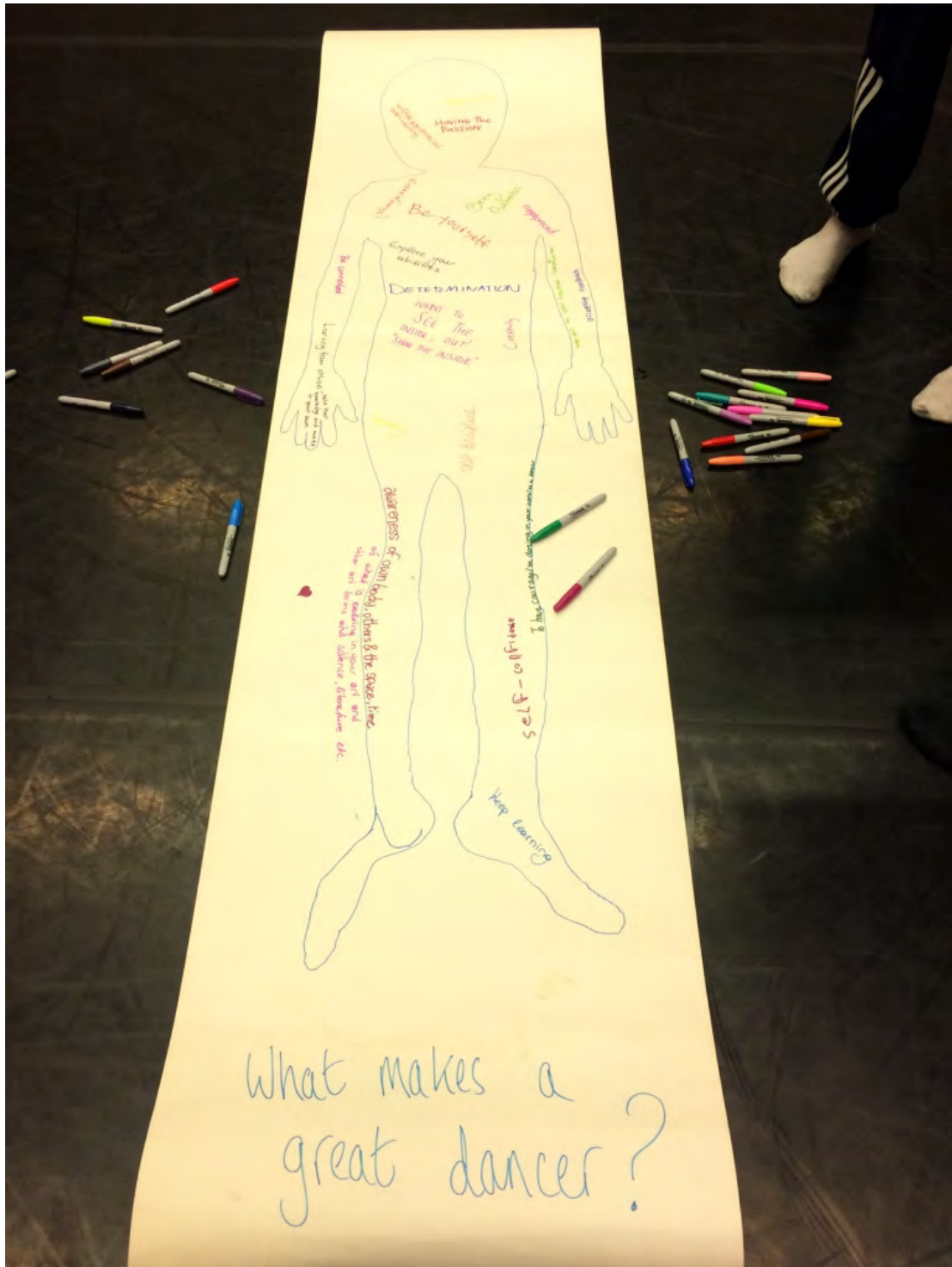


Photo 1 by Betina Panagiotara, The Hague Workshop

The third, of the four overall workshops of iDance, was held in The Hague, Netherlands, in March 2018, and it involved a workshop by the Stopgap Dance Company who shared their expertise in inclusive dance teaching through a set of discussions and practical tasks. Stopgap members Laura Jones and Siobhan Hayes ran the workshop that started by focusing on the notion of responsive teaching. For the

first exercise of the first day we all formed a circle on the floor, and introduced ourselves in order to become acquainted with each other and become a team. Laura and Siobhan explained their intentions in regard to the workshop and focused on one single question for the first day which was *How to design a class collectively*. This particular question brought forth the different dynamics developed in a classroom between the educator and the participants, and examined how one can co-design a class, establish equality, and what the implications of such an approach to teaching are.

To implement this model of co-shaping a class, a seminar, or a workshop in practice, we were invited to write down on a piece of paper the *rules* of our residency, which were rules to ensure our safety and commitment to the workshop, but also our obligations as participants. We first worked with our own team members –e.g. the Greek team– writing down rules such as *don't be late* or more fundamental like *voice your needs* that we then shared with everyone else so as to vote for a total of five rules, from all of the lists, that were the most important in order to set our working context for the duration of the workshop (photo 2). In other words, from the very beginning we became active agents in devising the principles of the workshop, and thus we were co-shaping the axioms of our working together, building on exchange and trust. At the same time, we became accountable for our participation. Overall, this task set the basis for bonding between the different groups, bringing forth issues of responsibility, and generating a common working space.

