

# THE FUTURE IS IN DANCE

A VISION AND STRATEGY  
FOR DANCE 2010—2020



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## Introduction

Finnish dance policies are currently facing new challenges. The numbers of performances, festivals, and dance events have increased, and the content of the artistic work has become more diversified. The working environment for dance has become international and is more challenging than ever before. In recent years interest in corporal methods and choreographic expertise has also strengthened outside the traditional field of the art, and more and more artists are employed in applied dance. A full thirty-five per cent of Finns have dance as a hobby.

The diversity and internationality of dance together with the need for more flexible forms of public support require new cultural policies that are both innovative and creative. Dance can be developed only if it receives additional economic resources. At the same time the current situation should be critically examined. If dance is to be preserved and developed, it requires appropriate structures that are stable and that take into account the special features of the discipline.

In the year 2008 the National Council for Dance initiated work on a dance strategy, whose purpose was to examine the activities in the field as a whole, align the developments emerging in the dance sector, and make proposals for actions to improve the operating conditions of dance. The strategy was also

intended to support the work of dance artists in different parts of Finland to develop activities in their own regions. Along with issues connected to production and performance, the strategy addresses the question of the many opportunities for dance in different areas of society.

The National Council for Dance (2007–2009) appointed a subcommittee with responsibility for drawing up the strategy. Members of the subcommittee included the dance artist Tuula Linnusmäki, who served as chairperson; Johanna Laakkonen, chairperson of the National Council for Dance; and the dance artists Sari Lakso and Pirjo Viitanen. Outside experts who were invited to contribute to the work on the strategy were Iris Autio, the managing director of the Terho Saarinen Company; Raija Ojala, the managing director of Zodiak – The Center for New Dance; Sanna Rekola, the director of Dance Info Finland; the dance artists Petri Kauppinen, Pia Lindy, and Merja Snellman; and Ari Tenhula, Professor of Contemporary Dance at the Theatre Academy Helsinki. Kenneth Kvarnström, dance artist and Professor of the Arts, participated in the subcommittee from the beginning of 2009, and senior adviser Mari Karikoski served as the subcommittee's secretary.

The Ministry of Education has supported the strategy work by directing resources to its undertaking.



## The vision: Dance in Finland 2020

By the year 2020 dance in Finland is envisioned as occupying a central place as part of a Finnish cultural identity. Finnish dance will be known for its originality, its strong performers, and its utilisation of new technological innovations.

The diversity of Finnish dance and its expertise will be the results of a high level of education, a financial system that supports quality, and bold structural reform. Creativity and the ability of dance to renew itself will be secured by providing dance artists and dance companies better working opportunities. The dance infrastructure will consist of high-level parties, artistically, regionally, nationally, and internationally. A nationwide touring organisation will offer the public the opportunity to experience dance for themselves, thereby benefitting life in different parts of the country. A strong audience base and the growing popularity of dance will also be creating new earning opportunities for dance artists.

Expertise connected to knowledge of the body and to dance will be applied in different sectors of Finnish society. Dance and methods originating in dance will be used in nursing and in caring for people, for example, and in promoting social integration as well in preventing social exclusion. Special skills connected to dance will have become one of the strengths of Finnish digital production.

Dance will be enhancing the well-being of the Finns, and the society will be supporting dance as a hobby. In comprehensive schools each child and young person will receive high-level, goal-directed dance instruction, which in turn will increase the well-being of the young and provide them with the basis for a solid dance education.

The special knowledge connected to dance will be disseminated abroad through performances, licences, and educational activities as well as through the exportation of a variety of services and service concepts. The innovative, human values of dance will be creating a positive image of Finland abroad, and the extensive related expertise will be widely recognised as one of Finland's strengths.

The House of Dance to be located in a central place in Helsinki will be serving as a trendsetter in the field, providing one of the best working spaces in the world dedicated entirely to dance. The House of Dance will be operating year round as a venue for guest appearances by national and international artists alike. The House of Dance will benefit from high technology and through its programme offerings will be serving as one of Finland's and Helsinki's best-known symbols internationally. With its input, the House of Dance will be enhancing the profile of cultural tourism in Finland and its wider recognition and appeal.

## Principal aims and action proposals

### **1.** **To improve the conditions for independent dance companies to do creative work.**

■ To create a three-tiered financial system for independent dance companies through which funding can be obtained for a term of one, three, or five years based on an evaluation of their fundamental goals and working plans as well as the quality of their activities.

■ To increase the number of production subsidies and initiate a work-in-progress type of grant to facilitate new, exploratory artistic work.

■ To increase the funding for promoting dance from the current level of EUR 1,070,000 to EUR 3.1 million by the year 2013 in order to make the above-mentioned funding systems possible.

### **2.** **To enhance the operating conditions, the quality of activities, and the impact of the dance theatres and production centres subsidized by law as well as the regional dance centres.**

■ To establish more competent units, both artistically and productively, among the dance theatres and production centres receiving state subsidies as well as in the regional dance centres through such means as consolidating their activities.

■ To take into consideration the quality of activities in the applications for funding for the state-subsidized theatres and orchestras and to support innovative and high-quality activities with discretionary funding.

■ To create criteria for the assessment of levels of quality in the field of dance in cooperation with the National Council for Dance and the Ministry of Education.

■ To induce municipalities to increase their share of funding for the state-subsidized dance theatres to proportionally the same level as for the drama theatres and the orchestras.

■ To arrange rehearsal and performance spaces for the use of dance in cooperation with local parties and municipalities that will fulfil the special needs of dance and its work safety requirements.

### **3.** **To enhance the accessibility to dance nationwide and to broaden the audience base for dance.**

■ A House of Dance will be established in Helsinki whose working concept will be a new, internationally significant performing arts centre. The project will be undertaken in cooperation with representatives from the city of Helsinki, the government, and the dance sector as well as with other parties in the performing arts.

■ A nationwide touring network will be created for dance and, in connection with that, a financial system that will make it possible to take dance works on tour to different parts of Finland. The network will be implemented together with the theatre sector.

■ Support for dance festivals and events will be increased in order to enable high-quality national- and international performances to take place as well as joint international productions.

■ Support for audience development will be increased.

### **4.** **To increase support for human well-being through dance.**

■ Dance will be included as part of the teaching curriculum in the comprehensive schools.

■ Sponsors and other parties will be induced to support the marketing of service innovations emerging from dance to serve the social and health-care sectors and develop the wellness services originating in dance.

