

daCi

dance and the Child international

Newsletter

December 2024

Latest news from daCi



Conference highlights,
national/regional
representatives
changes, twinning
projects and more ...

Cover Image by Mirjam Lamut

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Message from the Chair

Vesna Geršak

Dear members of the daCi community,

As I step into my role as Chair, I would first like to express my heartfelt thanks to outgoing Chair, Jeff Meiners. I have learnt a great deal from Jeff over the past few years and his guidance has been invaluable in shaping my approach to this position.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Susan Koff for her unwavering encouragement and support in helping me take on this new challenge.

I am also pleased to welcome our new Chair Elect, Nicholeen DeGrasse-Johnson, and I look forward to working with her.

The 16th daCi conference in Ljubljana, which took place in July, may be a distant memory as we approach the winter season and the upcoming holidays, but the warm memories of the conference still resonate. As the festive Christmas lights adorn Ljubljana, we have been going through all your feedback from the event. Your comments have brought me great joy, and it is a real pleasure to relive the experience through the photos and videos. We have come together not only as dancers, teachers and scholars, but as a global community united by our shared passion for dance. The power of dance has proven to be stronger than a hurricane!

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who participated in the daCi conference in Ljubljana. Special thanks go to the young people and educators who contributed to the success of the event with their energy and enthusiasm. The theme "I - Body, I - Dance" was realised thanks to the tireless efforts of many individuals. I would like to thank the entire organising committee, the daCi board and our worldwide representatives for their support.

I would also like to acknowledge our partners in organising the conference: Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities as our local partner, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia and the Municipality of Ljubljana for co-financing the event. Our heartfelt thanks also go to the Ljubljana Secondary Preschool Education, Grammar School, Performing Arts Grammar School, and the Tourism Ljubljana for their hospitality. In addition, I am incredibly grateful to the Cooper-Newell Foundation for their generous philanthropic support that made the daCi registration scholarships possible, enabling many young people to participate.

It is a great honour that the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO recognised the importance of the conference and granted it honorary patronage. The signing of the daCi Ljubljana Declaration by the Slovenian Minister of Culture and Minister of Education was significant and I look forward to working with daCi members to implementing action for dance education in different parts of the world.

A special THANK YOU goes to Nina, Goran, Urška, Helena, Mojca, Urša, Andreja, as well as my colleagues and the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana. Their commitment and teamwork made this event possible and brought together young people, dance educators and artists from all over the world to create the wonderful "I's" we experienced.

According to the registration statistics, we had 651 participants from 29 countries, which we consider a great success. The young dancers' programme attracted 395 participants from 12 countries, while the scholars programme had 256 individual authors and co-authors from 25 countries. We are very grateful to all those who gave presentations and participated in the conference. While it is difficult to highlight all the outstanding moments, I encourage you to visit our website to view the highlights of the event, which will be accessible until the next interim meeting in Malaysia.

In addition, we present to you the feedback from a survey completed by 88 participants. You will find the results in this newsletter, together with the evaluations of our daCi representatives worldwide. Thank you to everyone who gave us their feedback! We can see what you liked best and where improvements could be made. These will be very helpful for the planning of our next daCi conference in Malaysia 2027.

As the new Chair, I look forward to working with both our established colleagues and the new members who bring fresh perspectives to our volunteer work with daCi. I look forward to the year ahead and wish you all a joyful holiday season and a happy New Year.

Vesna



Message from the Chair Elect

Nicholeen DeGrasse-Johnson

As a member of dance and the Child international (daCi) since 1997, my interactions with educators and students alike from exciting parts of the dancing world have informed my passion for teaching and learning through dance immeasurably and have enabled me to guide generations of young dancers towards the ability to own how they move, live and are in their worlds.

My own students were encouraged to journal as they journeyed through daCi conferences and their perspectives would always give new meaning as to why daCi continued to exist and impact all who engaged with and through its offerings.

I share two student voices here:

Student #1:

"I am absolutely positive that I am a better person for having experienced going to three (3) daCi conferences. Attending each and every one of these conferences has given me great exposure and has also strengthened my pride of Jamaican culture where our indigenous dances are concerned while making friends from many different parts of the world."

Student #2:

What is dance you may ask? From my perspective it is quite a simple task. Your heart beats to the sound of the tune, Your body moves to the rhythm of the beat, One step to the left, two steps to the right, Everybody's dancing, no need to fight...

This past summer in Ljubljana, Slovenia, I was not only proud to observe one of my daCi 'babies' return to the conference as a Springboarder, but also to experience the number of participants who were passionately engaged in all things DANCE. Irie! I was deeply impressed with the level of participation and camaraderie amongst peoples of dance that transcended place and time; the familiar faces warmed my heart, and the new recruits seemed as eager as I was in 1997.

I am very excited about my new position in service of daCi.

I will be forever grateful to our organisation for demonstrating to me and to my students, the essential nature of dance as inclusive and all-embracing of culture and difference. Thank you all for your confidence and support in taking daCi to another level of fulfilling existence while remaining true to its mission:

"To promote the growth and development of dance for children and young people internationally, with respect for the ethnic, gender, physical, and cultural identities and all abilities of each young person within a spirit of international understanding."

Through this newsletter, we look forward to providing many highlights demonstrating the electrifying, embodied, and global energy of dance that daCi nurtures and celebrates.

Let us stay kinetic and connected.

One Love.

Nicholeen



Message from the Outgoing Chair

Jeff Meiners

Dear daCi friends

It is just months since many of us had the good fortune to meet again face-to-face in Slovenia for a wonderfully stimulating and enriching conference. Like previous daCi conferences, this was another unique experience that brought together young people, educators and artists to dance, share and learn together. This collaborative participation and networking through practice and research is testimony to daCi's ongoing impact around the world.

I am now Outgoing Chair and confident in daCi's future as my colleagues and friends Vesna and Nicholeen ably take the roles as Chair and Chair Elect.

Since my Chair's report presented at the General Council meeting in Ljubljana, I have been reflecting again on daCi's achievements since 2022.

These include:

- delivery of the successful 2024 conference via careful partnership collaboration;
- generous support for young people's 2024 conference participation from the Cooper-Newell Foundation;
- confirmation and plans underway for the 2027 conference hosted by Malaysia;

- a sliding scale for online membership fee payment and Slovenia 2024 conference registration, aligned with international guidance on varying economic circumstances of world regions;
- improved communication with members facilitated by the new daCi Administrator;
- successful Twinning, Outreach and Research projects involving young people;
- updating of the Constitution to include policy priorities and SpringBoard information;
- publication of proceedings & research outputs that add to the body of knowledge in the field of dance education, aligning with archive management at the University of Surrey;
- ongoing collaboration with UNESCO as 2024 Conference patrons and the creation of the daCi Ljubjana Declaration as guidance for action to support global dance education, building upon UNESCO's 2024 Abu Dhabi Framework for Culture and Arts Education.

Going forward the new Executive and Advisory Board are establishing committees to finalise the new 2024-2027 Strategic Plan which will be shared with members early in 2025. This includes a new process to involve all members in the election for the 2027 Executive Committee. We plan to improve the daCi website and grow daCi's financial status to support donations, gifts and sponsorship plus a new awards program. DaCi will continue to clarify and strengthen its relationship with UNESCO.

I am heartened by the ongoing support from past daCi leaders and that daCi is expanding to become a truly diverse international organisation. This is evidenced by growing representation in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific with new daCi representatives established in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan, vital for renewal and development.

With the continuing challenges of climate change, war, economic hardship, and threats to health around the world, daCi responds with resilience and endurance through dancing in our local communities and looking outwards to build a strong global network.

As I move towards my final months as Outgoing Chair, I thank you for your commitment to daCi and ask you all to consider where there are gaps in representation and how you might help grow daCi membership...

Wherever you are in the world, from Summer in Australia, I send you all good wishes for dancing at the end of the year and into 2025!

Jeff



Image by Mirjam Lamut

Warm wishes to all our members and friends around the world. Whether celebrating holidays, the changing seasons, or reflecting on the past year, we hope this time brings you joy and connection.

Thank you for being part of our global daCi community!

Jeff, Nicholeen and Vesna

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Image by Mirjam Lamut



daCi 2024 Conference Highlights

The members of the Organising Committee would like to thank you all again for your contribution to the Ljubljana Conference. After a long period of preparation, it was rewarding to see this gathering of joy, creativity, knowledge and experience.

Explore the highlights through a comprehensive documentary of the event. Featuring a collection of images, videos, statements, and important documents, you can capture the key moments and activities of the conference.



daCi 2024 Conference Highlights

Explore the highlights through a comprehensive documentary of the event:

Find conference Photo Highlights [HERE](#).

Browse through all photos [HERE](#).



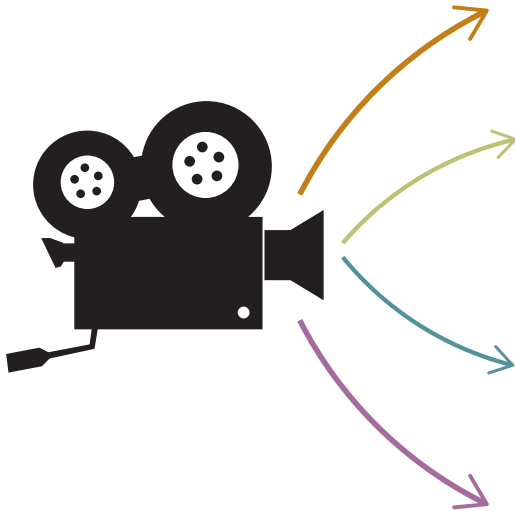
Photos by: Mirjam Lamut



See conference video [HERE](#).

YOUNG DANCERS PERFORMANCES

Witness the passion, creativity, and talent that filled the stage throughout the conference week. Our young dancers were the heart of the event. Their enthusiasm, creativity and boundless energy made this conference truly special. They brought new perspectives and fresh ideas that pushed the boundaries of what dance can be.

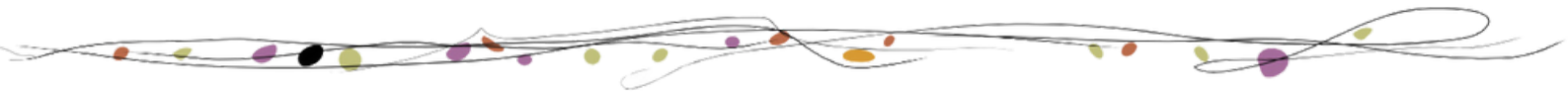


Session 1 can be viewed [HERE](#).

Session 2 can be viewed [HERE](#).

Session 3 can be viewed [HERE](#).

Session 4 can be viewed [HERE](#).



I-SHOOT DANCE STATEMENTS

Recording made at the I-Shoot workshops as part of the daCi 2024 conference:



Check out
the
recording via
link [HERE](#)!





Photos by: Mirjam Lamut



See conference video [HERE](#).