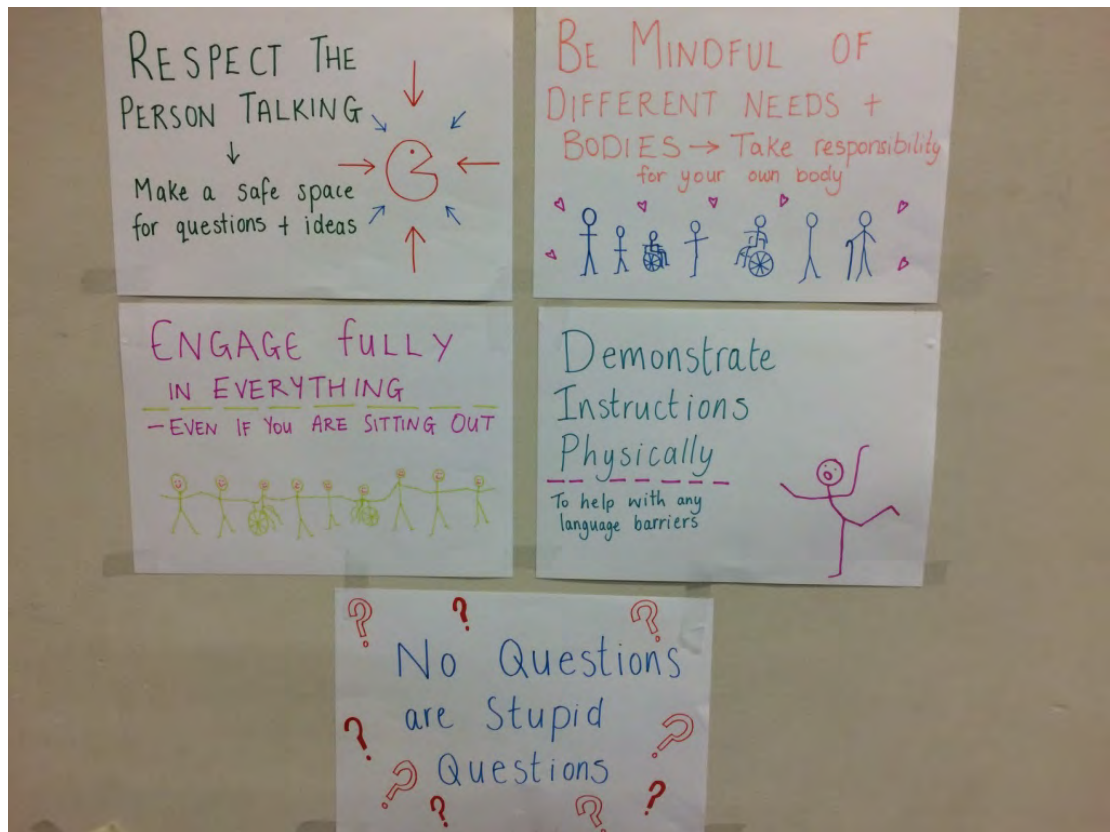


Photo 2 'Rules of Residency' by Betina Panagiotara, The Hague Workshop

Then, Laura and Siobhan discussed how the working ethos and mentality of the Stopgap Dance Company is one that balances between two seemingly opposite notions: *inclusion* and *rigour*. Inclusion connoting participation and access, and rigour for excellence and thoroughness. These two notions have come to symbolise different pedagogical approaches in the field of professional dance, wherein it is often considered that an inclusive practice cannot support excellence the same way traditional educational techniques that represent traditional aesthetic values do. Dance training is largely based on a set of codified techniques that address a specific body type, whereas inclusive dance practices provide an alternative approach that values diversity and enables people with disabilities to participate and to study dance professionally. Hence, the two notions mirror an existing conflict in inclusive dance and the questions posed by the educators were '*how can inclusive practices be rigorous?*' and '*how can we develop a set of skills that minimises the gap between the notions inclusion and rigour?*'. We all noted down words that came to mind when we think of these notions coming up with a long list of words to describe, understand, and examine them. The list was also indicative of the contradictions generated by the two words: inclusion was related to being open-minded, accessible, flexible, and

collective, while rigour was associated with being inflexible, meticulous, thorough, and insensible (photos 3 & 4). Bridging this gap and co-creating an approach that balances between inclusion and rigour is very significant for dance practices as it challenges established attitudes about inclusive dance not being rigorous or not meeting professional standards. Hence, the combination of inclusivity and rigour allows for accessibility, participation, flexibility, along with excellence, professionalism and precision. As Siobhan claimed, the Stopgap Dance Company's work 'is a scaling between inclusion and rigour', aspiring to achieve excellence in their work and teaching (2018).

