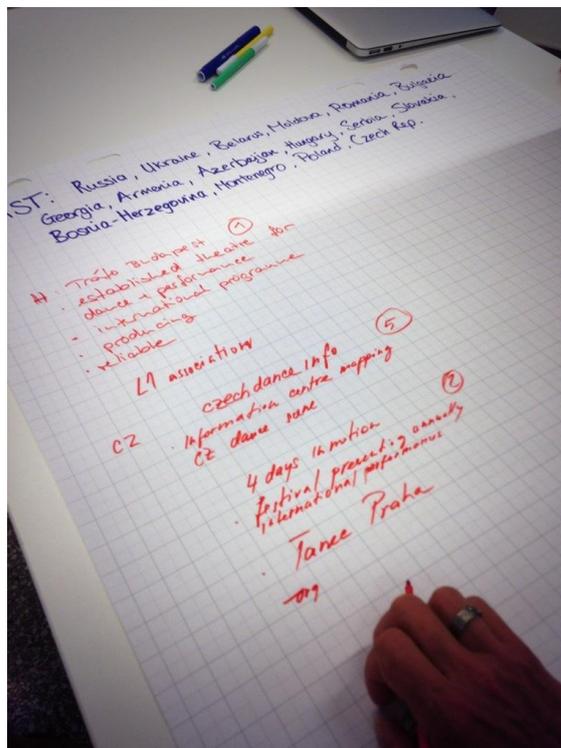


A HUNDRED. MAPPING CONTEMPORARY DANCE RESOURCES IN EUROPE

There's limited information for artists and producers and for organisations in search for partners for exchange and collaboration.

EDN commissioned an action research project in order to explore how knowledge exchange across networks can contribute to a mapping process.

A Hundred... is not an exhaustive study, but a preliminary data gathering exercise, an exploration of how this information might be distilled and disseminated. Click here to know more about the dance resources listed after study.



Section 1: Introduction & Overview of Research

Let's start with what this document is not:

- This is not a comprehensive or exhaustive map of dance.
- This is not a hierarchical list of contacts.
- This is not a final or restrictive database.

This online document is an attempt to capture a "snapshot" of the dance support structure across Europe at a certain point in time. It is a preliminary data gathering exercise and an exploration of how this information might be distilled into a hundred and disseminated for the benefit of artists, managers, organisations and other supporters of contemporary dance in Europe.

1.1 Why?

“Physical movement is, if you like, the raw material for the production of mobility. People move, things move, ideas move. The movement can, given the right equipment, be measured and mapped.” (Cresswell, 2009)¹

Contemporary Dance is a sector that can be perceived as fragile. The product is niche, and in many areas, the market is limited. In order to ensure the sustainability of the art form, artists have tested and pushed the boundaries, not only in concept or form, but across markets and borders. Mobility of dance artists and of those supporting dance is key to ensuring such sustainability. Therefore it is important to develop tools and resources which support the mobility of those involved in contemporary dance.

There are organisations that offer support and resources for dance across Europe. However, there is limited information to direct artists or producers to these possible supporting or presenting opportunities. In the same way, managers or organisations in search of partners for exchange programmes or international collaborations could benefit from a broader understanding of institutions across Europe who are working at an international level.

A Hundred... is an action research project that explores how knowledge exchange across networks - formal and informal – can contribute to a mapping process. It is an attempt to capture a picture of centres of activity – be these established institutions or new entities, networks or festivals – that support contemporary dance and have a strong international projection within their core mission or vision.

1.2 Who?

The European Dancehouse Network (EDN) has commissioned this independent research to explore the potential of mapping significant activity in dance across Europe. This action research exercise set out to identify a hundred contemporary dance resources -including dance spaces, festivals, networks and information centres- that those participants, working in dance across Europe, consider worth watching or engaging with.