- Forms of funding will be developed with various administrative areas to support the practical applications of dance.
- Training in the applied dance will be included in professional dance studies.

## **5.**

### **To increase the earning opportunities in dance and to strengthen the conditions for pursuing dance as a livelihood in the creative sector.**

- An international network for dance will be enhanced by increasing the amount of support designated for international cultural cooperation as well as the amount of travel funding made available by the Arts Council of Finland.

- Support for the export activities of dance will be increased.
- Expertise in the field of dance will also be combined in special projects with other fields of activity, including the game-, technology-, and film industries as well as tourism.
- Existing funders will be encouraged to commit themselves to invest in dance films and digital production.
- Expertise in production will be included as part of the professional education of artists.
- Production and managerial know-how in the field of dance will be improved, tailored with the help of a mentoring programme.

## Overview of the field

### **The Rise of Finnish Dance**

The last two decades have seen the rise of Finnish dance. Along with the establishment of professional education, the number of dance artists, dance companies, dance festivals, and different kinds of dance events has grown, and the contents of the art and its means of expression have diversified. The regional availability of dance has improved, and greater numbers of artists are working outside the metropolitan area than ever before. The developments in both quantity and quality have also furthered the internationalisation of the art.

In Finland there are eight dance theatres subsidized by law, two dance production centres, and, since beginning their operations in the year 2004, five Regional Centres for Dance and their offices, numbering ten in all. The National Ballet of Finland is located in Helsinki as is also the Helsinki Dance Company, which is the only Finnish dance company working in conjunction with a drama theatre. The state-subsidized dance theatres and production centres as well as the regional dance centres form the core of the dance infrastructure in Finland.

Independent dance artists and dance companies, meaning those who work outside the state-subsidized theatres, are also a significant part of the Finnish dance scene. Of approximately thirty independent dance companies, the majority are found in the metropolitan area. In addition, there are dozens of freelance choreographers working in different parts of Finland. Altogether, there are approximately 1,000 dance artists in Finland.

### ■ **Performances and Spectators (2008)**

Spectators	458,469
Performances	2,380
Number of premieres	203
Spectators abroad	75,828
Performances abroad	235

Since the year 2000, many new festivals and dance-related events have become established in Finland. The number of dance festivals has grown from six to fifteen during this decade, and dance is seen on the programmes of numerous other festivals that offer artistic events of all kinds.

Dance can be studied in six secondary-level institutions (that is, in conservatories), three polytechnic institutions, as well as at the Theatre Academy Helsinki, whose department of dance offers the only university-level dance education in Finland. Finnish dance artists also earn degrees in institutions abroad. Between forty and fifty dance artists are graduated annually from Finnish educational institutions.

In comparison with other areas of art, dance has fewer organisations to support its professional and amateur activities. Considering the area's volume of operations and its growing needs, the organisation field for dance is for the most part poorly resourced. Expanding the operational resources of the organisations would favourably influence development in the area as a whole.

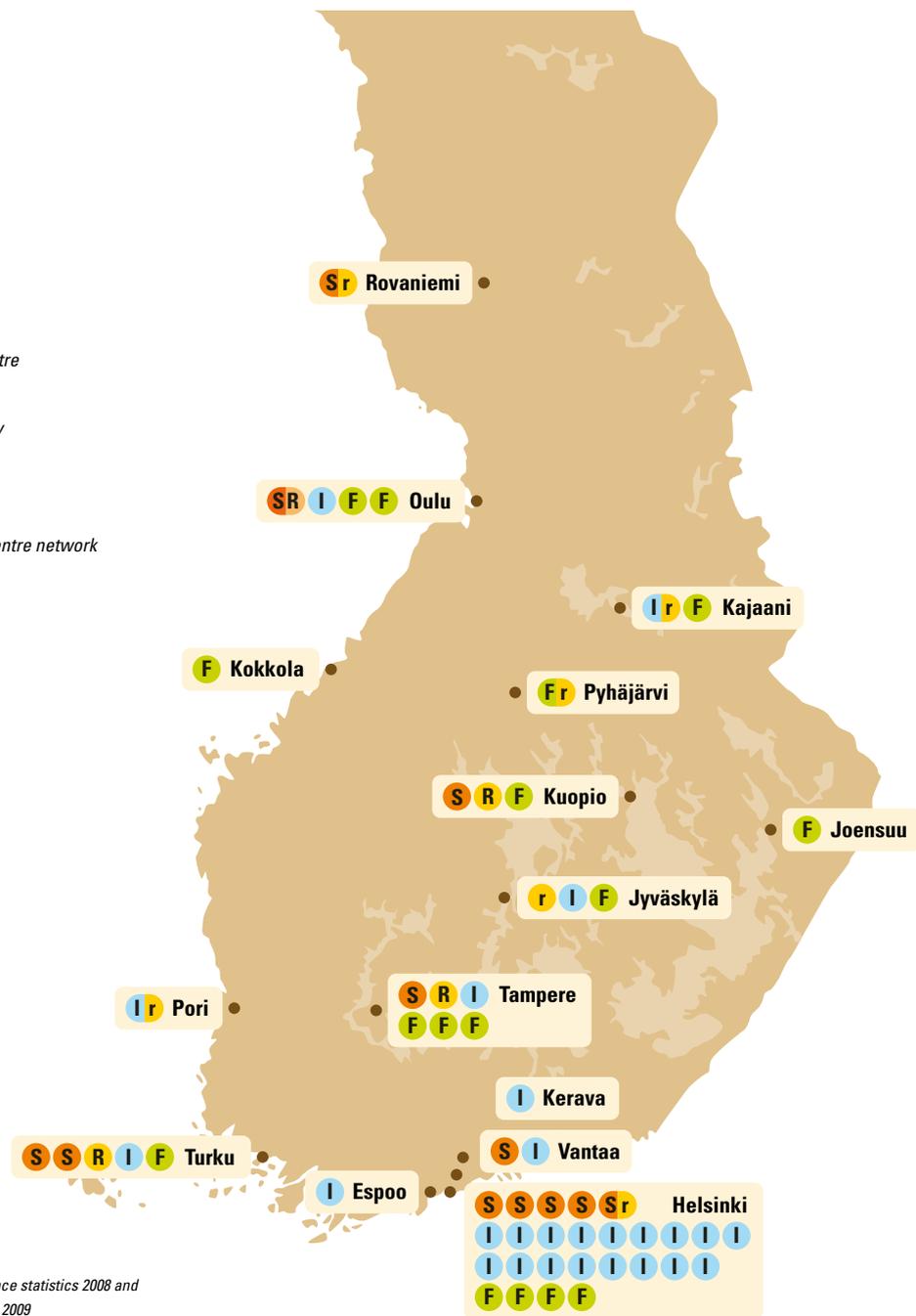
### **The Many-Faceted Nature of Dance**

The focus of artistic work varies for audiences of different ages and runs the gamut from contemporary dance works to classical ballet, dance theatre, physical theatre, folk dance, street dance, circus, and new currents in performance art. Dance does not depend on just one tradition or on certain methods and performance conventions. Dance can more readily be understood as a group of practices, artistic styles, and currents, whose different fashions represent part of the art of our time.