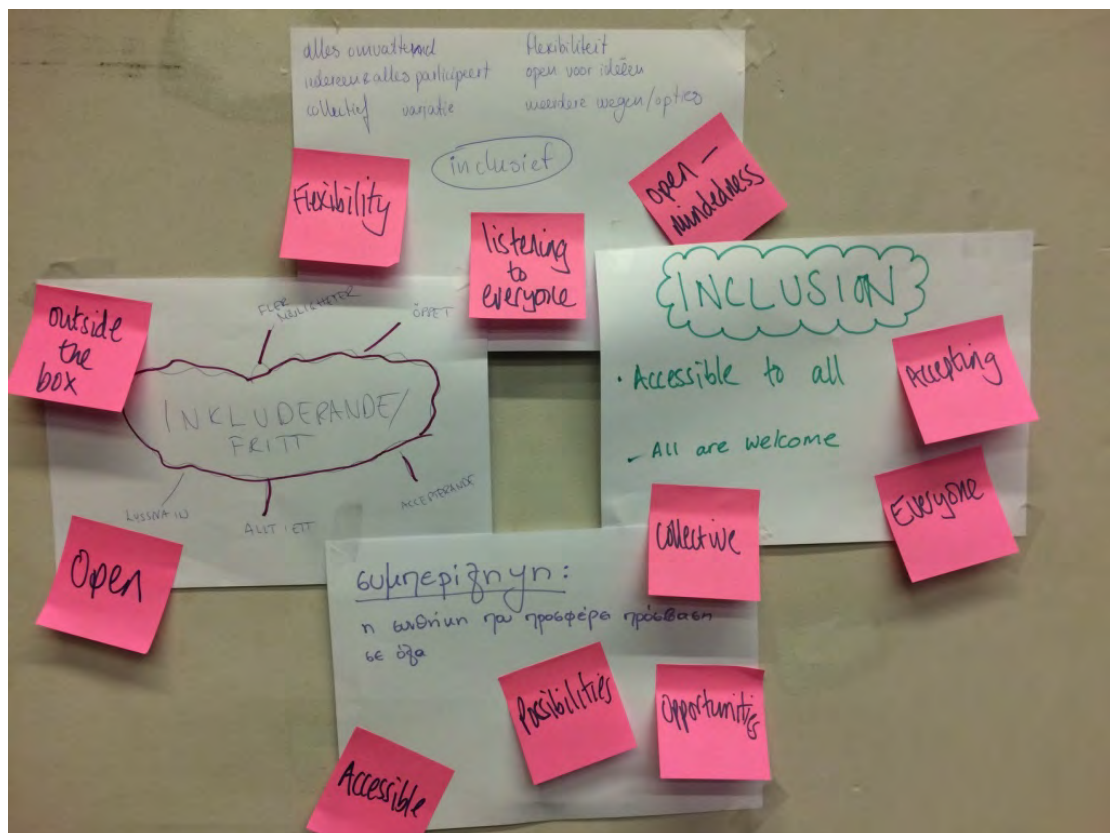


Photo 3 'Inclusion' by Betina Panagiotara, The Hague Workshop

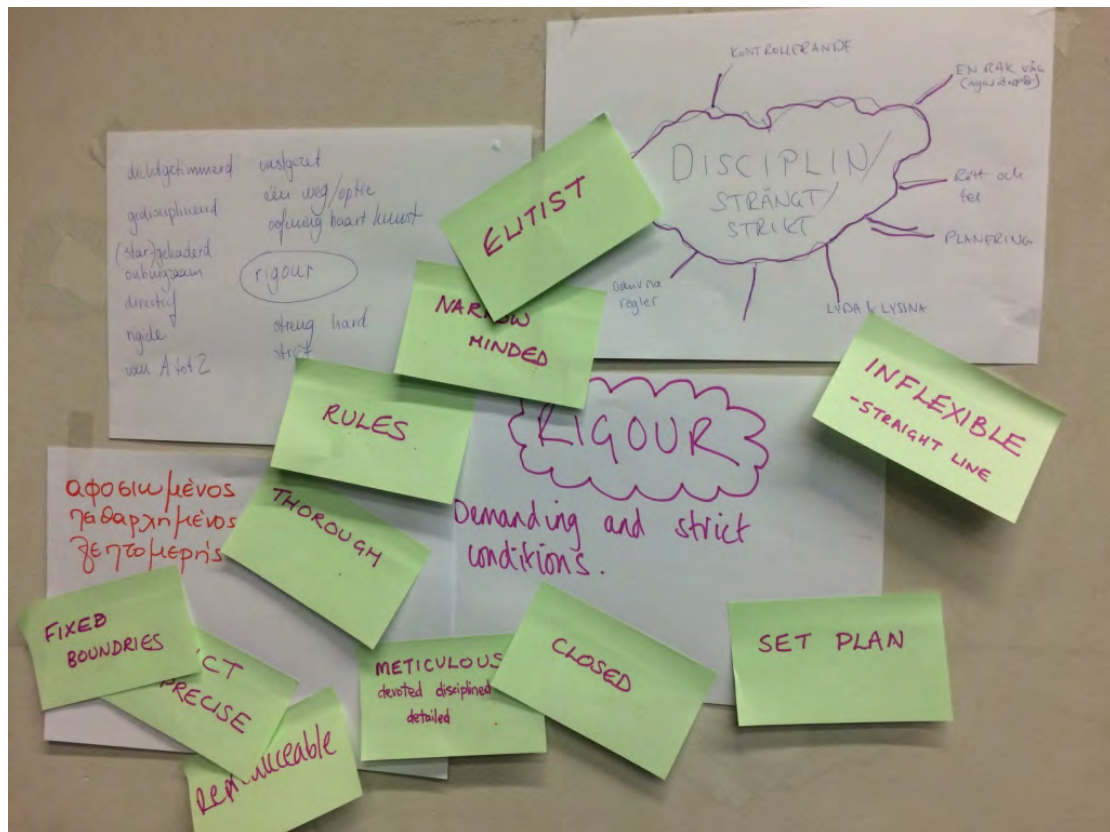


Photo 4 'Rigour' by Betina Panagiotara, The Hague Workshop

Having examined and discussed, as a team, the differences between these two notions and their importance in dance practice, the next task was to consider barriers in and solutions for inclusive work, focusing not only on what happens in the dance studio during the practice, but also on social realities that play a significant role for disabled people, such as venue accessibility (photo 5 & 6). Thus, the teacher responsible for an inclusive dance class has to be aware of and sensitive to the wider working and living conditions, taking into account what happens within and outside of a dancing studio. According to dance historian Alexandra Carter, the context of a dance practice is as important as the practice itself since 'context is not just background, but context is what produces the artistic event, and shapes our perception of it' (2004:16), while scholar Ana Vujanović argues that contextualising is also a way of contributing to an ethics and an ethos of personal responsibility within a community (2012). In a similar way, dance as an artistic practice is associated directly with its socio-political realities, it addresses them, and contributes actively to rethinking and reshaping them.