Ljubljana Declaration

On Thursday 11th July as part of the Dance and the Child (daCi) 2024 world conference in Slovenia, the Dance and the Child international Ljubljana Declaration was proclaimed and signed by the Republic of Slovenia Minister of Culture, Asta Vrečko and Minister of Education, Darjo Felda, daCi Chair, Jeff Meiners and incoming daCi Chair, Vesna Geršak. In addition, Gašper Hrastelj, Secretary General, Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO attended as honorary patron of the daCi 2024 Slovenia Conference.

Read the Declaration [HERE](#).



Photos by: Mirjam Lamut



daCi National/Regional representatives conference impressions

In this chapter, we share heartfelt impressions from daCi National/Regional Representatives and their students about their experiences at the 2024 conference.

Their unique perspectives highlight the vibrant energy, meaningful connections, and transformative moments that defined this gathering. Dive into their stories and relive the spirit of daCi.



Canada

The conference in Slovenia was outstanding in every way: the environment, the weather (although a bit warm), the quality and range of sessions, and enjoying the company of other participants. It was glorious to interact once again: to dance together, to break bread together, and to laugh together. The Canadian contingent was highly visible through scholarly presentations, children and youth performances, Twinning projects, and workshops. An added highlight was our Canadian meeting where we welcomed new members. I look forward to the momentum of DACI Canada continuing to build as we all work toward the conference in Malaysia in 2027. -

Norma Sue Fisher-Stitt

The Youth Ballet of Saskatchewan had an incredibly uplifting and inspired experience participating in daCi 2024 Slovenia. The Slovenian team did an incredible job hosting such a wonderful event and aimed to assist us at every request. The beauty of Ljubljana and the fun we had exploring this charming part of the world during our free time created lasting memories.

We had 6 dancers ages 13-18 in attendance, with 4 performing in one of the evening showcases. Each opportunity I had to meet up during the day with my students was filled with positive and excited feedback about the teachers, lessons, and peer connections. What struck me as exceptional was the kindness felt at every turn. The collective sense of understanding and encouragement was profound in such a beautiful, creative, and global dance environment. After their performance, my students were so touched by the thunderous applause from their peers in the audience, and the love and support in the room. They were moved and inspired by all the performances they observed and were happy that a video would be available to relive those moments. We were impressed by the talent and commitment of the young artists from all over the world. The diverse array of styles was enthralling, enjoyable and inspired.

We left Slovenia feeling empowered with knowledge and fresh understanding, full of ideas and new perspectives. The students have remained connected to their new friends and dream of their next opportunity through daCi. I left very motivated and inspired by the lectures and workshops I participated in, feeling blessed to have the opportunity to connect with so many knowledgeable teachers. It was emotional being surrounded by so many individuals that truly love dance and teaching our youth.

Michelle McMillan



Image by Mirjam Lamut

Canada

As my first in-person daCi conference, Ljubljana did not disappoint. The rhythm of the conference was both comfortable and vibrant. The opportunities for interactions with international colleagues created lasting memories and global networks of dance educators. The friendly city was a perfect backdrop for creative exchanges and great conversation.

Tanya Berg



Photo of Norma Sue Fisher-Stitt and Tanya Berg at the signing of the UNESCO Ljubljana declaration.



Photos by: Mirjam Lamut

Jamaica

The journey to daCi 2024 Ljubljana, Slovenia was nothing short of a miracle for the Jamaicans who came on the heels of Hurricane Beryl that ravished the country. daCi 2024 was lifechanging, an amazing experience for all who attended. See excerpts of some reflections below:

“We at Khulcha had looked forward to this physical conference, after being locked down due to the covid outbreak. The conference was like a breath of fresh air and I wanted for these new set of dancers to have the daCi life changing experience as my past students had.

Coming to Ljubljana and seeing all my daCi colleagues, was a welcoming one. Seeing the young dancers connecting with their peers, sharing movement ideas, with their collective energy and just hanging out was a pleasure”

Mrs. Carolyn Russell-Smith

Former daCi Jamaica Country Representative
Artistic Director - Khulcha Theatre School of Dance

My experience in LJUBLJANA was a great one. I'd definitely visit again, especially during the summer when the sun is out. The food was really delicious and I actually learned a word in slovenian, 'pomfrit' which means french fries. My favourite was the ice cream though, i was obsessed with the ice cream for the whole trip.

When we arrived at daCi for the first time, the opening ceremony was amazing, the singing, the dancing, really made me feel connected to the whole show. It was an unforgettable experience. I loved the way that there was a variety of dance classes in daCi to choose from. The classes really helped me to understand how others dance and not just how i dance, meaning it showed me that there are millions of different ways to connect your body and mind to the music and bring out your own style.

De'La-Rai Dwyer (13 years old.)

Student - Khulcha Theatre School of Dance



Jamaica

“This has been a great experience embarking on a journey to Ljubljana, Slovenia for a dance conference not just a physical experience but a dance of the soul and spirit. . .As we danced before the audience in Ljubljana, letting our passion shine through every twirl, every leap, and every gesture making our amazing parents and our extraordinary teacher Mrs.Carolyn Russell-Smith proud. Our presence at this conference is not just a representation of our skill but a testament to our dedication, perseverance, and love for the art of dance...”

Makayla Campbell. (13 years old.)

Student - Khulcha Theatre School of Dance



“...It was nice to learn and try the way that others dance all around the world and make new friends. Their way of dancing was very new to me, and it was important to learn a lot of skills regarding relationships between each other and our surroundings. I enjoyed meeting new people and watching the performances that they had prepared for us.

Each session was packed with key learning initiatives centered around the theme: I was impressed with the numbers of attendees from around the world and my belief in dance as a power tool to unify others, cutting across race, language barriers and culture was further deepened...”



Keana Thomas (14 years old.)

Student - Khulcha Theatre School of Dance

Jamaica

“Having my first, physical daCi conference experience, in July 2024, with my dance troupe, I was astonished with the level of effort that the organisers put into hosting this event. Dance troupes from across the world having to meet at a central location, Ljubljana Slovenia, brought forth many people. Without a doubt, the level of inclusivity did not go unnoticed as daCi made sure each dancer was given an identification card, was able to participate in various classes and showcase their dance pieces in the nightly productions.

I found the classes to be very exhilarating and enjoyable, getting the opportunity to not only learn different techniques and culture through dance from others but being able to share my own. Additionally, watching the performances in the evenings by each dance troupe was exceptional as every piece had their own individuality and creativity.”

Arianne Miller (17 years old)

Student - Khulcha Theatre School of Dance



“daCi Conference was an experience that I would not trade for anything, it was mind-blowing to see children and adults from across the world coming together to express their love for dance and movement. The fact that parents were also given the opportunity to share in the experience was appreciated...”

Parent of Makayla Campbell

The Jamaica daCi Chapter extends many thanks to Mrs. Carolyn Russell-Smith who is the outgoing Jamaica Country Representative and special commendation to our very own Dr. Nicholeen DeGrasse-Johnson who is Chair-Elect of the daCi Executive Committee.

We were also very proud of Janae Deslandes who served as part of the daCi SpringBoard and represented Jamaica to the fullest.

I believe the 2024 daCi conference has re-energized us and we will definitely be at daCi 2027! One love!

Sophia McKain

daCi Jamaica Country Representative



Khulcha Theatre School of Dance

Nicholeen DeGrasse-Johnson, Carolyn Russell-Smith, Sophia McKain

Portugal

It was an event that provided interesting moments of sharing and learning in community with people who value dance, who like to dance and who make dance happen in their different contexts. I was very grateful, inspired and wanted to continue believing in the poetry of the movement. I was very grateful, inspired and wanted to continue believing in the poetry of the movement.

Very well organized, the title 'I-Body, I-Dance' inspiring and the whole programme followed this 'I-...' Very well thought out and creative. Congratulations!

I-Open_ Opening event and I-Close_closing event were fantastic and the topics covered and the speakers were very good.

Two aspects for improvement:

- too many conferences at the same time
- inadequate workshop rooms (gym) and
- very hot.

It was a week full of learning and unforgettable moments. I think that overall the conference went very well. The key note presentation had great quality and originality. The presentations and the workshops had very broad and relevant themes. Unfortunately, the overlap of the various activities meant that I couldn't always attend all the ones I wanted to.

I think there could have been more interaction between the dance students and the academics, maybe by implementing some sessions that allowed for this interaction. Additionally, there could have been more performances.

Elisabete Monteiro



Photo by Elisabete Monteiro

Photos by Mirjam Lamut

Japan

The highlight was wonderful, bringing scenes to mind vividly like a story. We've gathered memorable aspects shared by Japan members.

Fantastic "I - body, I - dance"! : The Theme which has clear concept and structure of "I-body, I-dance" left a lasting impression! It was powerfully symbolic, with each "I" beginning creating a memorable and impactful experience! Imagination, Improvisation, Inclusion, Identity, Intelligence and Interdisciplinarity! Inspiring I-OPEN: The collaboration of song and dance was wonderful, absolutely amazing! Seen from above, the dancers were truly like a kaleidoscope. What does it look like from the front? I wish it had lasted longer! Through the words of the song and the dance set to music, we naturally understood the conference's direction, immersing us in the 6 days daCi journey with a powerful message guiding everyone forward. Shadows and dancers moved freely, connecting and becoming one. Dance expressed pure freedom, we can understand the feeling without speaking! I love seeing each country and teacher rise to greet one another, it was a perfect opening, making us feel warmly welcomed as we came together. Beautiful Ljubljana and Venue: The city and the facilities at the University of Ljubljana offered a truly wonderful setting, bringing comfort and warmth to participants.

The I-PERFORM venue, in particular, stood out as an immersive space where the close connection between audience and dancers created a captivating experience. The lighting beautifully highlighted the dancers, enhancing the charm of this unique environment! Vibrant Presentations & Workshops:

I-(RE)SEARCH was full of energy, with participants actively engaging in research and lively discussions. Both the workshops and lectures provided meaningful and fulfilling experiences for everyone involved.

Unique Experience!: I-DANCE FOR PEACE, I learned planetary dance for the first time. Dancing to the beat of drums and songs is a powerful step toward unity. I have had a similar experience before, and I remember being deeply moved. I was impressed by how the natural environment enriched the experience and nurtured a sense of concern for the community and the peace of the earth.



Japan

Insightful Keynotes & Lectures: The keynote speeches and lectures stood out, reaffirming that this is a space for actively sharing knowledge and culture in dance education. As one teenager noted “The keynote was incredibly interesting” highlighting these sessions as a valuable source of insight.

Discussions among adults also benefit the children they work with, making daCi a fantastic interdisciplinary environment that continually nurtures and inspires young learners.

Focus on the Ljubljana Declaration: The daCi Ljubljana Declaration is a very important statement that presents a vision for the future of education. It builds a shared understanding and emphasizes that dance is a wonderful value that makes a significant contribution to children's education and social development, offering strong support. It was impressive.

Unlocking Synergy ‘I-Perform’: I was particularly intrigued by the fusion project No. 1 which combines the silent ‘sculpture’ and the ‘living’ essence of dance in the session. The process of dancers drawing inspiration from the deep messages encapsulated by the sculptor and bringing them to life holds great potential for development. The time-based art, which disappears from the moment of the performance, is visually expressed, offering both dancers and the audience a sense of surprise and freshness making it a truly engaging project.