Contemporary dance especially has shaped our concepts of the starting points for the art as well as its form, content, realisation, and performance venues. Dance genres take their influences from each other, and dance openly interacts with new currents in the other arts – music, the visual arts, theatre, and the performance arts. In addition to stage works, dance can be realised, for example, in photography,

**Dance field**

- S** State-subsidized dance theatre and production centre
- I** Independent dance company
- R** Regional dance centre
- r** Part of the regional dance centre network
- F** Festival



Source: Dance performance and audience statistics 2008 and Ministry of Education: festival subsidies 2009

as a series of writings, mobile videos, or as an interactive event.

Finnish dance has been a pioneer in light- and sound design as well as in multimedia applications. In a growing number of performances, the significance of dance as an employer of artists from other fields is increasing, because the production of a dance work definitely necessitates professional input from several different areas, from music, sound, and visualisation to marketing and information services.

Ways of engaging in different kinds of artistic co-operation and collaboration have multiplied. More

and more, dance artists are employing the methods of community art or community dance and bringing dance to the very heart of daily life. Dance is being used in projects promoting multiculturalism, for example; it is used in nursing, in caring for people, and in socio-cultural undertakings. Dance is also a favourite leisure time activity, and its different genres, from contemporary dance to classical ballet, from folk dance and street dance to social dancing and dance sport, have a broad amateur following. Fully thirty-five per cent of Finns over ten years of age identify dance as a hobby.

## The production of a dance work

### The Majority of Premieres are Freelance Productions

Over the last decade the number of dance premieres in Finland has risen from around 130 to over 200 annually. In the year 2008, the number of dance performances was five times the number in 1990, totalling nearly 2,400 altogether. Of contemporary dance premieres, most are produced by freelancers, and, not counting classical ballet, the majority of Finnish dancers and choreographers work as independent artists. The number of independent dance companies has grown from fifteen to around thirty in the last ten years.

The large proportion of independent dance artists is explained by the increase in professional-level education available in Finland, yet the area's infrastructure remains underdeveloped. Outside the Finnish National Ballet, there are no large or medium-sized employers in the dance sector comparable to those for the drama theatres: in the year 2008 only fourteen dancers and choreographers were working in permanent positions in the state-subsidized dance theatres and production centres. In practice nearly everyone in the field is working as a freelancer with the exception of those who have earned degrees as dance teachers. The domain of independent dance is large relative to the field as a whole, and for that reason it has great significance as a pioneer in developing the content of the art form and in reinforcing a pluralistic dance culture.

### ■ Number of Premieres and Total Number of Performances (2008)

	<i>Number of premieres</i>	<i>Total number of performances</i>	
National Ballet of Finland and the Helsinki Dance Company	5	118	(4.6%)
State-subsidized theatres and production centres	60	1,377	(53.2%)
Independent dance companies	76	571	(22.1%)
Individual choreographers	84	524	(20.3%)

The state support system for the performing arts, set forth in the Theatres and Orchestras Act (1992/730), has not been able to respond to the rapidly growing needs of dance. After the Act came into force in 1993, the number of dance companies began to grow, but since the year 2000, only two new companies have been added to the groups protected and funded by the law. Because there are relatively few positions in companies with the state-subsidized theatres, the number of people working in independent companies outside the legislation has grown enormously.

Government funding for the state-subsidized dance theatres and production centres, the regional dance centres, and independent dance artists has risen from EUR 1.8 million in 2000 to approximately EUR 4.7 million in 2009. The operating conditions in the area of independent dance, however, have not improved significantly. The starting level of support has been low, and despite the growth, during the last decade the share of subsidies for the independent companies has remained around twenty per cent of the operational funding for all dance productions.

### ■ Government subsidies for dance productions (2009)<sup>1</sup>

State-subsidized dance theatres and production centres (10)	3,036,083	64 %
Regional dance centres (5)	750,000	16 %
Independent dance companies (12)	660,000	14 %
Allocated grants and special support (productions of individual choreographers, work groups, and associations)	290,000	6 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,736,083</b>	<b>100 %</b>

1. Exclusive of the government subsidies for the National Ballet of Finland and the Helsinki Dance Company.

Owing to the underdevelopment of public subsidies, private funding and foundational support are important additions to the overall financial sponsorship of dance. However, the proportion for dance from all foundations allocating support to the art is only around four per cent (2005).

Dance has been a pioneer in developing new operational models in Finland; examples are the production centres and the regional dance centres, which offer settings for the work of many freelance artists. Developing operational structures and a nationwide network has increased the opportunities for dance artists to work outside the metropolitan area. By strengthening the regional dance activities and assuring the highest level of professional ability possible, the audience base for dance can be increased and touring activities promoted.

## CHALLENGES

### Doing Culture on a Small Scale

The amount of funding directed to operational activities has not kept up with the growth in the number of artists and productions nor has sufficient support been allocated to independent dance companies where most of the growth has taken place. Operational activities in contemporary dance are managed by doing culture on a small scale. The small scale not only affects the size of the dance works performed and their content, including the number of dancers who can be hired, the quality of the costumes, the music, and so forth, but it also affects all parts of the process, from the limited resources available to produce the work to its marketing. This development should be stopped, and support for medium-size and large-scale works should be encouraged along with the smaller productions. Acknowledging the diversity and supporting this kind of varied working culture are prerequisites for vital and high-quality Finnish dance.

When the economic resources are few, dance artists cannot benefit from their know-how or realise their works on the level that their training and professional expertise would warrant. The majority of works are carried out with only a few dancers, and the life cycle of a work is short. On average, a single work has only five performances. The performances are given in places with small stages that were not designed for the needs of dance and whose small auditoriums do not accommodate audience numbers sufficient for a work's economic success. In contemporary dance medium-size and large productions are few, which limits both the performance offerings and the audience base.