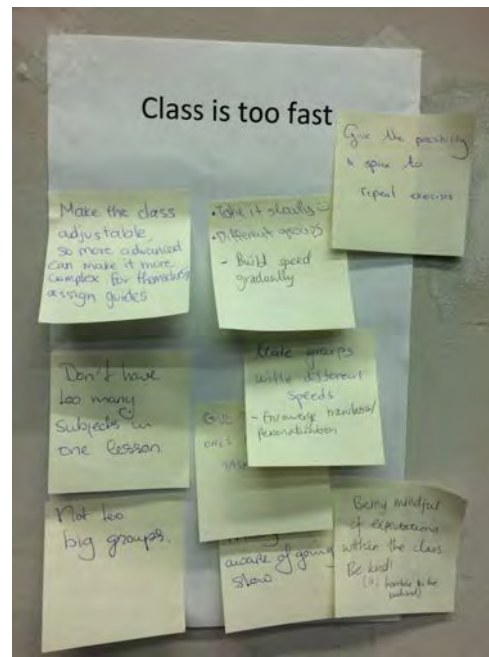
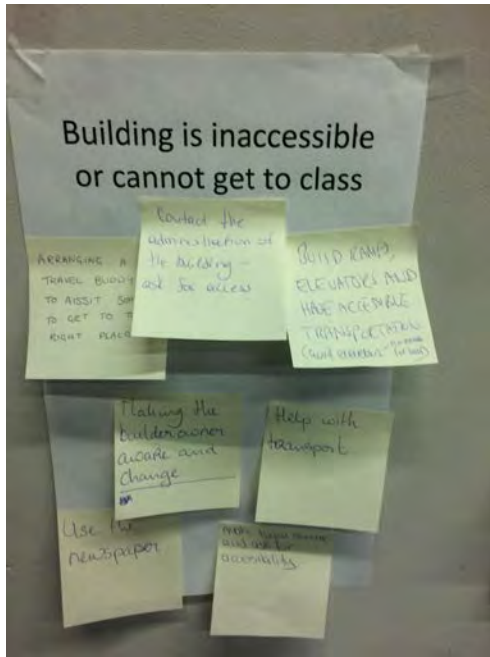


Photo 5 & 6 'Barriers' by Betina Panagiotara, The Hague Workshop

The next day, the workshop focused on the notion of *translation* as a specific skill for teaching and choreographing that is invaluable to inclusive dance practices as it allows an all-inclusive language and enables access to movement material. In practice, translation is a way of re-inventing existing terminology but also practical tasks in imaginative ways that reproduce the aim, the purpose and quality of the movement so that it can be tried by different bodies. Hence, translation enables focusing on understanding the mechanics of a movement and its intention, rather than inviting a mere imitation, facilitating communication and making a varied range of movement material accessible. Moreover, translation is a way of dissecting the parts of the movement, breaking down the movement into its basic elements, so as to communicate it more efficiently to all. According to researchers Elsa Urmston and Imogen Aujla, who work with the Stopgap Dance Company at the University of Bedfordshire, translation preserves the aim of the movement and leads to devising 'different ways of achieving the movement that are equitable in terms of transfer of weight, dynamics, relational proximity or spatial and directional orientation' (2018: 15).

During the workshop Laura and Siobhan discussed the notion of translation, gave practical examples, and encouraged participants to practice such an approach, inviting them to rethink the relationship between movement and language, to translate

movement through the use of metaphors, imagery, sounds, or any material that could be useful and effective, and, in essence, to build on a much more resourceful, flexible, and diverse way of teaching and communicating, enabling what cultural theorist and sociologist Rudi Laermans names ‘the thinking dancer’ (2015:366). This inventive approach to movement requires experience, creativity, adaptation, openness, and a critical attitude towards codified techniques, and traditional educational methodologies.

By the end of the day, this exercise resulted in an informal discussion amongst some of the participants and Laura about the value of codified techniques, such as ballet terminology, and the role of translation in teaching. Similarly, Tanja Mangalanayagam from the Skånes Dansteater mentioned in her interview how, even though translation is a vital tool for inclusive dance practices, for some professional dancers it is like a ‘process of unlearning’ that ‘is difficult because it challenges traditional ways of teaching and looking at the body, which are so ingrained in the dance profession, that it makes it almost painful to let go of these ideals’ (2018). Hence, the underlying anxiety following the class on translation has to do with losing or demoting a seemingly ‘universal’ dance language that has been shaped centuries ago, to substitute it with innovative approaches that seem however too diverse and too open to interpretation to lead to excellence in dance training. These anecdotes are significant as they are suggestive of a dominant discourse about dance technique and its value that is considered universal, even though it is only accessible to specific, normative bodies. They are also representative of what theorist Siebers has identified as the ideology of ability, that is, as we have already mentioned, an insistence on the notion of ability and a fear of human vulnerability and difference (2010). On the contrary, educational approaches, such as the method of translation, challenge such stereotypical understandings of movement, question the discourse on ability, and reconsider dance as an art form that is addressed to all, contributing to and creating specific alternatives that invite diversity and flexibility.

Next, we watched Laura interview Chris Pavia, who started with the Stopgap Dance Company as a trainee and is now a Senior Dance Artist choreographing for the team, who has been ‘chosen by Mencap as someone with Down Syndrome achieving excellence in his career’ (Stopgap Dance Company, 2018). The interview was focused

on his teaching skills, discussing the difficulties encountered and his strengths, but also sharing tools that are useful to him when preparing for and teaching a class. The aim was to collectively discuss and work on how to enable and support someone to design and lead an inclusive dance class. As a practical example that day, Chris Pavia led the session by guiding the warm up, doing dance tasks based on improvisation, and sharing choreographic inputs using specific techniques and especially the notion of translation, relating movements and their qualities to specific films and the tension they provoke, making it easier for everyone in the class to join the exercise. During the class, Siobhan and Laura supported Chris in his practice, giving a very practical example of how to empower one to design and lead an inclusive dance class. All three of them pointed out on the one hand the importance of solid preparation, and on the other hand the vitality of acknowledging and working with the other person's passion and abilities, such as films for Chris for example. Moreover, they stressed the difference between empowering and controlling, emphasising on how important it is for the one supporting the leader to keep visual contact at all times, to be alert and engaged in the duration of the process, to use an all-inclusive language, and to gradually build the necessary trust and confidence within the team. This set of techniques, along with the practical example and then the experimentation by the participants led to an overall understanding of the values and ethos of inclusive dance and collaborative work.

