

Summary Elements

Implementation of equity measures for artists and cultural workers who have an immigrant background, or are racialized or Indigenous: Best practices and challenges in the dance community

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Implementation of equity measures for artists and cultural workers who have an immigrant background, or are racialized or Indigenous: Best practices and challenges in the dance community

Table of Contents	3
Introduction	4
<u>1. Conception of Diversity According to the People Interviewed</u>	5
<u>2. Evolution of the Situation</u>	7
<u>3. Government Actions</u>	9
3.1 General findings	9
3.2 Structure of programs and grant applications	11
3.3 Organizations	12
3.4 Diversification of boards of directors (BD), management positions and work teams	13
3.5 Choreographers and artists	14
3.6 Divergent opinions	14
<u>Recommendations for Government Action</u>	16
<u>4. Dance Community</u>	18
4.1 General evaluation	18
4.2 Principles to uphold	19
4.3 Practices	20
4.4 Organizations	21
4.5 Audiences	25
<u>5. Art Schools</u>	26
5.1 Update on the issue	26
5.2 Role of art schools on the issue of diversity	27
5.3 Evaluation of the Teaching Community	27
<u>Recommendations for the Arts Community and Art Schools</u>	33
<u>6. DAM/RQD</u>	36
<u>Recommendations for DAM and the RQD</u>	36
Appendix 1 Cohort	38

INTRODUCTION

This summary report gives an account of a qualitative research on equity measures geared to artists and cultural workers who have an immigrant background or are racialized or Indigenous. This study aims to help improve our understanding of the obstacles to inclusion across the dance sector, but above all – in a context marked, in recent years, by recommendations and new practices advanced by the community, and sustained measures established by funding agencies – to identify promising strategies as well as challenges faced by organizations working to apply these measures.

This study, developed at the request of **Diversité artistique Montréal (DAM)** and the **Regroupement québécois de la danse (RQD)**, was conducted in collaboration with these organizations. It is exploratory and qualitative in nature. A dual data collection strategy was adopted. First, a documentary search was carried out for works and scientific articles on the subject, and for documentation issued by the main funding agencies, including action plans, programs, as well as activity and research reports. Secondly, interviews **(10)** and discussion groups **(2)** were held with **50** actors in the dance and dance teaching community, mainly Montrealers, along with members of the **Diversité artistique Montréal (DAM)** and **Regroupement québécois de la danse (RQD)** teams. Please see the appendix for a more specific description of the cohort.

The research report, available in French online [<https://bit.ly/3sinabL>], contains data on the presentation of the research, its methodology, and the review of specialized works (**see Part 1**). It details the comments collected during interviews, supported by numerous quotations (**see Part 2**). You will also find a bibliography.

In this document, you will find a summary of the essential elements of the research. We hasten to specify that **the research draws on perceptions and real-life experiences shared during interviews with actors in the dance community. Given that this is a qualitative exploratory research study, it cannot be used to generalize their statements, nor can it be deemed to represent all perspectives.**

We also identify the main recommendations arising from their discourse, based on our major lines of questioning: government action, the dance community and the teaching of dance, and the role that the two partner organizations in this study – **Diversité artistique Montréal (DAM)** and the **Regroupement québécois de la danse (RQD)** – must play.

1. Conception of Diversity According to the People Interviewed

What is ethnocultural diversity? Who belongs to that diversity? Who identifies as a person from a diverse ethnocultural background?

« Not everyone positions themselves from a perspective of race... I don't wake up black, I wake up black for other people. »

There was no consensus on these questions among the subjects interviewed, notably people with an immigrant background, recent immigrants, visible minorities, Indigenous communities, or racialized people.

- The notion of diversity, for many, revolves around a broader conception that incorporates various components, including ethnocultural diversity, but also sexual or gender diversity, the fact of living with a disability, and the particularities of bodies, life and dance trajectories, practices, and so on. Funding programs follow the same rationale, by broadening the communities to which they are intended.
- Here, the term “diversity” refers to a centre based upon which we are evaluated, or a standard according to which we are deemed to belong to a minority.
- The inclusion of Indigenous people in marginalized communities offered certain advantages, as it took the form of specific programs and support intended for these people. It is deemed problematic, however, in the sense that it is **colonialist** and **paternalistic**.

Identification related to ethnocultural origins raises the following issues:

- Not positioning oneself in the hierarchy or positioning oneself outside the hierarchy of the country of residence.
- Concerns and suspicion concerning an identification requirement.

There is an ambiguity here: The need to have data related specifically to ethnocultural origin to shed light on that reality and update the logics of domination by opposition to the refusal to be or self-identify in this manner, the complexity of always plural and sometimes shifting identities, and what some perceive as a danger of being identified according to such criteria.

Also emerging from the interviews were different conceptions of what should be done to address issues of disparity across the dance community:

- Positive discrimination: “With equivalent competencies and qualities, we favour...”
- Equity - specifically equal opportunity - which is often placed in opposition to equal rights, a formal justice.
- Evaluation based on quotas.
- True inclusion of diverse artistic practices, to diversify the community.