Closing celebration!: Everyone came together as one, creating a sense of unity through shared actions! It was so great! Young people and all are lively and seem to be having so much fun! The atmosphere was lively and filled with joy! I could see that everyone was smiling and feeling fulfilled.

Continuing to explore new inspirations and educational values through dance education as UNESCO for both children and adults at the daCi conference is a truly meaningful endeavour. The highlights for 6 days of inspiring exchanges allowed us to witness the children and young people growing naturally, richly, and powerfully, it's a truly moving experience. We said together, “I truly wish we could have been there!”. With heartfelt gratitude for the remarkable efforts of the host country Slovenia, we celebrate the great success of this conference. Reflecting on the wonderful experiences with daCi fills us with even greater excitement for the future. Thank you for sharing the incredible highlights!

Ebbe Daigo, Hisayo Sugao

New Zealand

Arriving in vibrant, sun-soaked Ljubljana on a bustling summer Saturday was the perfect start to this unforgettable daCi experience. The opening ceremony set the tone beautifully. As each country was called, its members stood and danced in celebration. When New Zealand was announced, it was a special moment for all of us who had made the journey to Slovenia, and we were filled with joy as the crowd cheered us on. Throughout the week, the international daCi community came alive. Daily interactions between the adult and youth venues were a highlight—watching 15-year-old Cassidy Scoones head to workshops in a venue filled with young dancers from across the world was inspiring.

As New Zealand's national representative, I had the privilege of gathering our country's participants under the shade of trees between venues, creating an oasis for our national meetings. Our final gathering ended just as an electric storm lit up the sky above, adding to the dramatic beauty of this city and the sense of connection to our surroundings. The closing ceremony brought everything full circle, with Cassidy on stage, dancing with newfound friends from his global dance community. When the DJ began, young and not-so- young alike joined in as one, dancing in shared freedom and joy. It was a heartfelt ending, full of tears, hugs, and exchanged contacts—connections forged through our common love for dance and shared humanity.

Clare Battersby



Dance and the Child, Ljubljana, 2024 was fantastic. I loved the clarity of the organisation and the content of the presentations. As always, the energy, honesty and insights offered from the young people, make daCi ongoingly special and extremely worthwhile. I love the academic community that gathers during daCi events. It is a lovely community that has a deep connection to dance education and our collective futures. Finally, the city of Ljubljana was a great meeting place, full of accessible culture, art and outdoors. Wonderful.

Ralph Buck

New Zealand

This daCi conference was both special and different for me. It was special to reconnect with friends, over morning coffee under shady trees, aperol spritz in the late afternoon sun and wine and food beside the river in the evening. It was different because after many conferences with EC meetings and SpringBoard responsibilities, I was free to experience a greater variety of the rich dance education experiences on offer - keynotes, paper presentations, lecture demonstrations, workshops and young people's performances. It was a joy and a privilege to participate in such a vibrant, well organised conference in beautiful Ljubljana.

Liz Melchoir



People - that's what comes to my mind when I reflect on the wonderful daCi conference in Ljubljana. The country was incredibly beautiful and the hospitality and organisation, quite amazing, but for me - making new friends in the lift, connecting with Australians I'd heard of but never met, reconnecting with people from other parts of New Zealand and from countries all over the world, and having breakfast with my colleague Sarah when we would never have time to do that at home. I've even had continuing contact with some special friends, Clare, Liz, and Kerrin.

Barbara Snook

I had the privilege to be in Slovenia facilitating inclusive "Flying Dance&" to young people from around the world at the World Dance Conference in Ljubljana (I Dance - daCi Conference). Together we transformed a beautiful studio into a flying fantasy, bringing to life "Maui and The Sun", a Māori legend, with storytelling and movement. The children enjoyed the chance to express their creativity and own choreographic skills depicting the journey of Te Ra, The Sun. Simply inspiring to see the young people at work! Mauri ora.

Linda Parker-Wendt

An amazing 16th daCi conference, Ljubljana, July 2024. Seven days with dance in full swing at the centre of everything. The effervescence of youth/ intergenerational / theory and practice interwoven/ rich connections/ the people from around the globe/ the commitment to dance pedagogy in all guises combined to make this memorable, exciting and embodied. Watching vibrant youth performances, connecting with dance colleagues both old and new. DANCING, seeing, hearing, touching, connecting, feeling made this conference alive and buzzing with vitality through I-Body, I-Dance.

Sue Cheesman

Slovenia

daCi 24 has exceeded my expectations. I was at the 2006 conference in The Hague and I was impressed. I am fascinated by the Ljubljana conference. I had several reasons to attend. Apart from the workshop and the poster presentation, I wanted to get in touch with our Slovenian artists, who I always meet in more stressful and competitive situations. I succeeded and I am very happy about that. To cooperate and not to compete, which is difficult to achieve nowadays, I know. I am keeping in touch with my Finnish colleagues and maybe the Ambifoto idea will spread to Scandinavia - it was too late for this year; one of them asked me if she could show this year's really great photos to her students at the University of Mikkeli (I received 80 photos this year and some of them are really great). Finally, my compliments to the organisers, first and foremost to Nina Meško and Vesna Geršak.

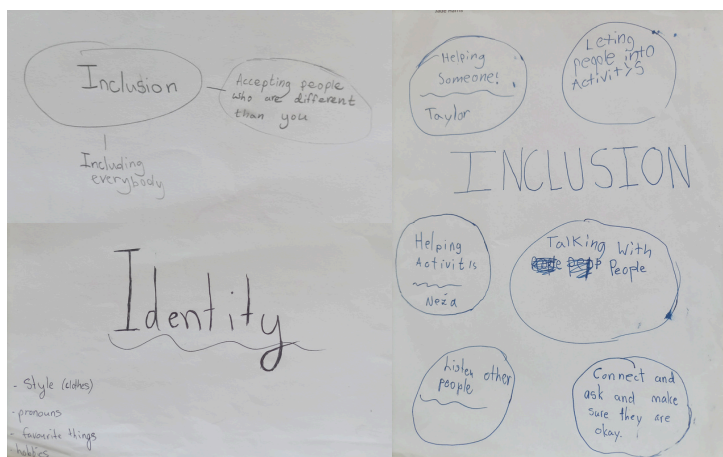
Ana Vok Pezdur (presenter)

Before the beginning my mind was filled with selfdoubt. Will it be good enough? will it be interesting enough? When we started all doubts melted away in our studio. So we began... Journey of exploration, different movement qualities, space and time. Through playfulness, relaxation and proposed material, great energy was born between all present bodies in space. I am - and so were they (green team) greatful for the experience and opportunity to be a apart of the world dancing. V VROČINSKEM VALOVANJU ZELENA PREPLET SVETA V PROSTORU IN ČASU PREPLET USTVARJALNIH LJUDI KI ŽELIJO PLESATI SI HVALEŽNOSTI PODOBA IN IGRIVOST TELES VSE LAHKO JE PLES V OBJEMU ZELENEGA ISKANJA ISKANJA NOVIH POTI ZLAGANJA VIZIJ V ENO SAMO LJUBEZEN - DACI 2024

Ana Romih (workshop leader for young dancers)

I -post daCi At daCi I led the I-BLUE (M) dance workshops with a group of young, talented and endlessly dedicated dancers from different parts of the world. I also had the daCi SpringBoarder Dorothee Tölgyesi, representing Canada, who was indispensable in the ballroom. Great organisation, breathing together and living the life of dance, where linguistic, national and age diversity lost its meaning and the universal language of dance became tangible. We proved that the language of dance needs no translation. Abstract concepts and theories that existed only as an idea of the universality of the language of dance were manifested in reality at this conference. I can only say - I - LIKE daCi. See you in Malaysia.

Sabina Schwenner (presenter and workshop leader for young dancers)



Slovenia

Attending the Daci Conference was an unforgettable experience and exploration of dance. The Dance Conference proves that expressive dance connects and unites. I personally met and became friends with many dancers from other countries. The dance was based on the whole group coming together. Together with the mentor Tina Valentan we created unforgettable stories and moments. It was also interesting to learn about expressive dance and the way other countries or continents approach it. The dance workshops allowed us to share movements and stories with both the youngest and the oldest. They completed the dance week with tests, new ideas and experiences (first time trapped in a bird cage, second time free in space).

Mila Vate (young dancer from KD Qulenium)

It was a great honour to attend the conference. It was very important for me to meet many young people from different countries during the conference. The workshops were interesting. Among the workshops, I would like to highlight the workshop of mentor Leon.

Mina Jelkić (young dancer from KD Qulenium)

Participating in the daCi conference was an inspiring experience where it was immeasurable to feel the unifying power of dance - among young dancers, artists, educators, therapists and academics. I felt the importance of the process from movement research to creative movement and stage presentation, dance in its full spectrum, a movement dialogue in which we can all participate. The event allowed experts from different fields of dance to collaborate and showed how interdisciplinary enriches everyone and creates a closer and broader community based on the exchange of ideas, creativity and acceptance of differences Hats off to the organisers and THANK YOU for the endless and diverse dance experience.

Katja Bucik, paper presentation

Dance, dance, otherwise we are lost, said Pina Bausch ... I attended the conference as a dance teacher and student and after six months the passion for dance with its flowing spirit, great connection and commitment is still present. I felt at home because I was connected with my colleagues. A busy week full of dance. I am so proud of my dear Vesna Geršak, my mentor, who now holds the daCi Chair. This will make dance even more popular and valuable in Slovenia.

Neva Kralj, lecture demonstration



Slovenia

Participating in the daCi conference was a valuable and unforgettable experience for me. As a member of the artistic committee, it was very interesting to work with the other members. It allowed me to broaden my horizons and get to know other choreographic artistic products and different approaches to contemporary dance pedagogy from different continents of the world. Although the structure of the workshop schedule seemed challenging at the beginning, we came up with a very functional schedule thanks to our joint deep and thoughtful work. I am also grateful to have been able to attend the daCi Assembly meetings where I learned about the structure and functioning of the whole global organisation. As a dance educator, I must admit that it was a great honour to work with young people from all over the world. I experienced the work and the children as a priceless beauty, where together we discovered the concepts of identity and inclusion. Through writing or dancing our own name we became aware of the body in space (directions, levels), we learned new creative approaches and above all we had a great time. Especially when we choreographed. Although the children didn't want to mix in the international groups at the beginning, they still enjoyed the mixed groups and worked well together. Having taught the S - blue group, which was the youngest, I have to give them a lot of credit for the way they bravely faced challenges such as the English language, new people, choreographic approaches... On the first day they were very reserved. But then their bodies started to 'open up' and they became very fluid. When I heard from the youngest ones that they were very proud because they were actually performing in front of the whole world, and when I saw them perform with such poise and feeling on stage and at the closing party, I was moved to tears. It was an invaluable and very precious experience: working together from the heart and creativity! Connected in our diversity, united in dance from all over the world! I enclose 3 photos - 3 notes taken in 3 groups as we explored the theme, so that we could internalise and immerse ourselves in the creative process of dance. Wonderful reflections from the children on what identity and inclusion mean to them. Very grateful!