This project sits alongside other research and development activities undertaken by the EDN, including the exploration of the form and function of a “Dancehouse”, and the evolving models of support for dance in Europe. Exploring further the idea of mapping such resources for dance across Europe also acknowledges the importance of network building and mobility – of artists and other cultural players – in the development of such identities. According to Vedel and Hoppu, in their edited publication *Nordic Dance Spaces. Practicing and imagining a region*:

“Mobilisation and mobility are therefore critical concepts, situating dancing as generating a grid of time and space: dancing bodies constitute contexts for movement, and identity building occurs as a practical effect of their activities.” Vedel and Hoppu (2014, p.2)²

It is intended that this research would result in an online document which would be relevant to a broad range of users, including artists, programmers and producers of dance; and that it would include dance resources that are both emerging and established. The results of this research will provide a “snapshot” of dance activity in Europe, relevant to a particular period of time, and is intended to be something that would be updated every few years.

For this preliminary study, these resources were selected through a consultation process with artists and representatives from dance organisations and festivals across Europe. The knowledge and experience of invited participants informs and provides more objective contributions, to shaping and developing a mapping process in support of dance development across Europe, as well as potentially informing future studies initiated by the EDN.

¹ Cresswell, T. (2009) *Towards a politics of mobility*. In: Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 2010, volume 28, p. 19.

² Vedel, K and P Hoppu (eds), 2014, *Nordic Dance Spaces. Practicing and imagining a Region*; Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

1.3 Aims and objectives

This research project set out to:

- Explore the concept of “mapping” in the context of European contemporary dance support and activity;
- Attempt to capture the “big picture” and distil it in a list of circa a hundred international facing dance resources: spaces, festivals and organisations that promote and support contemporary dance and stimulate international dialogue and collaboration;
- Collect data and knowledge that would support the mobility of artists and professionals working in dance across Europe;
- Consider a framework to visualise and better understand the dance ecology in Europe.

The objectives of this project are:

- To test a methodology in gathering required data that is responsive to the network and current practice;
- To produce an online resource that will provide information to artists, producers, organisations and other supporters of contemporary dance, on existing dance entities and resource organisations across Europe;
- To provide practical information that can assist in identifying the challenges and opportunities for strengthening relationships and information exchange between European dance organisations.

1.4 Summary of Findings – The numbers

Participation

5 workshops were held between April and November 2015:

- Aerowaves Spring Forward Festival, ES (20th April) – Pilot workshop
- Bassano del Grappa, IT (22nd August)
- Tanz im August, Berlin DE (29th August)
- La Briqueterie – CDC du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine FR (22nd October)
- TRAF0, Budapest HU (9th November)

In total 64 people* participated in these workshops:

- Workshop in Barcelona: 17 participants
- Workshop in Bassano del Grappa: 16 participants
- Workshop in Berlin: 9 participants
- Workshop in Vitry-sur-Seine: 10 participants
- Workshop in Budapest: 12 participants

*Country of origin of the participants: Spain, France, The Netherlands, Austria, UK, Italy, Israel, Portugal, Switzerland, Germany, Czech Republic, Greece, Norway, France, Croatia, Slovenia, Sweden, Romania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Denmark, Hungary, Serbia.

Data gathered

410 resources were identified through the research:

- 132 Dance Spaces
- 197 Festivals
- 48 Residencies
- 19 Networks
- 14 Dance information centres

This information was analysed and distilled in response to a selection criteria that accounted for a number of factors (further information is provided in Section 2). For example:

- Multiple entries, across festivals and spaces
- Percentage of contemporary dance programming
- International cooperation and programming

The information was gathered according to geographical area³:

- **North** (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Germany).
- **South** (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Macedonia, Albania, Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Andorra).
- **East** (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Poland, Czech Republic).
- **West** (UK, Ireland, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein).

Resources selected for final database

The resulting database contains 161 entries, across 5 redefined categories:

- 55 Dance Spaces – including residency spaces / dancehouses
- 16 Dance Networks & Projects – including national and international networks and collaborations
- 39 Dance Festivals – festivals exclusively for dance
- 41 Multidisciplinary Festivals – festivals with a high percentage of contemporary dance programming
- 10 Other Resources – including online resources and information centres

The geographical spread of all resources selected to be included in the final database, across all categories:

- North 23%
- South 32%
- East 22%
- West 24%

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The geographical spread of entries excluding Networks & Projects (as many of these are multi-centred and multi-national):

- North 20%
- South 37%
- East 19%
- West 24%

Section 2: Research Methodology

2.1 Action research

A Hundred... is an action research project – an applied research methodology in which the study is undertaken within a particular working context, or active project. It is a reflective process, in which the outcomes can continue to inform and evolve the research actions.