The next few days of the workshop, the aim was to introduce specific learning exercises stemming from the IRIS Teaching Syllabus, teach us how to use them, and to discuss and practice how to design and implement a class for a mixed group of people with disabilities through certain examples. The final day, the focus was on recapping the work that had already been done, discussing and exploring improvisation as an effective technique, and opening up a session for participants to respond to the training.

Throughout the workshop, led principally by the Stopgap Dance Company members, Laura and Siobhan, different teams were leading the warm-up so as to enable collaboration and participation. During the seminars, all participants would experiment with different roles, trying out techniques, discussing them, exploring what it means to lead a group and to design a class so that the theoretical context was

linked to practical tasks as well as empirical knowledge. In other words, the workshop was an archetype of inclusive dance practice and teaching, based on a shared working ethos, enabling participation and collaboration between members of the team, generating the conditions for experimentation with movement, introducing the notion of translation to the participants, and inviting them to explore it and share it with others.

At the end of the workshop several of the participants responded to the question “how was your iDance experience and what have you learned” that I posed. Their short answers are suggestive of the openness, creativity, and inclusivity of the workshops. Specifically, Maria from Greece shared that ‘the iDance project is interesting and expressive’ and that ‘what really helped me is how they explained the exercises to me through their bodies’, or in other words how they used the notion of translation to communicate practical tasks making them accessible to everyone (Kotti, 2018). Kat from the UK talked about a ‘privilege to be alongside so many experienced disabled dancers. An adventure to learn from others and share knowledge. Perfectly timed for me to discover the transition into wheelchair dancing’ (Ball, 2018). Her quote is indicative of the significance of building a community of people and a network of belonging, while also providing the necessary role-models for dancers with disabilities to be able to identify with and be inspired by. Sander from Holland, who was going to take part in the Sg2 educational programme in September 2018, argued that ‘iDance has been very important in exploring dance as a whole. I learned a lot from other people, and I was inspired. I also gained knowledge about my ability to dance and explore my body in dance’ that is to say, he highlighted how working with others helped him reconsider his own abilities (Verbeek, 2018). Likewise, Mila from Sweden argued that it was really ‘an inspiring collection of people sharing a lot of passion for and dedication to their art. Particularly it was very touching to see people so attentive to others’ needs’, thus bringing attention to the significance of trust, sensibility, and support in the field of inclusive dance (Mila, 2018). Katerina from Greece shared that iDance ‘changed the perspective through which I used to understand movement and dance. It opened an expanded range once I realised how many stereotypes I held about dance and how much more a moving body can be. It was wonderful to realise how much creativity a “limitation” can give birth to’ (Gevgetzi, 2018). Thus, Katerina acknowledged and at the same time re-examined her

own dance stereotypes through her participation in iDance, concluding in the importance of making inclusive dance visible.

All in all, at the end of this residency the participants emphasised how iDance empowered them and their practice, and stressed the importance of alternative educational approaches, networking, and becoming part of a community of people, exchanging and sharing knowledge and experience, and working with one another.

3iii. A critical insight

In July 2018, a few months after The Hague, iDance held its last residency in Malmo, Sweden, at the Skånes Dansteater, focusing on choreographing and producing a collective outdoors performance. During this workshop, participants worked in five teams with different choreographers, each team creating its own work that would then become part of an all-inclusive one. Hence, this workshop was centred around performative and choreographic techniques in the form of an intensive choreographic laboratory of inclusive dance practices, rather than focusing on educational and teaching skills like the previous ones. Finally, this residency provided the finale to the two-year programme through collaborative choreographic work that represented the ethos and core principles of inclusive dance.

Instead of describing and further discussing this last residency, in the next part we will be sharing the thoughts of the organisers and teachers of iDance about the programme, its benefits, and its future. These statements give voice to the educators involved but also to the representatives of the participating institutions who designed and led the programme, providing a critical insight to this study.

For Myrto Lavda from the Onassis Stegi, iDance triggered exchange and mobility among different countries and participants, which is very significant in terms of networking and creating a community of people and a sense of belonging. Moreover, as she argued, iDance significantly raised the visibility of inclusive dance in several European countries (2018). However, according to her, it remains crucial to find ways to further implicate and empower people with disabilities so that they become leaders in the field (Lavda, 2018). Similarly, Martine van Dijk from the Holland Dance Festival emphasised that ‘dance is for everyone’ and made a point about how valuable iDance has been in initiating and cultivating an ‘international exchange of knowledge and experience’ that made it possible to work together, to identify the existing conditions and challenges, and to inspire one another (2018). Moreover, she also notes how crucial it is for this network to continue working together, even after the programme has terminated (van Dijk, 2018). Tanja Mangalanayagam from the Skånes

Dansteater noted that iDance has been invaluable for working openly and inclusively, creating a set of educational skills and techniques for all (2018). She believes that the next step is to work in smaller groups of people having very specific aims, in order to work more in-depth and in detail (Mangalanayagam, 2018). Finally, Sho Shibata and Lucy Bennett from the Stopgap Dance Company pointed out how useful the iDance programme proved to be in learning and acknowledging the differences between countries, and in understanding how these differences influence inclusive dance practices in each context (2018). They also stressed the importance of networking, and in particular the exchange of knowledge and expertise as an invaluable process of the programme. For the future, they would like for the artists with and without disabilities to be much more involved in actively designing these programmes, assuming key-positions, and becoming members of the leadership contributing to ameliorating educational and artistic projects. Hence, all of the organisers mark networking and collaborating as important aspects of the programme, stress the need for dancers with disabilities to become leaders in the field, while they also express their thoughts on what the next steps for inclusive dance should be.