Mojca Kasjak (artistic committee member, youth workshop leader, facilitator)



Australia

DaCi has a rich legacy of building an international community through dance. Following the success of Adelaide (2018) and the connections maintained during the Covid-impacted Toronto conference, Ljubljana was especially meaningful.

Australian attendees reflected on the joy of connecting with people from around the world and the importance of exchanging ideas, stories and perspectives for teaching, practice, and advocacy. The quality and breadth of research, movement workshops, and keynote presentations in the scholarly program was further enriched by the opportunities to connect with one another during breaks and events. Having time to explore and immerse ourselves in activities around the city added another layer to the experience. Locals were incredibly friendly and welcoming, and the availability of free buses and access to bikes made getting around easy.

The performances, alongside the opening and closing ceremonies, created an energised atmosphere and truly celebrated the richness of diversity and cultural expression that daCi fosters so uniquely. We were thrilled that young dancers from Australia were able to attend, accompanied by dedicated parents and mentors. It was moving to witness the friendships formed by the dancers, especially during the closing ceremony, where the relationships they had built throughout the week were clearly reflected in both the performances and the after-party.

We would like to acknowledge the tireless work of outgoing Chair, Jeff Meiners. Jeff's ability to foster relationships and build networks has supported the Australian community for many years and strengthened daCi's international relationships and purpose. We would also like to thank our Slovenian hosts, whose hard work made the conference such a success, particularly Vesna, Nina and Goran! As we reflect on the conference, we look forward to building on the connections made in Ljubljana and generating momentum and excitement for Malaysia in 2027.

In the coming months, we hope to see our membership base continue to grow, allowing more people to experience the joy of being part of the daCi community.

Jacqueline Cooper and Kerrin Rowlands



Australia

They invite you to read also some quotes from our Australian attendees:

“daCi 2024 in Ljubljana was incredible for Wagana. We spent months in the lead up to the Conference fundraising, creating and rehearsing our performance Garraba Wayu and planning our workshop and we were grateful to share this work in the beauty that surrounded us in Ljubljana and in the daCi community. Our young dancers were equally excited and exhausted by the week of dance. They made new friends, they loved learning Slovenian Folk Dance, experiencing their first aerial class and watching the performance program. They ate lots of ice cream and loved the nightlife of the City after their dance days.”

To Clancy

“Having traveled halfway across the world to be at a conference can be confronting but arriving at a community which encourages diversity and self-expression is refreshing. Especially if you come from a place where you yourself are limited to expectations from peers, religion or family. DaCi, being an international conference, everyone has come from different origins, however movement being an international language is the best way to meet and understand others when it may be hard to verbally communicate.”

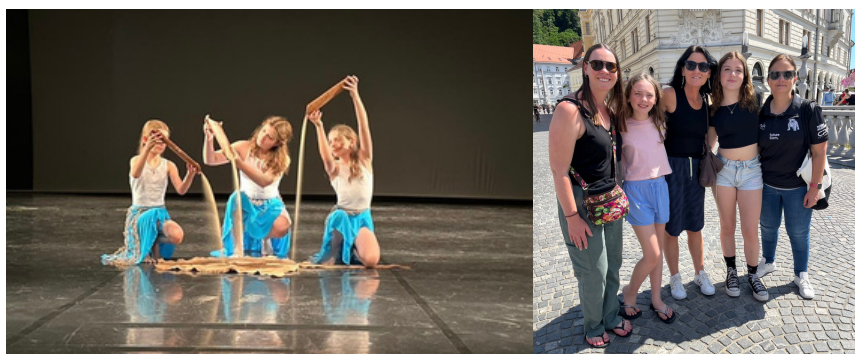
Cassidy Scoones (16 years)

“The conference provided an incredible opportunity to connect with dance educators from around the world, gain fresh insights, and refine some of the ideas we’ve been developing at our school. Highlights included the inspiring opening ceremony, the outstanding performance by the students of Ljubljana Secondary Performing Arts School, and the insightful keynote speakers who broadened our understanding and sparked new thinking. Witnessing the passion of dancers, educators, and academics in one space was so inspiring.

Trudy Surman & Tyson Olson

“Meeting fellow educators was a highlight for me and hearing their stories, whether it be before a session, at morning tea (the central hub at the university encouraged these dialogues throughout the day) or on a bus back into the city! The key highlights from the conference all centred around community - the events in the program that brought people together through a unified passion and love for dance. The conference celebrated its theme of Identity in beautifully vast and varied ways. The opening and closing ceremonies presented a strong sense of community and joy and proud identity. The value gained from this experience, for the young people involved, would be immeasurable and life long.”

Carolyn Obst



South Africa

The daCi Conference 2024 was a marvellous experience where diversity was embraced, and feelings of joy and love for dance and our humanity were unleashed. From the opening ceremony the conference hosts received the world with immense preparedness and great hospitality. It was enlightening to realize that whatever race, colour or creed you are or whichever part of the globe you come from, dance is a common denominator. Not only did we meet new international friends and colleagues from around the world and reconnect with longstanding ones, but we also deepened our country bonds.

The keynote speeches were quite carefully selected and the workshops and performances catered to different age groups, cultures and interests of the attendees at the conference. The deliberations at the conference opened new vistas of thinking and there were many lessons that participants can apply or try out going forward. The range of workshops, discussions and performances was amazing and truly offered a plethora of insights. One couldn't help but wish these sessions could have been recorded to allow for a larger audience and reach rather than occur once.

This trip convinced us all that there is so much to be gleaned from witnessing international dance. This was the first time that we had a group of young people from South Africa physically attending the daCi conference. Representing South Africa was such an honour for them, and they cherished every moment, from exploring the beautiful city of Ljubljana to engaging in inspiring talks, improv classes, and fun workshops. The highlight, of course, was performing for and connecting with young dancers from around the world. All our young dancers absolutely loved it.

Everyone was incredibly impressed by the excellent organisation, management and warm hospitality extended to us. It's clear why the conference draws such a dedicated and enthusiastic crowd. We left with wonderful memories and new friends. It was an unforgettable experience attending the 2024 daCi conference in Slovenia. Overall, this conference **INSPIRED** our creativity and **ENTHUSIASM** for future **COLLABORATIONS** with more **DANCERS** and dance **SCHOLARS**. The success of daCi Slovenia demonstrated the amazing possibilities that can arise for dance when educators, academics, arts institutions and government bodies work together harmoniously. Thank you to everyone who made this experience so special, and we look forward to Malaysia 2027 conference!

Lisa Wilson



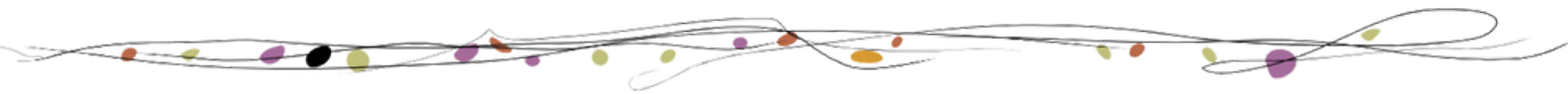
Springboard impressions



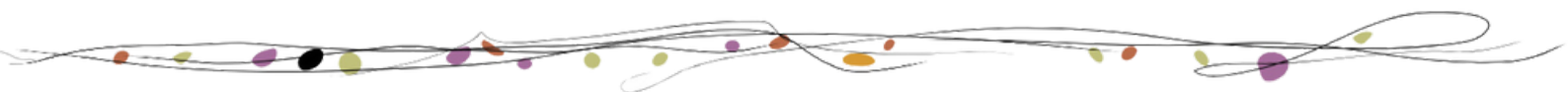
Ella Cumberland-Clark: The opportunity to be a part of this year's Springboard has been an extremely rewarding experience that has been educational along with providing me the chance to participate in the 2024 daCi conference. Throughout the conference I was able to interact with many different people originating from across the globe learning from them what it means to them to be a dance artist and more about their various cultures. I as an individual find the art of observing to be the most rewarding and the springboard program provided me the chance to shadow a variety of positions throughout the daCi board and organization. In my current stage of life (19 years old) I find myself in a very in between position, old enough to be an adult but still awaiting more life experiences. It was new and interesting for me to watch the daCi board during their meetings and see for myself what it takes behind the scenes to be such an organization. It inspired me watching everything come together and I saw from every one of them how important arts education really is as they applied themselves full-heartedly into this conference without the need of monetary or physical reward. After the first daCi meeting I attended this observation stuck with me and after experiencing this 2024 conference as a Springboarder I understand the reward that comes out of an international dance conference. It was an amazing opportunity to run workshops and see the minds of young people at work and really see their creativity flourish as the week went on. If I'm being completely honest, I was nervous for this part as I was beginning the planning I didn't know what I as a young artist myself I had to give. Having participated in daCi conferences as a child I remember how much I received from the dance artists, and I could tell you a list of ways that the experience changed me as a dancer and a person. However, this was the part of the conference I knew that was meant to challenge me and reflecting now I'm so glad I was able to run a dance flavor as the challenge of digging deep in myself allowed me another opportunity to grow. My favorite part of this conference was being given the chance to shadow dance artists during the afternoon and learn from professionals who are active in the arts community. Being a young artist I am extremely eager to learn from those in the field and I can confidently say I did. The artists were very friendly and welcoming, and I found myself learning more and more from just interacting with them. Being able to ask questions and get feedback and suggestions from someone in a field that holds so many uncertainties was very valuable. Throughout this entire process I have learned a lot from both the youth programs and the scholar programs that I will find myself carrying with me as I continue through the world of the arts and a fire has been sparked in me regarding the daCi conferences and I find myself excited to see if I will be able to stay connected with the organization as the years go on.

Springboard impressions

Dorothee Tölgyesi: This week working as a member of the Springboard, with Cassandra and the whole of the daCi organizational committee has been inspiring. Having this opportunity has opened my eyes to the fact that people around the world are as passionate about dance education as I am. It was a truly special experience to work with local artists that have so graciously included us into their creative process, providing us with unique insight into the realities of dancers and choreographers in Slovenia. Leading our own dance flavours allowed us to continue building the bridge between the children and adults and having time to participate in some of the adult programming only furthered this goal. Dance education, pedagogy and movement practices are integral to my identity. Coming to the dance and Child international conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia has been springboard for ideas, inspiration, and future projects. I have loved my experience on the Springboard and hope to continue my involvement with daCi.