Human resources are undersized at all levels, from the artistic staff to the technical personnel and the administrative employees. As for marketing and information, there are no resources, and because of the small audience numbers as well as the low ticket prices, income from ticket sales for performances is low. All of these factors bear out a picture of

dance in Finland today as a marginalised art form and accessible only with difficulty. In this small-sized convoluted circle live the majority of Finnish contemporary dance companies and independent choreographers.

### A Support Policy that Emphasises Quantity

A support policy that emphasises quantifiable criteria has left the discussion of the quality of artistic activities in the shade. So far, in decision-making about funding by art organisations in Finland, there has not been a readiness to develop quality criteria along with quantifiable measures.

By putting emphasis on the number of premieres, the funding system for its part steers the art towards quantifiable growth and the decentralisation of production resources. Public support as well as contributions from private foundations and donors is allocated primarily for the production of new works. Even the dance sector's own values emphasise the importance of first performances.

### The Low Level of Municipal Funding

With rare exceptions municipal support for the state-subsidized dance theatres has marked time over the last ten years. The relative share of the municipal subsidy for assisting the income of dance theatres is noticeably lower than for the drama theatres, and the share has fallen in the last decade, from 21 per cent to 16 per cent. The small amount of the municipal funding together with the rising costs mean that it is clearly difficult for companies to augment the volume of activities in order to qualify for additional person years, the unit used to measure and thus increase the state contribution. Without being able to qualify for more funding, the companies are unable to hire more people or launch new activities.

The state portion towards the cost of one person year in the government-subsidized theatres is 37 per cent. The remaining 63 per cent as well as the share of the employer's other contributions have to be covered through municipal support, earnings from productions, and other income. These costs are difficult to pay for through growth in earnings and other contributions, especially as the relative development of municipal support has been declining. Yet high-level dance performance is no different from comparable expenditures essential for theatre performances, and the general validity of a collective labour agreement applies to dance in the same way as to other areas of the performing arts. Operating conditions in the sector could be significantly improved if the municipalities would simply commit to supporting the state-subsidized dance theatres and production centres in their regions with relatively the same level of support as that given to the drama theatres.

### ■ Proportion of Municipal Support for the Income for the State-Subsidized Dance Theatres and Drama Theatres (2008)

Dance theatres	16%
Companies and small theatres	21%
Large and medium-size theatres	31%
Full-fledged municipal theatres	56%

### ■ Municipal Funding per Ticket (in EUR) for the State-Subsidized Dance Theatres and Drama Theatres (2008)

Dance theatre	EUR 1.50
Companies and small theatres	EUR 3.32
Large and medium-size theatres	EUR 20.62

The small amount of municipal support also affects those in independent dance companies. The most critical situation is in the metropolitan area and in Helsinki itself. Of approximately twenty independent dance companies working in Helsinki in the year 2008, only three companies received a total of EUR 63,500 from city subsidies.

### The Regional Dance Centre Network and its Funding

Along with the establishment of the regional dance centres by the Ministry of Education, municipal caretakers have increased their support for dance, but the satellite model of the regional centres has not been without its problems. In the satellite model, municipal aid consists of subsidies from several municipalities whose combined allocation equals the required municipal share of funding for the dance centre in that region. Each regional centre also receives a government subsidy in proportion to the amount of municipal funding granted. It is also possible for a subsidy to be allocated to several different recipients in one city. This kind of disjointed public support has given rise to small and under-resourced units, which have not developed to the level that was the goal of establishing the regional centres in the first place.

Geographically seen, the widely scattered operations have indeed increased the accessibility of dance, but at the same time they have led to small-scale, fragmented, and poorly planned activities in some of the regional centres. With the current level of public support and the disjointed financial structure, the regional centres have still not been able to increase employment significantly for dance artists or achieve a balanced geographical coverage of high-level contemporary dance. Even though the quantity of individual job opportunities offered by the regional centres is large, most work opportunities and work relationships for artists have the duration of only a few weeks to a month.

### Undersized Resources for Independent Dance Companies

The support allocated to independent dance companies in Finland is exceptionally small, and the support system is rigid. Independent activities are funded with an appropriation for promoting the art of dance. In the year 2009, EUR 660,000 of this appropriation was channeled into the activities of independent dance companies, and EUR 290,000 was directed to individual choreographers, work groups, and community productions. For one production the support allocated only covers on average the salary for one dancer for three months.

Independent dance companies working outside the state-subsidized theatres can obtain discretionary funds, granted as an operations subsidy for only one year at a time or as a special subsidy targeting productions. Support granted yearly means that it is impossible to make long-term plans or set up on-going operations. In the year 2009 operations subsidies were granted to twelve companies out of a total number of around thirty. Because it is nearly impossible for independent dance companies to gain entry into the echelon of state-subsidized theatres, the growing number of those who are granted funding outside the state-supported theatres threatens to become set in stone. Raising new companies into the circle of subsidized activities would mean dropping outside support for high-level companies led by choreographers over a long career. There is great pressure to increase the sums allocated and provide a more flexible support system that takes into account the career development of artists.

### Marketing and Production Expertise

The great public's knowledge about dance and the audience numbers for dance can be favourably influenced by investing in the marketing of performances and providing information about them. Because production budgets are small, companies and independent choreographers are not able to pay for professional marketing, a situation that affects the publicity for dance and the information tools for acquiring visibility and thereby audience numbers.

In addition there is a shortage of qualified dance producers. The project-specific nature of the sector and its uncertainty do not attract the well-trained producers, whose earning capabilities are better in other areas.



## AIM

**To enhance the operating conditions, the quality of activities, and the impact of the dance theatres and production centres subsidized by law as well as the regional dance centres and to improve the conditions for creative work by the independent dance companies.**

### Action Proposals

- To create a three-tiered financial system for independent dance companies through which funding can be obtained for a period of one, three, or five years based on an evaluation of their fundamental goals and working plans as well as the quality of their activities.
- To increase the number of production subsidies and initiate a work-in-progress type of grant to facilitate new, exploratory artistic work.
- To increase the funding for promoting dance from the current amount of EUR 1,070,000 to EUR 3.1 million by the year 2013 in order to make the above-mentioned funding systems possible.
- To establish better functioning units, both artistically and productively, in the state-subsidized dance theatres and production centres as well as in the regional dance centres, for instance, by combining their activities.
- To take into consideration the quality of activities in the applications of the state-subsidized theatres and orchestras and to encourage activities that are innovative and high level in quality with discretionary support.
- To create qualitative assessment criteria for the field of dance in cooperation with the National Council for Dance and the Ministry of Education.
- To induce municipalities to raise their share of municipal funding for the state-subsidized dance theatres to proportionally the same level as that for the drama theatres and orchestras.
- To arrange rehearsal and performance spaces for dance in cooperation with local parties and municipalities that will fulfil the special needs of dance and its work safety requirements.