Teacher and choreographer Goele van Dijck, who is based in Belgium and who collaborates with the Holland Dance Festival and participated in the iDance programme, also stressed the significance of getting familiarised with the conditions in different countries through the programme. She called iDance ‘a network of inspiration’ and expressed her wish that this collaboration and exchange will continue after its completion (2018). Sonia Parmentier, an experienced dancer and teacher with disability, who also works with the Holland Dance Festival, argued that iDance has been vital in facilitating participation, in enabling collaboration, and in making inclusive dance visible (2018). However, she also mentioned that the social context and practical conditions in every country, such as accessibility, form a significant barrier for disabled people that needs to be taken into account when discussing inclusive dance. As she recounts ‘if I cannot travel from point A to point B to give a class then what are we talking about?’, pointing out everyday practicalities and the need for a contextual approach that links socio-cultural conditions (Parmentier, 2018). Professional disabled dancer Madeleine Mansson from the Skånes Dansteater thinks it is imperative to continue the work initiated by the iDance programme through new projects that will ‘spread the knowledge in other parts of the region’ so that more

people are aware of and involved in inclusive dance practices (2018). She points out how challenging it is to ‘find leaders who want to be engaged and to lead workshops in their town’ revealing the realities of local communities and stressing the importance of sharing with others the educational methodologies developed during iDance (Mansson, 2018). Finally, disabled dancer and teacher Andreas Kolisoglou considers iDance a ‘reason for a dancing co-existence’ and he stresses the need for disabled dancers to become educators and leaders, co-shaping educational and professional workshops (2018). In conclusion, teachers also focused on how to further involve disabled dancers into designing educational programmes, on the significance of contextualising and of being aware of existing circumstances for people with disabilities, on the importance of socialising and coming together, as well as on being inspired by one another and on wishing to keep on going.

Overall, scholar Florian Schneider argues that ‘institutions have organised education as a process of subjectification that re-affirms the existing order and distribution of power in an endless loop’ whereas initiatives such as iDance that enable inclusive approaches to education promote new models that are diverse and accessible to all, challenging the reigning orthodoxy (2010).

3iv. Conclusions

iDance is a programme that enabled exchange, fostered collaboration, produced a set of educational tools and techniques, and built a European network of inclusive dance. Inclusive dance as an innovative approach to dance education that is accessible to all, and supports participation and professionalisation is at its core. Having observed and participated in some of the programme's workshops, and having discussed with and interviewed participants, teachers and organisers, I conclude this chapter with the identification of a set of core principles for inclusive dance that resulted from the programme. More specifically it has become clear that:

- 1. Teaching is for all:** inclusive dance is not only focused on people with disabilities. On the contrary, it is a pedagogical methodology aiming to educate and empower its participants, catering different needs. As Stopgap Dance Company members Laura and Siobhan note, 'we seek to not just do everything from a disabled perspective, but in every aspect of our work (choreographing or teaching) we try to create and deliver from both perspectives. That happens through empowerment, listening and appreciating difference' (2018).
- 2.** It is important to acknowledge and appreciate **difference as one of the core elements of inclusive dance**, so that each and every class is designed to address specific needs and people. As Lucy Bennett from the Stopgap Dance Company argues 'difference is our means and our method' (2014).
- 3. Communication is vital** for inclusive dance as the classes correspond to different needs each time, and aim to foster equality, and to enable horizontal relationships between educators and participants, rather than replicate dominant, hierarchical ones.
- 4. Adaptation is also critical** so as to create a responsive teaching that considers and addresses participants' needs.
- 5. A working ethos has to be established:** an ethos of working with one another, collaborating, and creating a team by building confidence and trust. A working-with that enables difference to be present and visible as part of the

process, and an acknowledgment of hardships that take place outside the studio.

6. **Patience and support are also core values** in inclusive dance training as it can be time-consuming to design and lead a class.
7. **Improvisation should be seen as one of the most important tools** in inclusive dance as it permits individuals to work on their own terms but, at the same time, within specific settings.
8. **Feedback and reflection are also essential** for an inclusive dance class that needs to be adjusted to different needs and take into account a variety of contexts.
9. **Excellence and rigour are important in inclusive dance:** inclusive dance is often thought of as a less demanding class in terms of technique, but that is neither the aim nor the reality of inclusive dance. On the contrary, teachers of inclusive dance strive for rigour and excellence for their students through different means and strategies. As artistic director of Stopgap Lucy Bennett notes ‘inclusivity, rigour and excellence are not a binary but you need to have a mind-set change to figure out how to deliver training that is rigorous and inclusive’ (2018).
10. **Translation is a very common and vital tool** for inclusive dance as it permits reshaping and re-inventing the existing terminology to target a specific class, it makes movement dynamic through descriptions, imageries, and metaphors, permitting access to movement and education to all, as examined in this chapter.
11. **Imagination and commitment are also significant,** as inclusive dance is a constantly shifting practice that aims to cultivate ways of teaching dance that foster excellence along with difference, diversity and inclusivity.

There are many similarities between discourses on collaborative working practices that take place in mainstream dance scenes in central European stages and the principles and tools listed above as the most fundamental in inclusive dance educational methodologies. In particular, since the late 1990s collaborative practices are at the core of theoretical debates about contemporary dance. They are considered significant in fostering a culture of working with the other, or as arts' sociologist Rudi Laermans suggests, collaborative practices in dance promote an ‘ethics of doing with

others' in such a way that difference between one another becomes the driving force of creativity, artistic making, and coming together (2012: 97). For Laermans in particular, examining modes of working in the field of contemporary dance, 'each artistic collaboration is in essence a micro-political experiment in democratising society' (2015: 37). As discussed in this research, collaboration is also at the core of inclusive dance pedagogies aiming to democratise the field of dance making it inclusive for all, diverse, and open. Moreover, according to sociologist Richard Sennett 'people's capacities for cooperation are greater and more complex than institutions allow them to be' (2013: 29). Thus, alternative frameworks that allow experimentation and working in difference like the ones provided and nurtured in inclusive dance which promote social and dialogical skills are necessary.