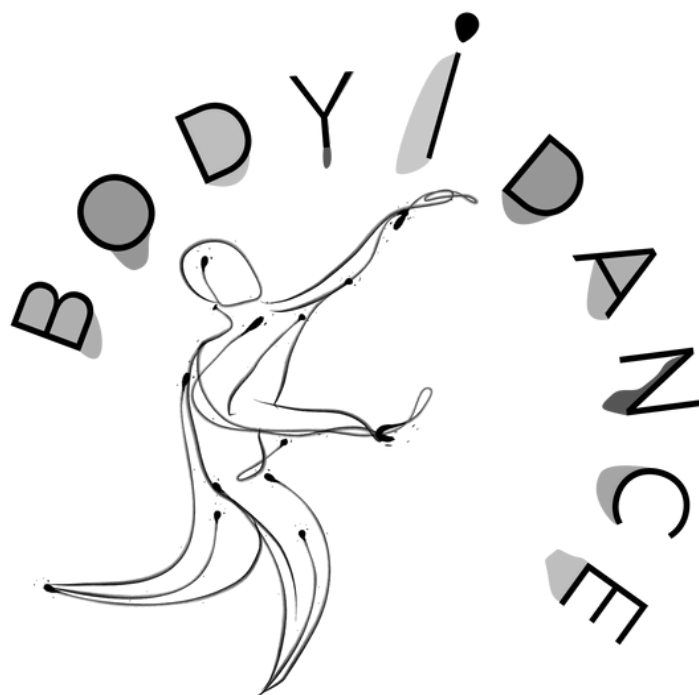
Brina Dokl: The week of DaCi 2024 in Ljubljana was surprising, full, playful and very dancy! As part of the Springboard I had the privilege of teaching young dancers. To share the space, energy, ideas, material. Together with being involved with the artist that was also working with group of children. I learned a lot! I saw a lot! I took part in lectures that gave me even more wide view of how I can be engaged with dance, dance community, what and how can I do or work. Listening to so many inspiring speeches. The feeling of community was so strong it made me believe or rather reminded me of why I am insisting with being a dancer - because it's a collective thing! Doing, dancing together, sweating, sharing this space of being playful, weird sometimes and not being judged for that. Also, hard working. It's a space to explore. And that what this week was also about. Exploring and seeing different cultures, colours, dancers, dance styles, approaches, languages. It filled me with hope, inspiration. It really is a meeting point of lots of different sections. Exactly what together makes us great. I even learned something new about myself and discovered more joy in teaching kids. Hopefully now I continue and give more and more and more kids, youngsters opportunities to join this great world of moving called dancing. And for myself to not forget why I do it. It gives me wings.

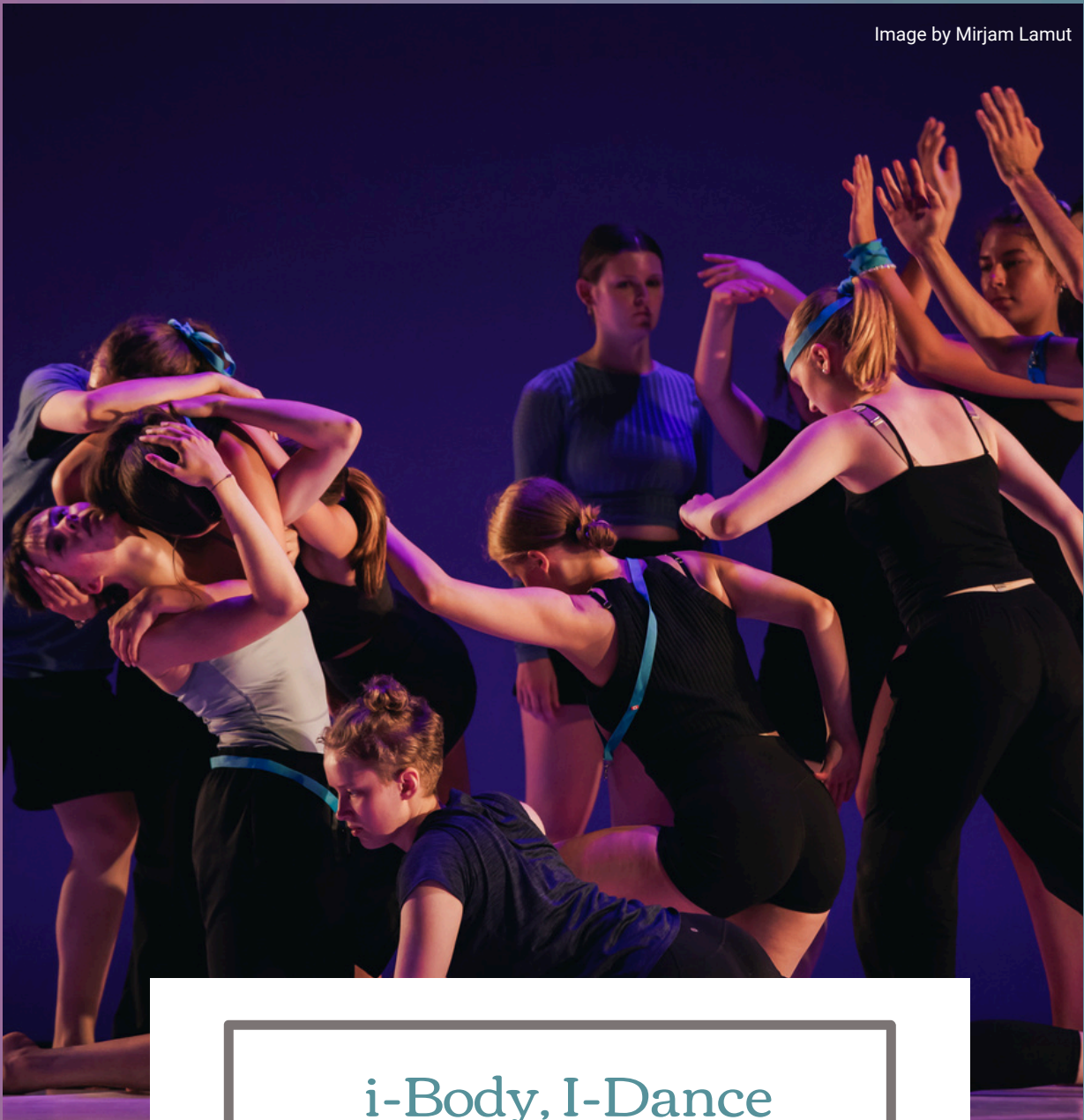


Patricija Crnkovic: For me, the interesting thing about being on Springboard is bridging the various perspectives on dance through different cultures. We enrich ourselves by sharing with children from different environments with very different dance backgrounds. We practice our adjustability and test how specific approaches work in groups. I believe that as Springboards we also made the gap smaller between youth and facilitators: making it easier for children to relax.

Springboard impressions

Janae Delandes: My experience as a Springboarder in Slovenia this past summer was surreal. I was added to the team late because one of the Springboarders who had originally been chosen could no longer make it. When I stepped in, I didn't have much time to create a new programme, but with the help of Cassandra and the other Springboarders, I could host my sessions as originally planned. I was in a unique situation because I was the only Springboarder who needed a teammate from my country to help during the workshops. This made it feel like there was much more pressure on me to do well and execute fun and exciting workshops. I allowed that pressure to overwhelm me initially, but by my second workshop, I was able to share the aspects of my culture that I wanted to. The workshops were not perfect, but they were uniquely mine, and I was proud that I could shift others' perspectives on cultural dance, even briefly. I was able to make connections with many of the participants and learn more about them while showing more of myself. I was excited that we, as Springboarders, could enjoy the conference and attend workshops. I attended quite a few, including one on jazz history and Ms. McKain's Ska and Dancehall workshop. It made me appreciate the conference and its commitment to promoting cultural differences. I have been to several daCi conferences, but this was the first one where I could reflect on the impact of international conferences that welcome diversity of thought and culture. Living in the heart of the city was a phenomenal experience. I was able to explore Ljubljana without straying too far from the apartment. Living like a local, learning the bus routes, buying groceries to cook, wandering around, and taking in the sights was a fantastic experience. The city was beautiful, and I was grateful for the chance to have such an experience with such wonderful people. Overall, this daCi conference was like nothing I've ever participated in. It brought out so many feelings in me, the most prominent being the confidence I lacked. I am incredibly grateful to all who contributed to my being able to attend the daCi conference in Slovenia, and I would be honoured to continue to work with daCi International in any capacity.





i-Body, I-Dance Conference questionnaire analysis results

The questionnaire was sent to 360 addresses and we received 88 replies, which is 24% of all addressed persons involved in the Ljubljana conference.

Most of the respondents are scholars who attended the conference as individuals. According to the results of the survey, the conference brought together very experienced daCi followers and those who had no experience with daCi before. More than 50% of the respondents were attending the conference for the first time.

Conference statistics

Ljubljana daCi conference had 651 registered participants from 29 countries.

Scholars registration statistic

Type of registration	Number
Scholars	158
Other Attenders	98
Sholars and Other attenders	256

Young dancers registration statistic

Type of registration	Number
Group Coordinator	36
Chaperones	72
Young Dancers	287

The **Scholars programme** consisted of:

- 70 paper presentations / 26 hours programme.
- 24 lecture demonstrations / 36 hours of programme.
- 31 Moving Workshops / 46,5 hours of programme.
- 11 panel discussions / 16.5 hours of programme.
- 4 keynote speeches / 6 hours of programme.
- 10 Poster Presentations.
- In total 122,5 hours of scholar programme.

The **Young Dancers programme** consisted of

- 18 I-research workshops / 27 hours programme.
- Three colour dance workshop groups (Green, Orange and Blue) each divided into three groups by age (Small, Medium and Large). Each age group worked for 8 hours and 72 hours in total. The final result was presented at the closing event.
- I-perform / 4 hours programme + rehearsals.
- The I-write and I-shoot programme units ran parallel to the movement activities of the young dancers and the result is the I-shoot video, which you can find in this newsletter or on the conference highlights page.
- In total 99 hours of young dancers programme + rehearsals and I-shoot, write activities.

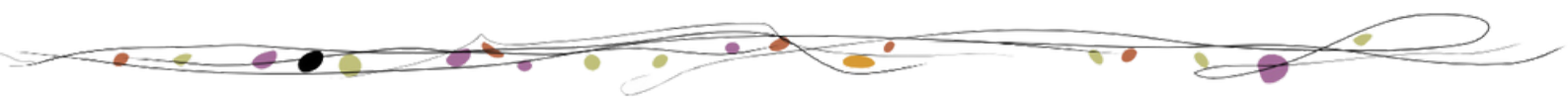


Conference statistics

Joint programme consisted of:

- 9 morning sessions / 36 hours programme
- Opening session / 3 hours
- Closing event 3 hours.

A total of 42 hours of joint programme and 263,5 hours of total conference programme, complemented by evening performances of the Slovenian dance scene and the sightseeing day tourist offer.