## Performances and audiences

### **The Chance for Everyone to See Dance**

The opportunity to see and experience dance should be offered to all, regardless of domicile, age, or social status. Because dance is not bound to a verbal language, it opens up to spectators from different language groups and different cultural backgrounds. Especially among spectators of contemporary dance, there are many young people and young adults who also actively follow other kinds of visual and performance arts.

Nevertheless, dance offerings year round are still unequal regionally and concentrated mainly in the larger cities and near those centres where the majority of dance companies, audiences, and performance spaces are located. The absence of a functioning touring network and the lack of performance venues suitable for the special needs of dance are crucial factors affecting the accessibility of dance in Finland as well as the ability to attract new audiences and extend the life cycle of performances. Furthermore, because of the short performance seasons, performances do not reach all interested persons, and dance loses potential spectators.

### **Versatile Festival Offerings**

The festivals in Finland make it possible to see many kinds of dance performances, and festivals are also important as forums for performances of dance works from abroad. Festivals are found over a geographically broad area, and their repertory targets many groups and covers a variety of genres, from contemporary dance and ballet to flamenco, street dance, and folk dance. The international repertory of the larger festivals and offshoot events such as courses and seminars also attract spectators from abroad. Festivals thus offer many opportunities for cultural tourism. The smaller, locally significant events diversify the regional cultural services and make available high-quality dance performances around the country.

### **Aspiration for a Dialogue**

The desire of artists for transparency and dialogue with the public and with society at large has brought dance closer to the spectator, and the field of dance activities has moved out of its performance venues to the broader community. In addition to performances that take place on a stage, dance can be encountered in such places as the metro, on the daily programme at old people's homes, or in the bustle of a city. The public's interest in the subjective experience of dance has grown, and many people participate in different kinds of audience workshops and projects involving spectators.

### **Opportunities for Digital Production**

Digital production and the marketing of such things as recorded performances and film productions mark an internationally growing field, from which Finnish dance has not yet been able to benefit, owing to the lack of national funding mechanisms. Dance films are seldom made, and there are no resources for undertaking competitive productions. Digital production has the potential to increase the visibility and accessibility of dance as well as to preserve the national dance culture. There is also economic significance in the development of production opportunities and distribution outlets for dance films.

## **CHALLENGES**

### **Strengthening a Touring Network for Dance**

The decrease in tour activities by dance companies, evident since the beginning of the 1990s, has narrowed the cultural offerings in Finland, particularly in areas that do not have their own locally functioning dance company. The reasons for the decline are the diminishing cultural funds from municipalities and the dearth of appropriations from traditional purchaser groups, namely, daycare centres and schools. Elsewhere in Finland general-purpose theatres for guest appearances and their touring networks are lacking. Nor could the city theatres be used as

stages for visiting dance performances. Opportunities for the regional centres to arrange tours are hindered by a shortage of suitable performance venues, and their economic resources are insufficient for organising touring activity.

Finland is a challenging tour environment, both for national as well as international companies. The long distances, which increase the costs of touring and guest performances, are not taken into consideration in the subsidies allocated to dance companies. To all intents and purposes, touring nationally is invariably unprofitable, the reason that tours dry up, especially for medium-size and large works.

### **Lack of Suitable Performance and Rehearsal Space**

Finland is lacking a national stage for guest performances, a House of Dance. The House of Dance to be located in Helsinki could make guest appearances possible for both national and international dance companies. Under its auspices the operations for a national touring network could also be organised.

Performance and rehearsal space for dance requires urgent attention all over the country. The general problems are stages that are too small, tiny auditoriums and vestibules, and insufficient rehearsal space and dressing room areas. In some regional dance centres, there is not even a proper dance stage, and there is a shortage of rehearsal space in nearly all districts where there are professional dance activities. The space problems are particularly acute in the metropolitan area, where a large proportion of independent dance artists are working in places that do not meet safety requirements and in which no consideration has been given to the special needs of dance.

### **Operating Conditions of Festivals and Events**

Of the support allocated for national artistic events, the share for dance festivals and dance events has grown from EUR 216,700 (in the year 2000) to EUR 312,000 (in 2008), yet the operating conditions in individual events and festivals have not improved. In

eight years the average support for event-type productions fell from EUR 36,160 to EUR 24,000, because at the same time the number of events with support subsidies grew, from six to thirteen. Because the additional funding was used for an increasing number of recipients, the support level for most events has remained exceptionally low. Most dance festivals are small, regional events, which concentrate mainly on the presentation of national repertoire. In the year 2009 support for eight festivals was EUR 10,000 or less. Even for the larger festivals, the support has developed only according to the cost of living index or has remained under it; in 2009 only two festivals received support of more than EUR 50,000.



### **AIM**

**To improve the nationwide accessibility to dance and to broaden the audience base.**

### **Action Proposals**

- To establish a House of Dance in Helsinki whose working concept will be to provide a new, internationally significant centre for the performing arts. The project will be undertaken in cooperation with representatives from the city of Helsinki, the government, and the dance sector as well as with other parties in the performing arts.
- To create a nationwide touring network for dance and, in that connection, a financial system that will enable dance tours in various parts of Finland. The network will be implemented together with the theatre sector.
- To increase support for dance festivals and events in order to make possible high-quality national- and international guest appearances and international joint productions.
- To increase the support for audience development for dance.