The research method used to gather the data was based on a Focus Group model. The goal was not only a quantitative documentation of resources, but also to gather qualitative data. Therefore this method was considered the most appropriate to encourage participants to be critical, reflexive and collectively engaged in the process.

³ The geographical area includes the 47 official members states of the Council of Europe
<http://www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/our-member-states>

Selected participants were invited to attend the session and actively engage with the task of identifying important dance resources in their region and across Europe. At the beginning of each workshop, the objectives were explained and participants were asked to focus on 5 categories:

1. Dance spaces (i.e. spaces that support research, residencies, production and presentation opportunities);
2. Dance festivals;
3. Multidisciplinary festivals and/or venues programming dance;
4. Networks;
5. Dance information Centres.

The workshop/research coordinators facilitated discussion and provided space for participants to comment and feedback on findings, which give rise to a wealth of different points of view.

2.2 Workshops

An initial workshop had been organised in Barcelona in April 2015, coinciding with the Aerowaves Spring Forward Festival. This workshop was initially developed as part of the EU-funded Léim project⁴.

To maximise the impact, and reach a wide range of potential participants, four further workshops were then organised as part of, or around a series of previously identified professional gatherings taking place between June and December 2015, in different European countries:

22 August 2015

Bassano del Grappa, Italy

Host: Centro per la scena contemporanea, Comune di Bassano del Grappa

Context: EDN Atelier Building a Dancehouse

29 August 2015

Berlin, Germany

Host: Tanz im August

Context: Tanz im August festival

22 October 2015

Vitry-sur-Seine, France

Host: La Briqueterie – CDC du Val-de-Marne

Context: Aerowaves annual partners' meeting

9 November 2015

Budapest, Hungary

Host: Trafó House of Contemporary Arts

Context: IETM Autumn Plenary Meeting

The research coordinators liaised with a hosting partner in each of these locations. These partners supported the project by providing a venue and connecting the researchers with participants attending the gathering, as well as the local professional sector and, in some cases, neighbouring countries. A representative selection of attendees were contacted by the facilitators⁵ of each workshop, taking into account the balance between different professions, as well as nationalities.

The participants invited to take part at each location were identified by the research coordinators as “active” European cultural players. They included artists, programmers, dance house directors, producers and other influencers in European dance. Their presence at key events and activities within a

⁴ 2 year leadership development project (2013-2015) funded through the EU Culture Programme 2007-2013. www.leimproject.eu & <http://ednetwork.eu/project/leim/>

⁵ 22 August 2015 : Elisabetta Bisaro, Natalia Alvarez (Sheila Creevey as methodologist) ; 29 August 2015 : Béla Bisom, Natalia Alvarez ; 22 October 2015 : Elisabetta Bisaro, Natalia Alvarez (Sheila Creevey as methodologist); 9 November 2015: Béla Bisom, Natalia Alvarez.

European context were used as indicators as to their suitability for participation. A variety of participants were invited to attend these workshops in order to include different perspectives and sources of knowledge.

When bringing together diverse, and multi-national participants, the resulting working styles and approach to the task differed. Thus the working model has evolved over the research period, with the task and instructions refining and gaining clarity with each iteration. Whilst the openness of the task enabled participants to choose the style of data gathering most appropriate to their working group, it has required extra time at commencement of the sessions to agree working methodologies. The result of this approach has seen very different group dynamics across each of the sessions, in response to the context of the workshop and the range of participants.

The working groups were divided by geographical region – North, South, East and West. In the first part of the workshop, the participants were asked to contribute initially to the data gathering of their own region, and then invited to share their knowledge of other resources across the other regions. The second part involved the sharing of information, whereas a member of the working group was nominated to share their selection, and to articulate their reason for inclusion, and any questions that arose. The workshops were followed up with a survey of participants, reflecting on the process and experience of the workshops. This has provided some further qualitative data, adding to the information captured through the notes, recordings and transcriptions of the workshops.