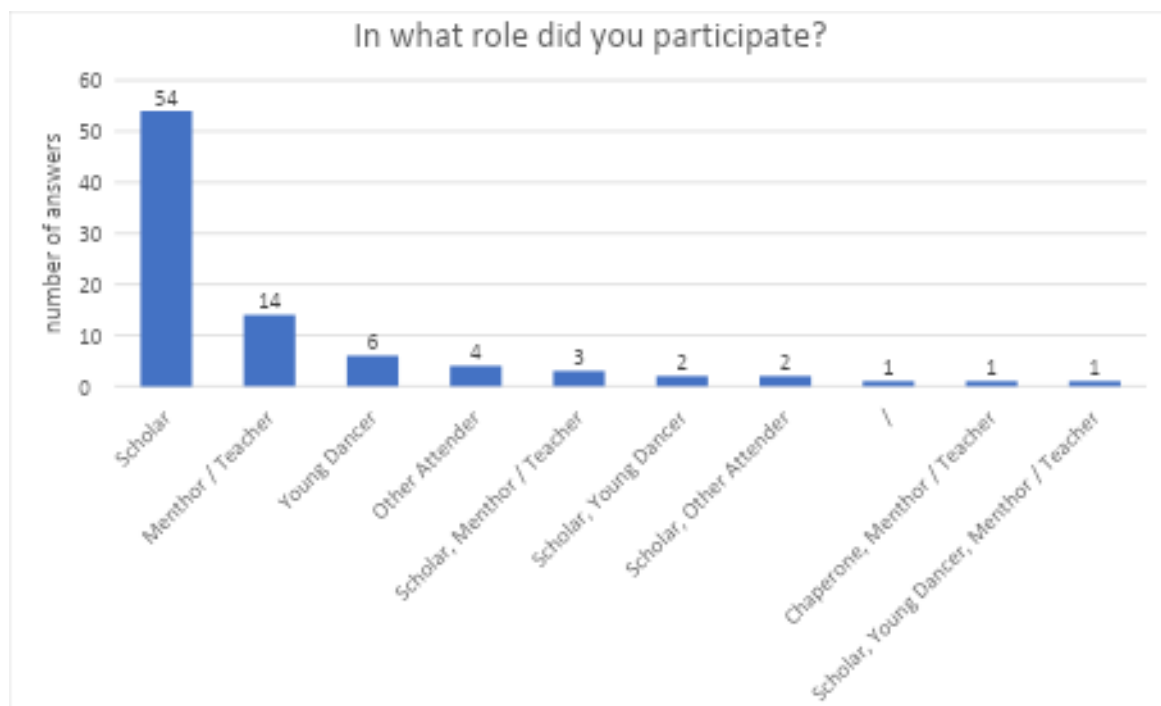


Conference questionnaire analysis results

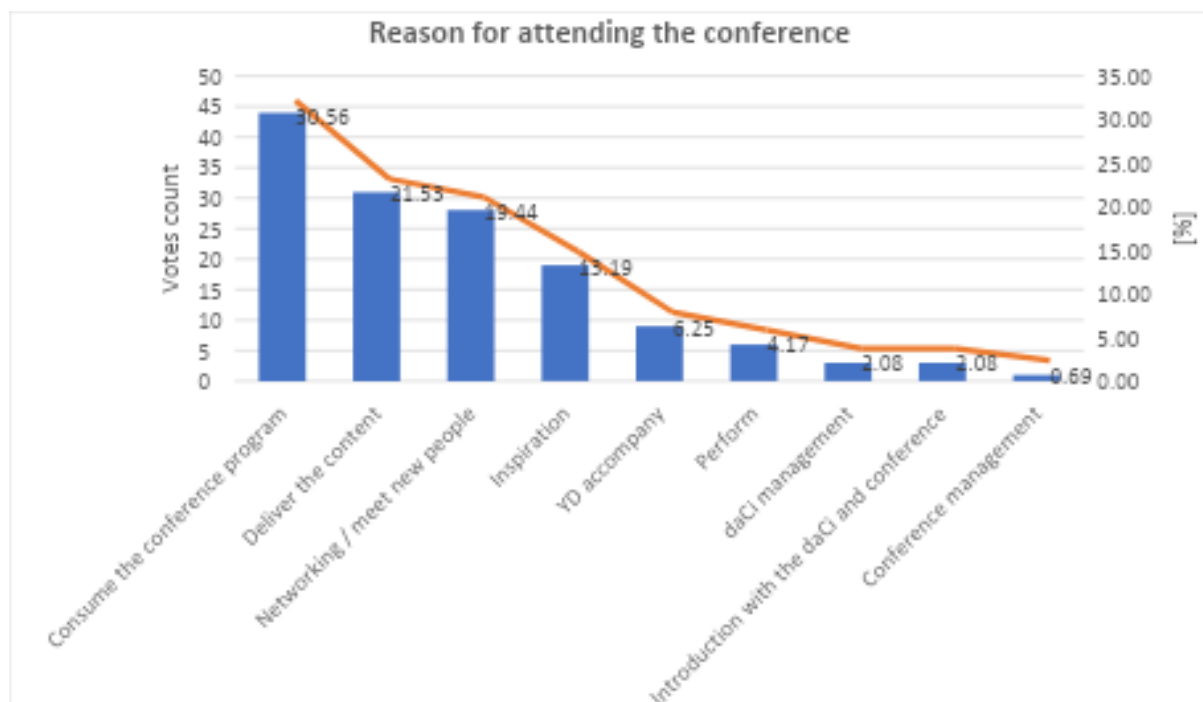
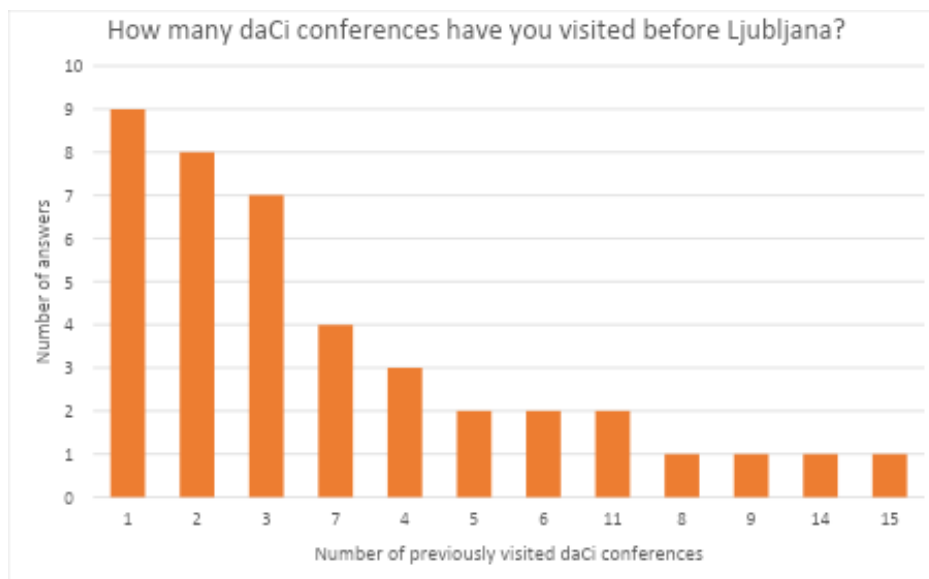
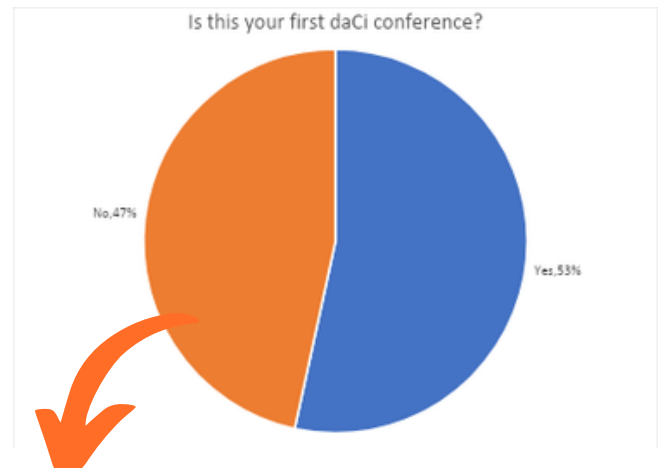
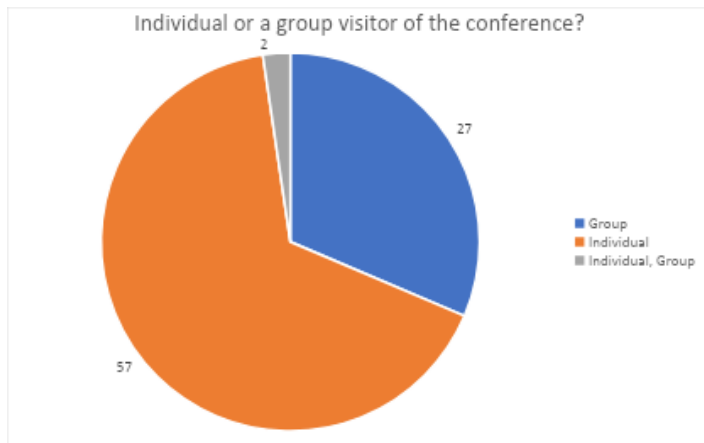
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DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Conference questionnaire analysis results



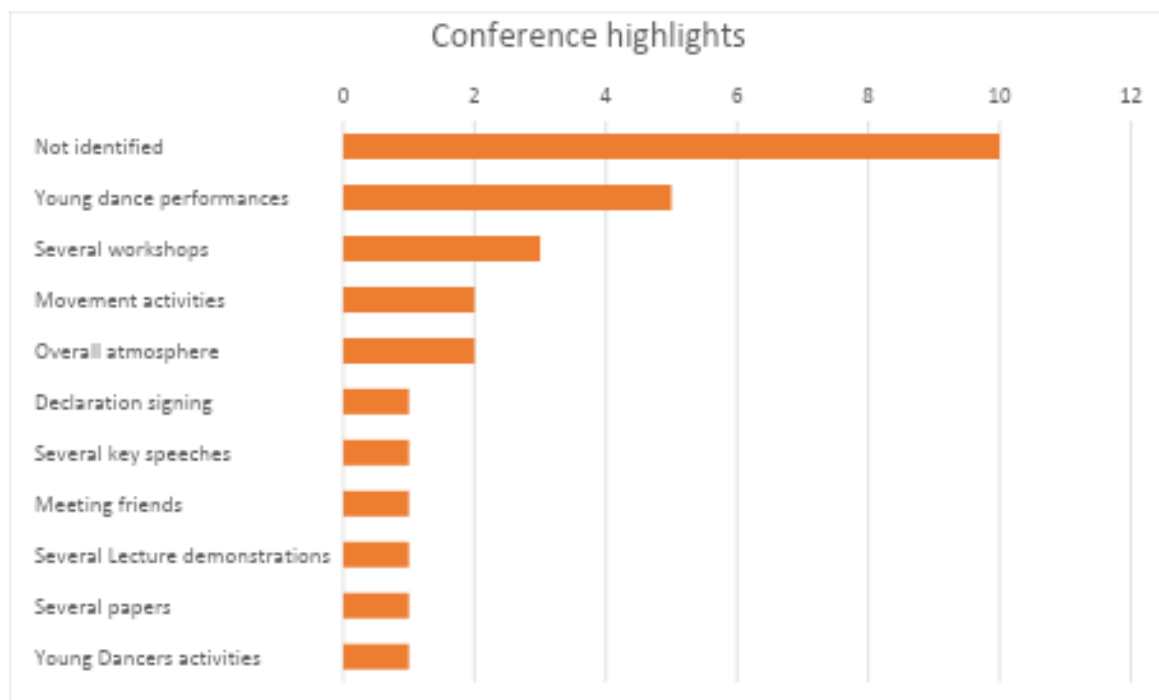
The conference attracts visitors with the opportunity to gain and share content, meet old friends and make new connections.

What did conference participants like the most?

The answers can be divided into two main groups. The first group refers to a broad reply like "Atmosphere" or a programme cluster like "Young Dancers Performances". The second group of replies highlights individual programme units such as xy paper, workshop, keynote speech, etc. We received 157 responses for highlights, as opposed to 56 for downlights presented further in the article, so we can conclude that positive feelings predominate.