## International activities and exports

### The Diversity of International Activities

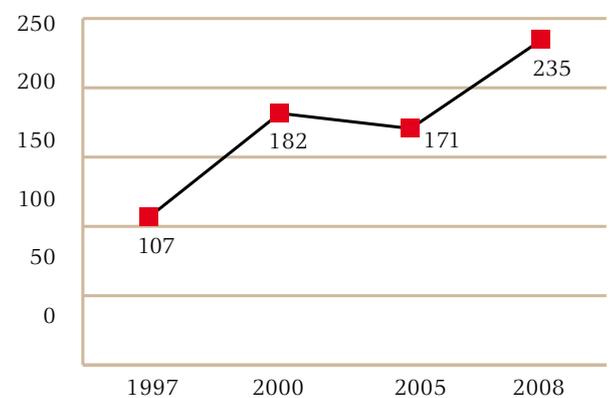
Because of its physicality and visuality, dance interests an increasingly large number of people all over the world. Today the working environment for the art form is global, a development that has also influenced the contents and working methods of dance in Finland. International activities are numerous and diverse, and together with performance imports and exports international collaboration is carried out in many ways, including in networks between artists, artist-in-residence programmes, professional training, research, and various cooperative projects.

In a small country such as Finland the chance to work internationally enriches the art form, offers new, challenging opportunities for work, and broadens the audience base for performances. Such activities also have economic significance and open avenues for international co-productions as well as for projects with international funding.

In the 1990s international interest in Finnish dance escalated, thanks to the high level of professional education and the rise in the artistic niveau, among other factors. The strengths of Finnish dance are also in the use of innovative new technologies and in the close cooperation of dance artists with professionals in media art as well as in light and sound design.

The positive developments in the dance sector are also reflected in the statistics. In the year 2008 Finnish dance had over 75,000 spectators in 235 performances in a total of 28 countries. In the first decade of the twenty-first century the proportion of foreign spectators for Finnish dance has been around one fifth of the total number of viewers. In addition to performances, choreographers and dancers are working abroad; individual operators and events, regional centres, and educational institutions in the sector are arranging guest appearances, cooperative projects, teaching- and performance exchanges as well as workshops and seminars. Yet except for performances, statistics are not available to show the scope of all of these activities.

### ■ Finnish Dance Performances Abroad, 1997–2008



### The Growing Area of Exports

Exportation of performances abroad is a growing sector of dance in the rapidly globalizing market. The export potential of Finnish dance has also clearly emerged in connection with the development of cultural exports, an area in which the dance sector has a great deal of potential. Besides the exportation of performances, other expertise connected to dance offers opportunities, including licences and copyrights as well as television and other kinds of audiovisual production. To make the most of these opportunities necessitates strengthening the national infrastructure and increasing the funding directed to international activities. Exporting performances calls for supporting reciprocal exchange, which in turn requires supporting imports and joint productions.

Dance Info Finland fosters the international promotion of Finnish dance and serves as a strategic partner in implementing a development programme for cultural exports. Because dance does not have its own organisation solely responsible for focusing on international activity, Dance Info Finland plays a central role in the international promotion and marketing of dance, providing publicity and information as

well as contributing to networking. However, Dance Info Finland also has numerous other, national tasks that it must oversee, and funding sufficient for carrying out these responsibilities must be ensured. By improving the resources for dance companies and others involved in the sector as well as developing marketing and building up agencies that would support the international work of dance artists, international activities and exports could certainly be promoted further.

## CHALLENGES

### **Support for International Cooperation**

Exchange and collaboration in international networks increase the vitality of dance and exert a positive influence on its development. Current support policies emphasising the market applications of the art do not sufficiently encourage other forms of international activity. In the year 2008 the portion of dance subsidies appropriated by the Ministry of Education and the Arts Council of Finland targeting international activities was around EUR 320,000 in all, and of that sum, half was earmarked for cultural export. After the focus of public subsidy was moved to cultural exports, the Ministry of Education's funding for international cultural cooperation granted to dance companies and independent choreographers dried up. For many companies the result was a decline in guest activities abroad.

As a consequence of these developments, the system of travel support from the Arts Council of Finland has become crucial for guest appearances abroad, even though the amount of funding is insufficient. In the year 2008 the total share of the Arts Council's travel funding for dance was approximately EUR 30,000. The subsidy form best suits supporting small guest performances, but practically speaking, the available appropriations are not sufficient for staging guest appearances of medium-size and large works. The long distances, which raise the costs of Finnish works, also justify the need for separate travel funds. In many other countries there are special travel subsidy systems that provide assistance for appearances of dance companies abroad. Lacking such support, Finnish performances are expensive by comparison with the better subsidized foreign works.

Artists' networks and other kinds of collaboration unconnected to performance are not sufficiently funded either, nor are there any current funding systems to enable long-term support for international work.

### **Challenges of the International Working Environment**

Festivals, production centres, and their audiences are more diverse than ever, and greater familiarity with the international working environment is required of artists than was formerly the case. Many artists study and work abroad, but so far in Finland, there are few people, organisations, or other representatives in the sector with a deep understanding of the international dance market as a whole. There is a great need for information and advising services and for developing a mentoring programme. It is important to increase the understanding of the global working environment with support for networking and creating contacts for artists, festivals, and the producers who serve as middlemen. Knowledge of the international working environment and functioning cooperative networks are also required to be able to produce works with market potential.

### **Deficiencies in the Domestic Infrastructure**

The weak financial foundation of Finnish dance companies and freelance productions together with the geographic situation significantly influence the opportunities for being active internationally. Salary and other tour expenses have to be included in the performance fees, which puts Finnish companies in an unequal position vis-à-vis the better supported European companies.

The lack of suitable performance venues and a touring network as well as the insufficiency of funding weaken the opportunities for hosting significant foreign performances. By comparison with other Nordic countries the international performances seen in Finland are small in scale. Realising the vision for a House of Dance and for a touring network would significantly improve the situation and the opportunities for reciprocal cultural cooperation in the realm of Finnish dance.

Many foreign festivals and production centres serve as joint producers in international productions, but in Finland only a few parties have had sufficient resources to work as co-producers. Few in the area have applied for international funding, because the small organisations do not have the necessary resources for programme administration and planning nor do they have the international cooperative networks.



## AIM

**To increase international cooperation in the dance sector as well as to improve the economic conditions for guest performances and dance exports.**

### Action Proposals

■ To enhance the international networks for dance by increasing both the amount of funding designated for international cultural cooperation as well as the travel funds from the Arts Council of Finland.

- To increase the support for dance exports.
- To increase the support for dance festivals and events in order to make possible high-quality national- and international guest performances and international collaborations.
- To increase the support for Finnish dance artists to work in residence abroad and to allocate part of the Arts Council residence grants for dance.
- To develop advising and information services for international dance activities in cooperation with other areas in the arts.
- To extend the keeping of statistics by Dance Info Finland to include choreographic work abroad, professional collaborations, and workshop and residence activities.

