

## **Follow up conversation on the visitation 2019 of the BA dance and BA dance in education programmes of the Amsterdam University of the Arts.**

In September 2019 the visitation of the Bachelor programmes Dance and Dance in Education of the Academy of Theatre and Dance took place. The full range of ATD Dance study programmes is as diverse as the professional field in the Netherlands and abroad. It offers classical ballet (National Ballet Academy / NBA), contemporary and urban dance (Modern Theatre Dance / MTD, Urban Contemporary / UC and Expanded Contemporary Dance / ECD), choreography (School for New Dance Development / SNDO) and Dance in Education (Docent Dans / DD).

The visitation panel had the purpose to judge the quality of the education and organization thereof. The panel used the NVAO framework for limited programme assessment. The panel visited the school and some performances and held interviews with students, teachers, alumni, representatives of the field, members of the participation councils, the exam committee and the management.

According to the panel both programmes are of very good quality across all standards. Some of the findings of the panel:

- The committee is impressed with the quality of the programme, and would hope to see especially its development-oriented assessment method to become a standard in education
- According to the assessment committee, the professional field is integral to the educational practice and closely interconnected through all manner of ties. Furthermore, the programmes maintain contacts with noted international dance study programmes.
- The study programmes provide ample room for individual choices and thereby give opportunities for deep learning and optimal development of the students.
- The assessment committee established that the Dance in Education students are well-prepared for a wide variety of professional environments and jobs.

The follow up conversation took place on February 1st 2021. Its purpose was to orientate on the possibilities for broadening and strengthening the connections with the local Dutch pupils and workfield. The main question was: *How to connect with pupils from all socio cultural backgrounds in Amsterdam high schools in a structural way?* Present were the chair and one panel member of the 2019 visitation. The ATD domain dance was represented by its artistic directors and the head of education and student wellbeing.

### **Outline of the conversation:**

Apart from the 5 O'Clock Class and the in school preliminary education Ballet Academy, the Domain Dance has (mainly through the NBA) contacts with over 200 amateur schools. Every year, 70 to 80% of 5 OCC pupils who audition for higher vocational dance education find a place on a dance study programme in the Netherlands. The question is how to you get students that don't participate in these preliminary programmes interested in studying at the ATD and specifically for long term commitment to the dance profession.

We already found that getting parents on board is very important. For a broader approach of this challenge, the panel advises to start with identifying preferred key partners and formulate specific goals: which are the aims of your contacts with the high schools? Be aware that spreading too thinly might amount to nothing. By narrowing down you are able to signpost. For parents it is important to see that careers in dance are viable. Try to realize that both in school and in company presences. Make the pupils get in contact with the ATD dancers. That helps pupils to realize that a dancing career is possible. ATD-students will function as a role model. From the in-school projects in which you start with sharing your love for dance, you can scout students for further training.

For broadening the contacts in Amsterdam, the starting point can be the connections of the ATD teachers and staff. Use the contacts you have for internships for the Dance in Education programme. It is also possible to attract attention of kids and youngsters by performing in public spaces, like a skate park or a sports field. Combine that with offering low threshold programmes for a broad range of talents. ATD students can work with these pupils as a part of their own curriculum.

The panel praises the conscious way in which the ATD deals with language matters. Depending on the professional practice of the programme, international students have to learn Dutch. For example the Dance in Education programmes; the students are trained to teach in a Dutch School. In programmes that educate

for a more international programme, the lessons easily switch to English. ATD ensures the teachers have sufficient English proficiency and the students also have to meet minimum requirements, which are laid down in the OER.

The panel members are thanked for their time and this conversation. We would love to continue it in the near future, to share our experiences in sharing the passion for dance with a broader and more diverse groups of pupils and students.