Apparently you have liked everything or many things, so at the top of the highlights table is the phrase 'General satisfaction', which includes 'everything', 'all', 'many things' and similar responses. More specific responses show that participants enjoyed watching performances and actively participating in workshops, demonstrations and morning flavours.

Among the individual programme units, you were most impressed by the keynote speeches by Susan Griss and Eeva Antila / Suvi Honkanen.



Conference highlights

15

Susan Griss (key speech, Minds in Motion: Creative Movement as a Language for Learning)

13

Eeva Anttila and Suvi Honkanen (key speech), Embodying Hope through Dance

6

Alfdaniels Mabingo (MW), Indigenous Ugandan dances as archives of knowledge and meaning of being

6

Opening event

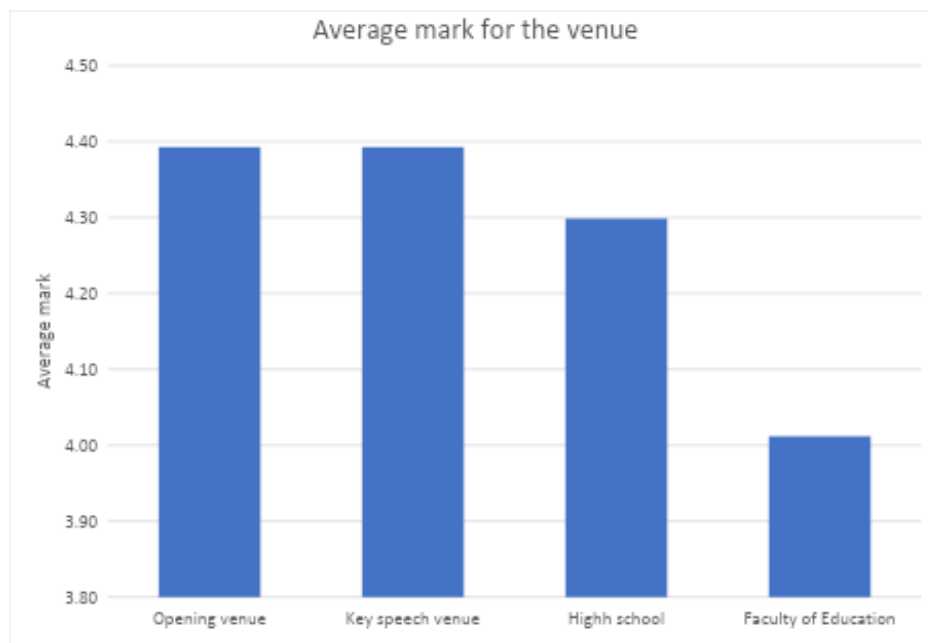
What did conference participants dislike?

We have received 56 valuable feedback responses about shortcomings, difficulties, mistakes you encountered at the conference. You were disturbed the most with "the way of presentation", which means that the concrete program unit was not presented clearly due to the language difficulties or technical shortcomings.

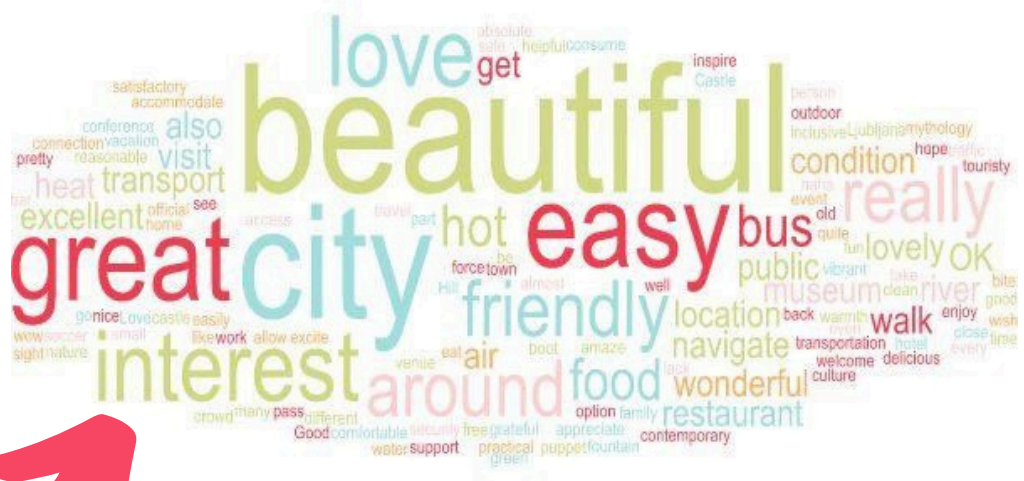
Misleading titles is a very subjective complaint arising from a mismatch between the visitor's expectations based on the title of the session and the actual experience.

Very much objective complaints relate to the conditions of the venue, targeting the lack of air conditioning during the summer heat wave we experienced during the week of the conference. Some venues were too small for the needs of the programme units, such as Morning Flavours and Young Dance Performances.

The average marks for the venues are high and in the expected order.



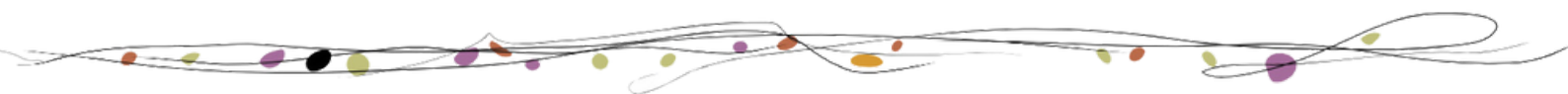
When asked about Ljubljana - the host city however, the best way to find out your attitude towards Ljubljana is to look at the word cloud on your right!



What would you like to repeat on the next conference?

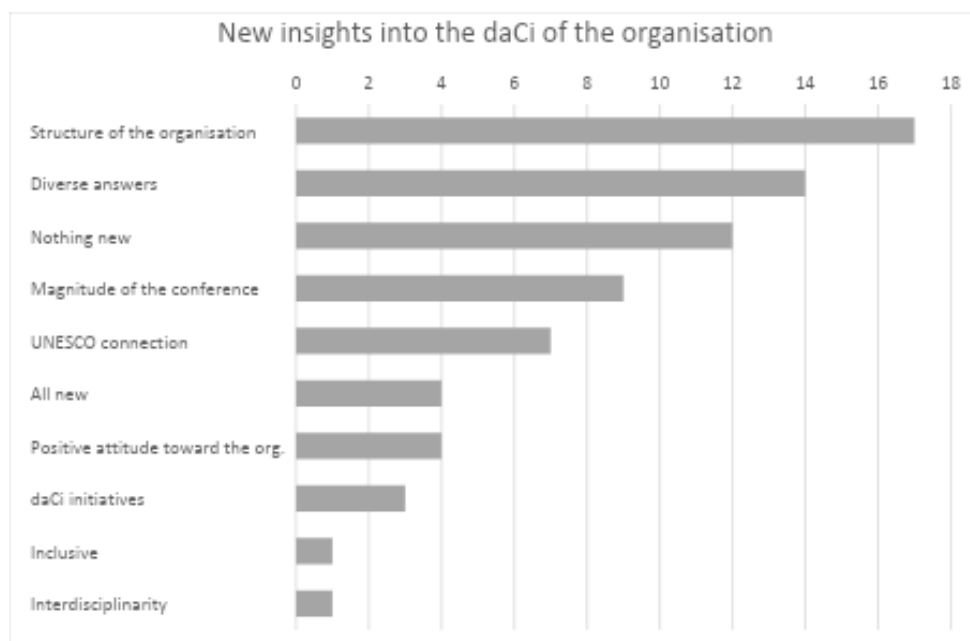
Certainly, young dance performances should remain in the programme and opportunities for participants to move as well. Coffee breaks are highly valued, but not because of the coffee itself, but because it was placed in the heart of the building together with the information desk as an excellent meeting point for non-formal exchange. Other must-haves include a free day and morning flavours, and of course the conference would not be complete without an opening and closing event.

Title	Votes	Title	Votes
Young dancers performances	16	Coffee break / Opening event / Program diversity	7
Workshops	11	Free day / Atmosphere / Morning flavours	6
Everything	9	Closing event / Key speeches / Lecture Demonstrations / Local dance performances	3



Did you learn anything new about the daCi?

The veterans simply enjoyed the event, but many of you learned a lot of new things about daCi. Especially about the structure of the organisation, its relationship with UNESCO and the scale of the conference.



A big thank you
from the organising committee
to everybody who helped and made this
conference a reality!



MALAYSIA 2027

Looking ahead, we are excited about our next conference, which will take place in Malaysia in 2027.



Photos by: Mirjam Lamut

Introduction to the
Malaysia daCi 2027
conference

See video [HERE](#).

daCi
dance and the Child international



Proceedings of the 16th Conference

Proceedings of the 16th Conference: I - Body, I - Dance, Ljubljana.



We invite all those who participated in the conference and presented a paper, a poster or on a panel to submit their work for publication. All papers will be double-blind peer-reviewed by the members of the conference proceedings. The conference proceedings will be published online by the publishing house of the Faculty of Education of the University of Ljubljana.

Proceedings of the 16th Conference

There are two formats for submission:

- an academic research paper with a minimum of 4,000 to a maximum of 5,000 words or
- a shorter good practice lead paper (but not for workshops) with a maximum of 3,000 words.

The announcement with the submission guidelines will be sent to all paper/panel/poster presenters via Brevo daCi email. Therefore, please look out for the daCi emails in December/January. The deadline for submissions of papers is 1 April 2025.

Editors of the conference proceedings: Sue Cheesman, co-editors: Vesna Geršak and Nina Meško.