## Well-being through dance

### **Dance increases well-being and creativity**

Increasingly, dance is encountered outside the traditional theatre context, and various kinds of activities are taking place under the guidance of a dancer. More broadly put, a variety of services is originating in dance, such as activities carried out in undertaking projects with children and young people, therapeutic benefits delivered through nursing care, and the development of products and services in connection with different kinds of work-, residential-, and other communities or businesses.

These activities also include such things as community dance and various services that make use of socio-cultural methods. They comprise projects involving audience participation as well as services and products that benefit from corporal awareness, choreographic expertise, and methods arising from knowledge of the body and how it moves.

Participating in dance activities increases spiritual and physical well-being and provides opportunities to experience and take part in dance, whatever the age, gender, place of residence, or physical condition. The artist interacts directly with the participants, and the art comes out of things that are ready to hand. The modes of working provide the points of departure, but art can also function indirectly to bring forth new insights, develop community feeling, or be a force in uniting administrative areas.

Carrying out activities with different kinds of groups heightens a sense of community and strengthens social capital. Community dancing, for instance, can improve the quality of life and well-being by supporting participants' personal, overall creative expression. An encouraging and supportive environment and an attitude of tolerance together with the joy and pleasure of dancing all provide resources for participants' daily lives.

Dance in these different environments is not separate from the work of traditional performance activities. Function has a significant place in making dance more accessible and better known. Likewise, when

the concept of the profession of a dance artist broadens, operating outside the traditional artistic context offers new and challenging situations and can bring new perspectives and content to the art.

### **CHALLENGES**

#### **Funding of Service Production and Delivery**

Services originating in dance are carried out in Finland today by all of the regional dance centres, many of the dance theatres subsidized by law, many freelance dance artists, and independent dance companies. There are no precise numbers for the scope of these activities, and information about their influence is scattered and difficult to track down.

Although opportunities for the arts to provide well-being are understood better than ever, services originating in art are not always seen as the work of specialists who must be paid just as other professionals are. For example, in the realm where the social and health-care sectors converge with the art sector, putting dance to use in nursing homes arouses interest, but owing to a lack of funding, it is often assumed that an artist or an art organisation will work without compensation, or the compensation covers only a fraction of the expense.

Whenever there are few economic and personal resources available for carrying out projects, operational growth and development slow down. In addition to the content of projects, the individual artist is often responsible for tasks ranging from marketing to billing. The undertakings implemented in the field of dance are project-specific, even though from the perspective of the client, there would be a need for long-lasting, regular functions.

The small size of the parties involved and the lack of funding opportunities pertaining to know-how make it difficult to benefit from such international funding channels as EU grants. Individual operators feel that they do not have the opportunities to compete with the large organisations for funding directed to projects in the social and health sectors.

**AIM**

**To increase human well-being through dance.**

**Action Proposals**

■ To develop forms of funding with different administrative areas in order to support activities related to the applied dance.

- To include training in the applied dance in professional dance education.
- To organise supplemental training for dance artists working professionally that will support employment outside the traditional dance context and to have both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy demonstrate their support for such training.
- To see that statistics are kept on the applied dance.

## Dance in the schools

### **Dance is comprehensive**

Dance is a powerful resource for human development from which the school environment has not yet benefitted sufficiently. Both as a social and a creative activity as well as a means of physical expression, dance enhances learning for children and young people and fosters their development and growth as human beings.

The significance of dance in human development and learning is based especially on the physical and non-verbal nature of dance. Corporal experiences trigger and support learning and development in children and young people. The development of conceptual thought is based on rich sensory experiences and on concrete bodily activities in the physical and social world.

Senses and experiences emerge in the body through movement and physical activity. Creative and collaborative interaction with others in which different perspectives, problem solving, recognition of the feelings of others, and the identification of one's own feelings is especially important in expanding the experiential world. Concrete, physical activities in a group setting enhance the development of social and cognitive skills in many ways.

### **Dance as Support for Children's Development**

Through dance, people can communicate the kinds of experiences, feelings, and hopes that can be difficult to express in language. Because dance is not bound to words, it is an especially powerful art form for supporting children with special needs. Through dance it is possible to promote tolerance and cultural understanding. Dancing is done everywhere in the world, albeit in different ways. Through dance lessons pupils can get to know different dance styles and cultures.

To the study of dance belongs the absorption in listening to one's own body, concentrating and observing others, creative physical contact with others, and developing creative problem-solving skills as well as aesthetic perceptions and judgements. Dance al-

so brings joy and pleasure and promotes a positive attitude to movement, to the body, and to personal health care. Dance enhances mobility and coordination skills and makes possible many kinds of successful experiences, even for those pupils who have not experienced success in more performance-centred activities like sports, for example.

## **CHALLENGES**

### **The Absence of Dance from the School Curriculum**

Dance is not included as an independent subject in the comprehensive school curriculum. Dance is mentioned briefly as part of physical education, and in much of Finland, the dance instruction in schools is limited to a few lessons a year in connection with physical education classes. Because dance is included as part of physical education, it is often taught by instructors who are unacquainted with dance. Nor does the instruction take into account dance as an art or the creativity connected to it. The starting point for dance instruction in comprehensive schools should be the expressive, creative, and performance nature of dance. The social, non-performance aspects should also be considered as well as the connections of dance to other artistic subjects and to exercise. Art instruction in comprehensive schools should be developed through activities that supersede the mixing of art forms and the limits of a single subject.

Teachers in comprehensive schools do not generally have the qualifications to teach dance. In teacher training, dance instruction is given at random. Because the subject is absent from the school curriculum, it is not offered as part of teacher training.

### **The Haphazardness of Dance Instruction**

Outside of physical education classes, dance instruction is haphazard and, insofar as it is organised, takes place in clubs or as part of short-term projects. As for dance as part of education, children and young people are in unequal positions regionally and socio-economically, because in large cities there are general-

ly better opportunities for various art interests than in small and secluded districts. A large part of dance instruction takes place privately or in dance schools maintained by a municipality, where the costs must be paid for by the pupils.

Dance lacks an organisation that would strengthen the position of dance instruction in the schools and support the teachers who are working there. There is insufficient instructional material available on the subject to assist teachers in giving lessons. Many dance artists and dance companies already cooperate with comprehensive schools and daycare centres, but the activity is done on a project-specific basis, while the scarcity of funding makes the situation even more difficult.