2.3 Issues & questions arising

Throughout the workshops, questions arose as to the purpose, function and rationale for the research. These included:

Who is this resource for? If it is solely for artists, it will require a different set of data, than if it is for programmers and dance managers, or for those new to working with dance.

What are the **Key Indicators** for inclusion in the list? There was common agreement on issues such as quality of output/engagement, international facing priorities, level of activity. However questions were raised as to the **value** of information gathered. For example: Is it better to focus on lesser known festivals or organisations, rather than those which have a bigger presence in the European dance scene? Is it important to identify which of these resources are future facing – i.e. anticipated to become important milestones on the dance calendar, or key institutions in support of artists?

How resilient are these resources? Are they personality driven – and if so, is there a succession plan to ensure it is still relevant in future years? Are these resources equipped for a shift in financial or artistic context? Would it still be relevant?

2.4 Ethical issues arising

The ethical issues of sharing information, and individual opinions on the identified resources, and the impact of this on the individuals involved has been raised a number of times. Participants in the research (subject to their signed consent) would be identified in the final report, and there was concern expressed regarding the inclusion – or in particular, the non-inclusion of artistic institutions and resources they represent.

The strength of a network relies on the strength of relationships – with artists, organisations and supporting bodies. To express a preference, or a negative experience, or indeed sharing information on a key ally in your work, can be a difficult thing to do when so much depends on their support.

It was expressed that the research may benefit from publishing a rationale around those not included, as well as those included.

2.5 Selection criteria

The data analysis was undertaken by the research coordinators and the criteria for selection was responsive to the information gathered. The main criterion for selection, as established at the outset of the research proposal was that:

“Each of the entries will have to prove that their mission and programming encourages and supports international dialogue and collaboration.”

Throughout the process, questions, discussions and feedback from participants of the workshops further elaborated on the main criterion, by identifying key indicators for inclusion on the long list. This included:

Activity

- Programming
- Producing
- Initiatives
- Residency space
- Information sharing

Characteristic

- Quality
- Reliable / Consistent (programme / support)
- Sustainable
- Not usual suspects
- “In the Loop” – aware of current developments, initiatives, who’s who and what’s what...
- Future focused (Future proofing)

International Facing

- European Projects (draw people together at particular points of the year)
- Export opportunities
- Host & help international touring
- Open calls
- Exchange & Mobility
- Website / Accessibility (English language website)

The resulting long-list from all five workshops included **410** international dance entities / resources:

- 132 Dance Spaces
- 197 Festivals
- 48 entities offering residencies
- 19 Networks
- 14 Dance information centres

The long-list was distilled to **161** international dance entities / resources. This process involved analysis of the data and the further redefining of the categories in response to the information gathered. Having sifted through the information gathered, the research coordinators have identified these further criteria to support the rationale for inclusion in the final database.

Redefining of categories:

- “Festivals” include only those programming exclusively dance; multidisciplinary festivals have been included under the “multi-disciplinary” category
- “Multidisciplinary” includes spaces and festivals
- “Other” includes resource and information centres
- “Networks & Projects” category includes dance and multidisciplinary networks, platforms and projects – national and international

- A dance space can be also a festival; it was decided to not repeat the same entry for more than one category to leave space for other entries (for ex. Tanec Praha or Explore festival in Romania)
- Priority goes to relevant categories: dance festivals and dance spaces

Criteria for non-inclusion

Entries that had no contemporary dance in the programming, had no international programme and/or whose websites were not accessible or were difficult to understand, were excluded.

“Festivals” and “Multidisciplinary” were the categories with the most entries. To further refine the selection, two additional selection criteria were added: for festivals, to consider the percentage of international companies programmed in their last edition; for “multidisciplinary”, to check the percentage of dance shows/activities in the programming, compared to other genres.

General observations

Geographical spread is an important factor to consider in the selection process. Whilst the majority of resources included are located in the Southern or Eastern region, this is partly due to the existence of a more networked sector in the West. For example, the National Dance Network (NDN) in the UK or the Centre de Développement Choréographiques (CDC) in France. In these cases, the network and not the individual resources / entities were included.