In this context, inclusive dance as well as collaborative practices in mainstream dance are rooted in and cultivate a philosophy of working with the other that is grounded on respecting difference, enabling diversity, and inspiring collaboration. In a dominant neoliberal system that valorises individuality and promotes a culture of ability and independence, inclusive dance provides an alternative that is collaborative, open, diverse, equal, and communal. Nonetheless, inclusive dance is still excluded from mainstream dance scenes making this correlation hard to bring forth, even though it is at the core of debates taking place about dominant working and learning modes. Associating the working ethos of inclusive dance with collaborative working modes is one more way to highlight its significance in wider contexts, to enter the theoretical debates occurring today in mainstream venues, and to raise visibility emphasising how inclusive dance is indeed a counter model to existing artistic and sociopolitical realities.

In conclusion, this chapter focused on inclusive dance education, discussing a set of core issues and strategies employed so as to make inclusive dance visible. This chapter also described and examined the workshop on inclusive teacher training held in The Hague as a specific case study of inclusive dance practices, providing concrete examples of the techniques, methodologies, and set of skills used, as well as of the philosophy and ethos required to design, lead or participate in an inclusive dance class. Moreover, this chapter gave voice to participants so as to share their own experience and expectations of iDance thus contributing to the understanding of the

overall impact of the programme. Finally, it also associated inclusive dance with an ongoing discourse on collaborative working modes taking place in mainstream dance scenes and venues, revealing links that might have gone unnoticed so far.

4. CONCLUDING WITH BEST PRACTICES

The contextual approach to the topic enabled this research to focus on the conditions of each country and study their effect in relation to dance and disability, thus avoiding homogenisation and generalisation (Vujanović, 2015). Taking this approach into consideration and having already discussed the existing differences in cultural policies, socio-political discourses, and educational frameworks in chapter two, it is also crucial to examine similarities so as to be able first to build on commonalities; second to articulate alternatives to the status quo; and third to share knowledge through a best practices approach. Thus, in what follows, there is a list of the outcomes of the report, as well as a best practices guide for inclusive dance. The latter is not extensive or all-inclusive, as it aims to point out professional and educational projects and activities that can be useful, practical, and noteworthy when discussing dance and disability, especially in relation to education.

As examined in both the first and the second chapter, it is crucial to develop **role models** in the field of inclusive dance so that people with disabilities can identify with and be inspired by them. As disabled artist Kate Marsh and scholar Sara Whatley have pointed out, role models are very significant in challenging dominant perceptions about the disabled body in wider social terms besides the field of dance (2016). They also contribute to the empowerment of people with disabilities who have been excluded from the mainstream socio-political and cultural discourse for a very long time. Finally, they support change in the dominant educational system through specific alternatives, which as Laermans argues is the only way for ‘creative newcomers’ to ‘challenge the temporary canon or reigning orthodoxy’ (2015: 18).

Therefore, it is imperative in order to enable access, participation and visibility of people with disabilities that **inclusive pedagogical approaches** are part of educational curriculums in academic dance studies, in conservatoires, and vocational dance schools, as well as in amateur dance schools. Such approaches are not beneficial only for artists with disabilities. On the contrary, anecdotes from the field are suggestive of how inclusive dance practices benefit everyone and especially contemporary dance as a field. For example, teacher and choreographer Goele van

Dijck described, in her interview with the researcher, how for some teachers she had worked with in inclusive dance classes, disabled dancers were an ‘eye-opener’ that helped them reconsider dance and education. Finally, empirical research demonstrates that inclusive teaching practices are illuminating and liberating for all, creating critical knowledge, and inviting a reconsideration of the field of dance and a re-examination of what is considered an able body (Whatley, 2007).

For inclusive dance to become part of dance curricula, it is essential that **dance teachers are introduced to inclusive dance methodologies**. Even if some teachers are interested in inclusive dance, they do not always know where they can be taught such practices, while many others are simply intimidated by the idea of teaching to a mixed abilities class. It is a challenging task that needs specific skills such as adaptability, flexibility, awareness, and patience and hence it is very important for educators to be educated. Such a perspective is adopted by the iDance programme that has created an online syllabus of a variety of teaching approaches and dance classes so as to facilitate interested parties and to contribute to knowledge.

As examined throughout the research, the state’s **cultural policy** is vital for inclusive dance. A long-term policy, with specific aims and objectives, that would financially support already existing, but also newly-formed, companies and institutions involved in dance and disability would be very effective in making inclusive dance sustainable in the long run. Moreover, it would make inclusive dance visible in wider parts of society, making it an agent for educational methods and teaching practices, as well as a part of the mainstream discourse investing also in audience development. Finally, inclusive dance would also be an active agent of change in culture and society given that the origins of discrimination against people with disabilities derive from both the medical approach to disability and the Western ideological discourse that praises the able body.

As Kate Marsh and Jonathan Burrows further argue

UK experience tells us that the development and progression of art that includes and is made by people with disability is dependent on policies and political frameworks for support. Without such formal structures, disability arts as a sector that is

‘recognised’ in its own right wouldn’t be possible, or would be the privilege of some, while others stay marginalised and under-supported.

Marsh & Burrows, 2017: 27

Thus, the importance of state support and of a consistent cultural policy is evident through the leading example in the field, which is the UK, as explored in chapter three. The long-term commitment to inclusive dance has resulted in the UK being one of the top countries in terms of professional networks, dance companies, education, and overall accessibility, participation and visibility. Such a cultural policy is also key in empowering people with disability to be aware of their choices and to participate in various initiatives. The latter is also a common issue between different settings: how to get more people to **participate**.

Overall, the **organisation of events and educational activities, and the hosting of performances are methods** of raising visibility and awareness but most importantly of challenging the norm and inviting a reconsideration of stereotypical approaches to both dance and disability. Additionally, theoretical approaches are crucial since they question established discourses, they bring forth the paradoxes inherent in the notion of ability and the body, and they reveal the constructed nature of stereotypes that have for a long time defined sociocultural policies and structures. As most of the theorists and practitioners argue, theoretical studies on inclusive dance vastly contribute to the field as they make it part of academia, creating a common ground for further research, posing questions as to the validity of notions such as abled and disabled, associating given realities to specific discourses and traditions, and giving voice to those who have been silenced.