## AIM

**To incorporate dance into the curriculum of the comprehensive schools as an independent subject of its own based on a holistic concept of dance as an art form and as part of culture and society. At the heart of the subject will be dance as a corporal experience as well as a creative, collaborative activity and a performance art.**

## Action Proposals

- To incorporate dance into the teaching curriculum of comprehensive schools as a general subject for everyone and to draw up the principles for dance in the same way as for other subjects in the national teaching curriculum.
- To support those who organise instruction in drawing up the school teaching curriculum.
- To establish an organisation to promote the position of dance instruction in schools and to support its operations in directing resources to organisations in the dance sector.
- To ensure that each child has the opportunity to become familiar with at least one professional dance performance during the school years.
- To prepare instructional materials in dance that can be used to further the training of class teachers.
- To organise additional and supplemental training for dance artists which will provide hands-on readiness for working in schools.

## Dance as an area of a creative economy

### **Dance at the heart of a creative economy**

Along with its innate strengths, dance has been highlighted as an interesting area of a creative economy. As is typical of creative areas, dance is produced through networking, and thus it is cost effective: dance activities are maintained through a cooperative network of artistic companies, small enterprises, and professionals instead of through large institutions. Dance is also one of the most internationally orientated areas of culture. Because of its audiovisual dimensions, dance can move into digital forms and can also spread on the Internet. Along with cultural exportation and cultural tourism, the development of services originating in dance has particularly great potential. Dance offers the global market to educational activities as well as by-products connected to dance.

From the perspective of a creative economy, dance has many possibilities for augmenting economic resources and thereby developing the sector and improving employment. In developing dance as a creative economic field, however, it is important to remember that the success of dance ultimately depends on the artistic well-being of its core. Sufficient basic funding for the art is also an essential condition for realising the goals set for a creative economy.

### **CHALLENGES**

#### **Exportation of Performances and Expertise**

The export of performances and know-how can bring significant additional resources to Finnish dance and improve employment opportunities for its professionals. Both export sectors still have a great deal of untapped potential: by increasing the financing for international networking, developing avenues for marketing and distribution, and enhancing agent- and managerial know-how, the export of Finnish dance could be many times its current level. In addition to performances, the export of choreographic expertise has increased since the year 2000, a development that is gradually being reflected in other professional groups working in the sector. In undertaking com-

missions abroad, Finnish choreographers also employ other Finnish designers. Thanks to the success achieved by their works, Finnish light- and costume designers, for example, have begun to receive other dance-connected design work abroad.

#### **Dance as a Factor in Cultural Tourism and Branding**

Seen from an international perspective, the network of high-level dance festivals and events in different parts of Finland is a strength that would offer opportunities for marketing cultural tourism. Also it would be possible to use performances by Finnish dance companies abroad to promote interest in Finland as a destination for cultural tourism.

Very few in the Finnish dance sector have sought out cooperative agreements with the travel industry. Factors that hamper the utilisation of more dance tourism are the limited amount of basic funding, the lack of cooperation between the different sectors as well as the difference in approaches: currently, the resources are insufficient for the artistic and production development of festivals; local and regional funders do not recognise the potential of dance-related events; and the travel industry is only just beginning to wake up to the idea of marketing to a target audience. In Helsinki development is also slow, owing to the lack of a proper performance venue – a House of Dance.

#### **The Marketing of Well-Being Services Originating in Dance**

In Finland there are many positive examples and experiences of using dance in such areas as therapeutic and nursing care as well as in immigration and community projects and in projects with children and young people. Reform in the municipal and service structure as well as interest in the possibilities offered by a creative economy are generating demand and new markets for services arising from art and culture. Services originating in dance are closely connected to the potential for economic development, both in Finland and abroad.

Developing services from dance requires, in addition to special dance-related knowledge, the professional management of the whole service process. There is a need to combine expertise in different areas and especially in preparing education in the practical applications of the art, which, among other benefits, would strengthen the know-how connected to dance artists' business activities, the marketing of services, the use of methods originating in art, and the learning of groups with special needs. On the other hand, the possibilities offered by the art could be pointed out as part of education in the commercial sector as well as in the social and health-care sectors.

The practical challenges for marketing dance shape the different organisational and funding structures for art and business as well as the working practice. Dance artists are accustomed to working with non-profit associations. Even though business thinking and the interest in entrepreneurship are on the rise in dance circles, there are still many practical obstacles connected to developing a service business. Charging for services can jeopardise an association's tax assessment as well as the contributions earmarked for artistic activities. In addition it is difficult for someone working in an association-like organisation to benefit from development funding for the service business, which is available through TEKES (the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation), for example, and in the Technology Centres of Expertise (the TE centres). In turn, support intended for artistic activity may not be used for entrepreneurial tasks.

## AIM

**To strengthen individual earning opportunities in the field of dance as part of a creative economy such that in this development consideration is given to an artistically-orientated approach.**

### Action Proposals

- To increase support for the exportation of dance.
- To strengthen the infrastructure of dance and the working field, especially production expertise and activities conducive to cooperation, in order to diversify the means for making a living in dance.
- To induce existing donors and other parties to support the marketing of service innovations emerging from dance to serve the social and health-care sectors and develop the wellness services originating in dance.
- To combine expertise in the dance sector in special projects with other fields of activity, including the game, technology, and film industries as well as tourism.
- To have existing sponsors commit to investing in dance films and digital production.
- To cooperate actively with the travel sector in undertaking separate projects.
- To improve the production and managerial know-how in the dance sector with the help of a tailored mentoring programme.



## Experts consulted

### Members of the Dance and Well-Being Subcommittee

Marjo Hämäläinen and Jari Karttunen, dance artists; Katja Kirsi, Education and Outreach coordinator at Zodiak – Center for New Dance; and Kirsi Saastamoinen, artistic director of the Routa dance company.

### Members of the Dance in Schools Subcommittee

Professor Eeva Anttila, the Theatre Academy Helsinki; Kaisa Hahl, lecturer in dance; Katri Nirhamo, class teacher and dance teacher; Ritva Norkia, former managing director for the Association of Dance Institutes in Finland.

### Materials Consulted by the Subcommittee

Work on the dance strategy has benefited from the following materials produced for seminars organised by the National Council for Dance:

“Kohti tanssistrategiaa – tanssin kentän työskentelyseminaari” [Towards a Dance Strategy: Working Seminar in the Field of Dance], Helsinki, 4 June 2008, and

“Tanssin tulevaisuusverstaas” [The Future Workshop for Dance], Helsinki, 10–11 June 2009.

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