EDN members are accounted for within this network also.

There was less representation from the Northern region, to provide further insight to this area, in spite of hosting a workshop in Berlin.

In countries with less resources, there are more multidisciplinary spaces than spaces dedicated to dance, often founded or led by an artist; for example Croatia. The dance centre is also the main organiser of a festival but part of EDN; in Hungary, Workshop Foundation is a main player but part of Aerowaves.

In some countries like France, for example, with lots of different spaces and all within a defined category, it was decided to list more networks and resource centres than festivals.

2.6 Outcomes

This process resulted in the following documented resources:

- 55 **Dance Spaces** – including residency spaces / dancehouses
- 16 **Networks & Projects** – including national and international networks and collaborations
- 39 **Dance Festivals** – festivals exclusively for dance
- 41 **Multidisciplinary** – festivals with a high percentage of contemporary dance programming
- 10 **Other Resources** – including online resources and information centres

The geographical spread of all resources selected to be included in the final database, across all categories:

- North: 23%
- South: 32%
- East: 22%
- West: 23%

Section 3: Next steps

This preliminary study set out to test the idea of a mapping process and to gather data relating to key infrastructural resources. These included dance specific spaces, festivals, networks and information centres; as well as multidisciplinary resources with a significant focus on dance.

It is anticipated that the publication and dissemination of this information will respond to a perceived lack of signposting information for dance artists, producers, managers and organisations seeking to develop international relationships and opportunities.

It is important that such a document be a “live” resource that is updated on a regular basis. This could be achieved either by making it accessible through open-sourcing, or continuing the research process over a longer period. **This work lies outside the remit and parameters of this preliminary study**, and therefore the database is presented as a final product.

However, throughout the research process, a new framework for sharing or disseminating the information gathered was evolved, and is presented here as a potential “Next Step” for the EDN should the network wish to pursue it.

3.1 Developing a framework

In considering the framework for this study, a grounded theory approach was employed. In other words, the research focus and framework (or conceptual categorisation) would be refined as the study evolved. The resulting framework below has been developed in response to the initial aims and objectives of the project, but also responds to the critical and ethical issues that arose throughout the preliminary study.

This framework categorises resources in terms of relationships. It acknowledges that users of this resource will have different motivations in engaging with the ‘map’. Therefore we have identified five categories (the 5 C’s) that we consider will be relevant to the different users, and will provide an overview of the kinds of resources available across Europe for those seeking to develop relationships in dance.

Figure: *5C’s Framework* ©Sheila Creevey 2016

CREATE	Resources that support the development of artists and new work. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Residency Programmes – Research & Production Space – Artist Development Organisations
CONNECT	Places to connect with people, organisations, and supporters. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Networks – Festivals / Showcases – Events & Conferences
COMMISSION	Organisations commissioning, investing in, or otherwise financially supporting the development of dance work. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Organisations that commission, or co-commission international work. – Festivals that commission work, or offer longer engagements for artists
COLLABORATE	Resources or organisations that support European partnership work. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Those organisations prioritising international partnership projects – Resources and networks that bring together artists / organisations – Those focussing on mobility and cross- border activity
COMMUNICATE	Information resources for those seeking to learn more about dance in Europe. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regional / National dance information centres – Resources that identify key players in national and international dance activity – Those organisations publishing information on national and international dance activity

This framework could provide the basis for an interactive website. We visualise this as a geographical map of Europe, with options to select one of the categories, which will then be highlighted.

For example, if an artist wished to identify a potential commissioning partner for a new work, they could select “Commission” which would then highlight those selected resources across Europe, and provide further information.

Thus, such a resource would provide a guiding framework to visualise the field and better understand the dance ecology in Europe.

Section 4: Team

Research coordinated by: Elisabetta Bisaro & Natalia Álvarez Simó

Report compiled by: Sheila Creevey (Methodologist)

Workshop coordination in Berlin and Budapest: Béla Bisom

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Sheila Creevey
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The results of the study are available on www.ednetwork.eu



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