Taking into consideration the above conclusions, this is the **best practices guide** in relation to dance and disability:

1. **Publications** that contribute to awareness, challenge stereotypical notions of both dance and disability, promote openness and dialogue, and enrich the dance discourse. Such contributions are for example *Moving Matters, Supporting Disabled Dance Students in Higher Education* by Sara Whatley (2007), *Choreographing Difference: The Body and the Identity in*

Contemporary Dance by Ann Cooper Albright (1997), *Disability and Contemporary Performance* by Petra Kuppers (2005), and *Disability Theory* by Tobin Siebers (2008).

2. **Research initiatives** that foster collaboration between institutions, theorists, and practitioners, examining inclusive dance in relation to different discourses. Such an example is *Invisible Difference*. The project is a collaboration between different institutions like the University of Coventry, the University of Exeter, and the University of Aberdeen, funded by the Arts Council England. It aims to outline and examine how the law protects and supports people with disability in professional dance contexts, and, to do so, it works with researchers, practitioners and artists. It is a valuable outlet of resources on the law, dance and disability, while also it features online articles, presentations, and interviews from past events that can be valuable for the field, adding to the educational realities.
3. **Professional dance companies** that are committed to inclusive dance working with dancers with and without disabilities, acting as policy-makers in their country of origin, and shaping the future of inclusive dance through their educational programmes and agendas. Such examples are the *Candoco and Stopgap Dance Companies*, as examined earlier in this report, the *Axis Dance Company* in the USA, and many more in several other countries.
4. **Teaching methodologies** that are shared and make inclusive dance widely known and accessible to teachers around the world. Such methodologies are *DanceAbility*: an organised teaching methodology that was initiated in the USA in the late 1980s by Alito Alessi and his dance partner Karen Nelson. Many workshops have been organised under the umbrella of DanceAbility which is repeated annually since 1996. Up until 2007 more than 250 teachers were certified as DanceAbility teachers. The organisation is active internationally through its teacher certification courses, educational programmes, and touring performances such as the Street Performance Parades. Their aim is to challenge stereotypes in relation to disability and to educate as many people as possible in dance. *IRIS — Inclusive Teaching*

Syllabus by the Stopgap Dance Company is a comprehensive handbook on inclusive dance teaching methodologies stemming from the company's experience since 1995. It is an amalgamation of their expertise on teaching professional disabled dancers and it is divided in four levels: *Include*, *Respond*, *Integrate*, and *Specialise*. Each level provides its own set of tools and exercises for designing and developing an inclusive dance class that is based on the notions of inclusion and rigour. Finally, *iDance* has also generated an online learning kit including lesson plans, as well as digital material on how to organise and teach a class. In particular, the methodologies employed and the classes designed during iDance are available online at <http://www.idancenetwork.eu/>. The site operates as an open source inventory with lesson plans and digital material aiming to share expertise and to make inclusive dance available to more teachers worldwide. The online platform operates in accordance with the philosophy pertaining inclusive dance that is focused on ethos, difference and diversity.

5. **Academic institutions** that welcome and enable change so that they become inclusive and aware of differences and varying needs. One such example comes from the UK and is the *University of Coventry*: one of the leading universities in the UK and internationally, on dance and disability studies, open to students with and without disability, with an inclusive educational curriculum that is constantly shifting and adapting to the needs of the students, with research facilities and funds for further studying dance and disability.
6. **Cultural policies** that support, promote, and sustain inclusive dance in the long-run, ensuring further development of the field such as the *Scottish and the British* ones, as discussed in chapter two of this research.
7. **Events** such as festivals, platforms, and conferences that create visibility and awareness, that cultivate new audiences, create a community, and in the long-run, create new ethics and traditions as, for example, the *Southbank Centre's Unlimited Festival*.

Concluding, inclusive dance educational methodologies are vital for the renewal of the contemporary dance scene that can be more inclusive, diverse, and democratic for, as Laermans suggests, ‘each artistic collaboration is in essence a micro-political experiment in democratising society’ (2015: 37). Inclusive dance is a step towards further democratising Western societies by challenging normative perceptions on disability and dance, embracing diversity and difference, and empowering people with disabilities to participate actively in the socio-cultural and political discourse. Furthermore, as examined throughout this research, inclusive dance is an alternative to the dominant ideology of ability that is grounded on exclusion. On the contrary, inclusive dance practices and educational methodologies are agents of change that foster inclusivity, fight for equality and accessibility, challenge stereotypical understandings of dance and the body, and hence trigger a reconsideration of what dance as an art form is, or can be potentially. Initiatives such as iDance and the ones mentioned in the best-practices guide are broadening the field, making way for its re-examination through practical examples, and for a much-needed democratisation that is rooted in inclusivity and difference.

APPENDIX I — ETHICS

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APPENDIX II — BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Betina Panagiotara is a dance researcher and journalist. In 2018, she was awarded her Ph.D. at the University of Roehampton looking at the contemporary dance scene in Greece amidst the socio-political crisis, focusing on emerging artistic practices. Her research was supported by the Onassis Public Benefit Foundation. She holds a BA in Media, Culture & Communication (GR) and a MA in Dance Histories, Cultures and Practices (UK). She teaches dance history, has worked as a research associate at the Kalamata International Dance Festival, and as production manager at Animasyros International Animation Festival & Agora. She works with artists in research, dramaturgy and production, and collaborates with international media outlets, such as BBC TV News, as a local producer. She has participated with her research at international conferences, has published articles in scientific journals, and contributed to the book *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance* (Georgelou, Protopapa & Theodoridou, 2016).

URL: <https://roehampton.academia.edu/BetinaPanagiotara>

Email: spanagiotara@gmail.com

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I DANCE



ONASSIS
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SKÅNES DANSTEATER



Stopgap DANCE COMPANY