Photos by Mirjam Lamut

Image by Mirjam Lamut



daCi initiatives announcement

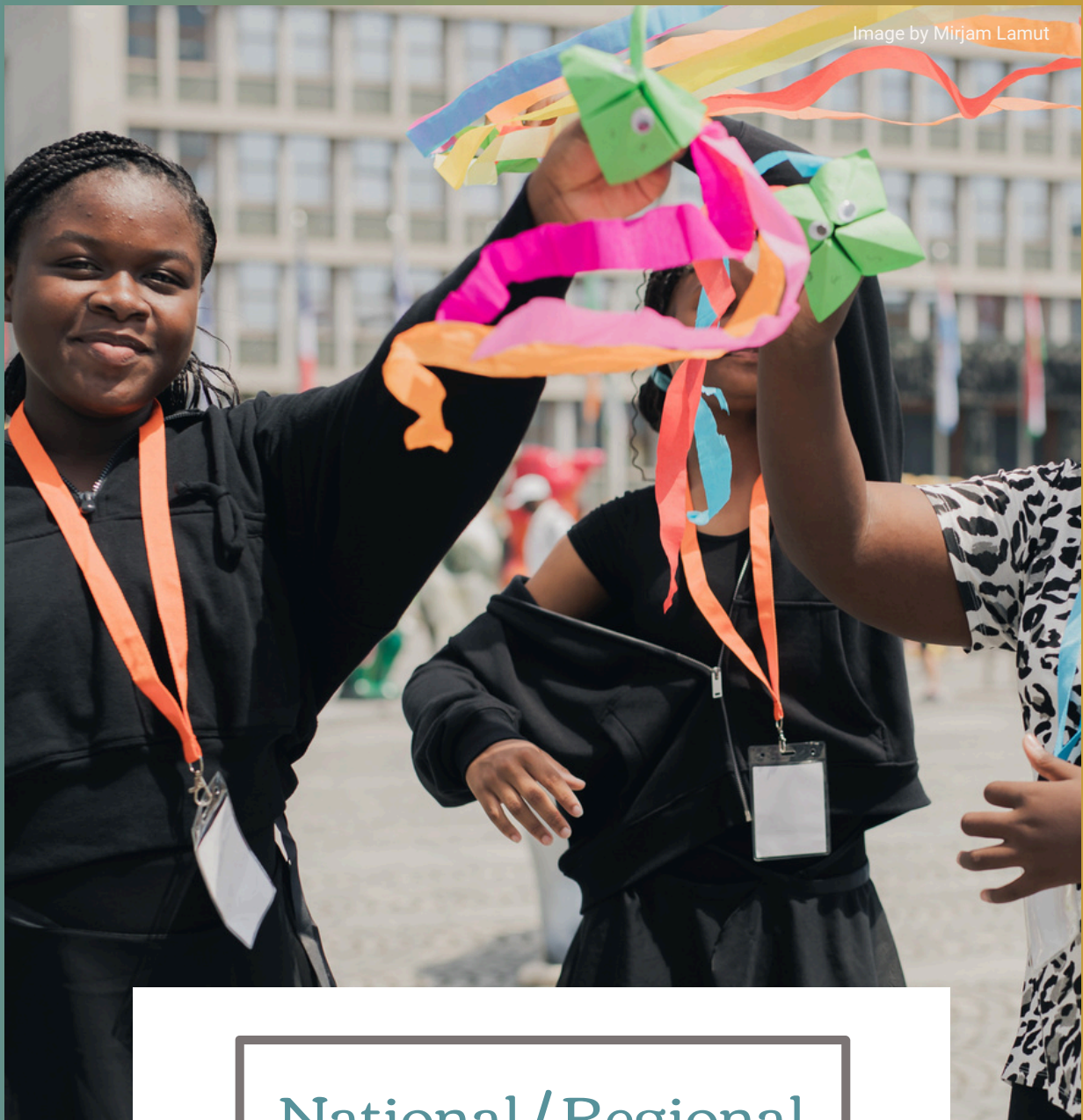
daCi members are encouraged to begin thinking about planning a Twinning, Outreach or Research project for inclusion in the next daCi Conference in Malaysia.

While these committees won't be accepting applications for funding until summer/fall 2025, daCi members are encouraged to begin planning now.

For information on the Twinning, Outreach and Research projects go to [WEBSITE](#) where you'll find the guidelines and application forms plus an example of a Twinning Project, "The Peace Africa Children's Ensemble 2022."

daCi
dance and the Child international

Mary-Elizabeth Manley, Member-at-Large, daCi International



National / Regional representatives changes

We are delighted to introduce the newly appointed daCi National Representatives for **Jamaica** and **Japan**.

These passionate individuals bring fresh perspectives and a shared commitment to promoting dance and arts education worldwide.

Welcome!

daCi Jamaica Election

The daCi Jamaica Representative election was held on August 14, 2024. The newly elected Representative is Sophia McKain. I wish her all the best in her new role.

During my period of leadership, I relentlessly tried to unify daCi Jamaica members, with the hope to have more impact as a body. I did not however, manage to achieve all my primary objectives, but outstanding target achievements are fully available to Ms. McKain. It is hoped that she continues to champion the cause for the organization's growth.

Thank you daCi International, for giving me this platform to help impact the lives of our young people. I had opportunities to come in contact with them, primarily through workshop presentations. These conferences that are held every three years around the world, have enriched the lives of participants, who cherish the activities.

To the friends I have made over the years, I appreciated sharing knowledge and expertise obtained. Slovenia 2024 Conference, was a breath of fresh air after Covid, seeing young people and adults excited to be at physical conferences. I am looking forward to the next conference in 2027.

Love you all and wish the best for daCi organizations around the world.

Regards,

Carolyn Russell-Smith

daCi Jamaica Outgoing National Representative



Image by Mirjam Lamut

Legacy of Mrs. Carolyn Russell-Smith

Mrs. Carolyn Russell-Smith has served as an exemplary ambassador for DACI over the past 15 years, leaving an indelible mark on the organization. Her leadership and dedication have been nothing short of outstanding, as she consistently championed DACI's mission and vision, ensuring that every member was well-informed and actively engaged in the organization's activities.

Throughout her tenure, Carolyn took it upon herself to sensitively and effectively communicate all matters concerning DACI to the members, fostering a strong sense of community and purpose. During the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, when in-person interactions were severely limited, Carolyn's leadership truly shone. She encouraged members to embrace online platforms, facilitating virtual meetings and participation in various activities that kept the spirit of DACI alive and vibrant despite the global challenges.

Beyond her efforts during the pandemic, Carolyn was a strong advocate for international engagement. She actively promoted and encouraged overseas travel to DACI events, recognizing the value of these experiences in broadening horizons and building connections across borders. Her contributions were not limited to logistics; she was also a key figure in making presentations during lecture series, where her insights and expertise left a lasting impact on audiences.

Carolyn's dedication to intellectual and professional development was further demonstrated by her encouragement of publications among members. She offered valuable recommendations, suggested relevant topics for discussion, and provided the necessary support to ensure that members could contribute meaningfully to DACI's body of work.



Photos by: Mirjam Lamut

Her tireless efforts have significantly enhanced DACI Jamaica, opening doors for many and maximizing the potential of both young minds and bodies. Carolyn Russell Smith's unparalleled commitment has made DACI Jamaica a stronger, more dynamic organization, and our gratitude for her contributions cannot be sufficiently expressed. Her legacy will undoubtedly continue to inspire and guide us for years to come.

Monika Lawrence, BSc, Mphil, Ph.D

Japan shift of representative

Ebbe Daigo, the National Representative of the Japan daCi Chapter, has informed us that the Chapter has a new representatives, Mrs Hisayo Sugao and Mrs Chiho AKAGAWA.

Here is the announcement from Ebbe Daigo:

I'm writing this article to let you know that daCi Japan is going to propose Mrs Hisayo SUGAO as the National / Regional Representative of Japan joined by co-representative Mrs Chiho AKAGAWA. This idea came up while working on the discussion for the possibility of daCi 2030 in Japan. Hisayo has worked in Hiroshima for years and has effective leadership skills. She is a lecturer at Elisabeth University of Music. Mrs Chiho AKAGAWA is a Professor at Sapporo International University,

Faculty of Sports and Humanities, CEO and Director at Modern Ballet Studio, Representative of the theatre company MORI NO KAI and a dance therapist.

I've been in this position for about 6-7 years and have learnt a lot from this experience. The people I have met through daCi have been precious and I appreciate all their support.

I have currently moved to Malaysia for my new job and in these circumstances I decided to hand over the role to someone who can work closely with daCi Japan members.

Even after Hisayo became the new National Representative, I still support her in various situations. Especially for the next daCi conference in Malaysia, as I am lucky enough to be in the host country and more than happy to support the local team.



Chiho AKAGAWA



Hisayo SUGAO

Image by Mirjam Lamut

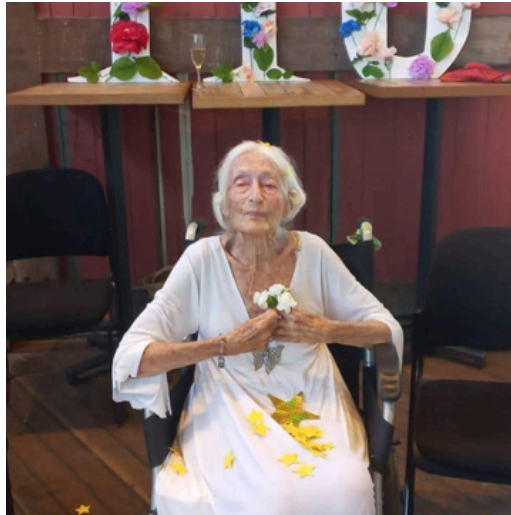


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Vale Eileen Kramer: a tribute

8 November 1914 - 15 November 2024

With sadness, I write following the news that Eileen Kramer passed away peacefully a week after celebrating her 110th birthday at Bangarra Dance Theatre, Sydney.

Dr Maggie Haertsch messaged us to say: Our beloved Eileen has taken her final bow and off on her next adventure. She left the planet today to catch a star. So look at the sky tonight, raise a glass and cheer her on.

Eileen leaves daCi with entrancing memories of her special presence at the daCi/World Dance Alliance congress Panpapanpalya 2018 in Australia, under the themes 'dance, gathering, generations, learning'. Eileen's artistic spirit shone as she led teachers in a stimulating workshop. This was followed by her captivating performance as part of the final creative sharing in Dance Epidemic at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Supported by dancer Patrick Harding-Irmer, Eileen danced seated, elegant and graceful, watched by so many of us. Eileen was a lifelong learner and had never forgotten her memories from the earliest years, urging young daCi dancers to "hold on to your creativity".

daCi South Africa representative Lisa Wilson, shared a fond photograph from that time and daCi Japan representative Hisayo Sugao wrote to say 'news of her passing has once again brought to light the depth of Eileen's extraordinary soul and passion'.

I am so grateful that I grew to know Eileen over the next years as she shared many delightful stories and parts of dances from her time as a Bodenwieser dancer. Eileen was also a choreographer, painter, singer and costume designer, publishing articles and books with inspiring stories conveying her life experiences and influences. A world traveller, living in India, Pakistan, Paris, New York, Lewisburg, Virginia, Eileen returned to her birthplace, Sydney in 2013 aged 99, for "the best years of my life".

I feel bereft as I had so many more questions for this kind and generous wise elder. In her eulogy for Eileen, Cathy Gray so beautifully said:

It has been such a privilege to be able to share even the smallest part of your marathon journey in life. You say you have been lucky. But truly, you have also made your own luck. With your endless curiosity, your cheeky wit, and that antenna of your mind, super-tuned to the absurdity and wonder and beauty and grace of the world. You could see the miraculous in tiny ordinary things as well as vast and magical ones. You have sprinkled your sparkle dust over us in a myriad of ways. You have changed us. You are part of us. And we celebrate you.

Eileen touched so many, telling us that she found joy and expression through dance. Her playful, creative, imaginative and loving spirit endures, and Eileen's star shines on to inspire us with her unwavering energy, exceptional memory and infectious sense of fun for life.

Vale Eileen.

If you have photographs or words to share about meeting Eileen, please contact Goran (goran.pakozdi@daci2024.org).

Visit Eileen-Kramer.com to find out more about Eileen.

Jeff Meiners, December 2024





Thank you for reading the December 2024 Newsletter
from the Executive Committee and National / Regional
Representatives

Executive Committee:

Jeff Meiners (Australia)

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