Most people, during the interview, used the term “systemic racism” without it being mentioned by the research team. Not only did it enter the vocabulary, but the term is used to reflect a reality.

2. Evolution of the Situation

The dance community is deemed to be in flux, that's to say the evaluation of the pace and the issues specific to it is not the same, and its progress is also non-linear and viewed as too slow. Too slow for some, which suggests considerable resistance: **"We have a long way to go"**. For others, this slowness relates to the time it takes for social change to occur and the time required to adapt accordingly: **"A paradigm change takes 20 years"**.

Markers of progress identified:

- The community is increasingly reflexive when it comes to issues of diversity.
- People from an immigrant background or people who are racialized or Indigenous now want to take part in the debate, notably because it has shifted from a discourse of victimization to one of structural inequalities.
- People observe that they are in transformation, either through a reassessment of their position statement and privileges as white people, or through an increased awareness of racism and its influence on their career trajectories as artists or cultural workers, and the desire to act against racism through dance or an action undertaken within the dance community.

Markers of the challenges identified:

- The difficulty in recognizing that racism exists, specifically its systemic character.
- The fragility of gains and the need to remain vigilant, among some people.
- Considerable scepticism concerning the motivations of a majority of actors in the dance community.
- Institutions and people who would take action because they are obliged to do so, or people with problematic biases.
- Identifying as someone who belongs to our ethnocultural diversity involves a process, one that can require time for a recent immigrant.

In comparison with other sectors, art is generally deemed to be at the forefront on issues of racism and diversity, and dance, within the performing arts, is considered highly progressive on such issues.

Various reasons are cited to explain this openness:

- Dance is in “**movement**”.
- Dance has long been characterized by hybrid practices (a characteristic that is even more pronounced in contemporary art), and these practices are often exploratory.

These issues existed, but were not the focus of so much attention, as they are now, nor was the same value placed on them, and nor did they have the same potential for being seen and heard in the public domain.

- Choreographers and dance artists are highly visible on international stages.
- The issue of cultural appropriation was the subject of early debate in the dance community.
- The relative marginality of this community compared to others and the difficult conditions that characterize it make people more open to other realities.

On the other hand, many of the people interviewed believe that there is a marked generational difference on this issue.

The changes that have occurred are associated with several phenomena:

- Demographic transformations
- The evolution of values
- The ethical and social shift undertaken by artistic organizations
- The battles led by people with diverse ethnocultural backgrounds and people from Indigenous communities and their allies
- The actions of major arts funding agencies
- The evolution of dance practices and the criteria adopted by artistic institutions

3. Government Actions

Several people in our cohort do not know about grant programs and cannot say whether their organization uses them. They attest to the need for such programs to have information on this subject consolidated and updated on a regular basis, since (and the review of works on the subject clearly demonstrates this) the programs adapt quickly and considerably to demand, though this does not always trickle down to the community.

3.1 General findings

The benefits of government action identified:

- It sets guidelines for orientations to adopt.
- It supports efforts to lend a greater presence to artists with an immigrant background as well as racialized or Indigenous artists, and it changes the composition of work teams in the dance community.
- Jury members are increasingly aware of the various biases that act to marginalize several artistic practices and artists.
- Increasingly, lending agencies are giving greater consideration to their own biases and the composition of their teams.

However, a minority of the people interviewed stated that lending agencies still lag well behind and do not consider the real needs of people said to belong our “diversity” as well as Indigenous people.

« While the programs can be described along the lines of “variable geometry”, they are still far-reaching and have still contributed a great deal. »

« The information doesn’t circulate at all, regardless of what we say; it doesn’t circulate within institutions, so you can imagine how it is for unilingual Mexican dancers who may or may not speak English... »

The general limitations of government action identified:

- Action in relation to culture occupies a broader context of discrimination, one that includes numerous obstacles and requires considerable energy on the part of groups, creates frustration for artists, and is never considered in the support offered. Examples include the rules imposed on foreign workers, border-crossing restrictions, the complexity and non-translation of websites and forms, etc.

There are plenty of initiatives that ease our collective conscience, but they don't trickle down to the people that need it.

- Governments must stop considering art as a product, i.e., as something whose value depends on its capacity to generate revenue.
- At the CALQ, specifically, more programs should be offered, but its position must be clearer and more engaged on the subject of diversity in art.

➤ **The people interviewed suggested that the government of Québec recognize the existence of systemic racism.**

➤ **Some people also said that the general precarity across the dance community can be an aggravating factor for inequalities and discrimination, while others stated that this difficulty can also be invoked to justify inaction. However, the consensus is that dance sector funding must be increased to better support the transformations that must be carried out.**

« Differences must be considered. What I see, most of the time, is that they lump us all together, even though we don't all share the same problems. »

3.2 Structure of programs and grant applications

- The logic and language of grant applications are quite “academic” and difficult to understand for many [support has been available in the past few years, and it is possible, in certain programs, to apply differently, e.g., by submitting videos]. Application forms remain too long and complex, despite the changes made.
- Under several general programs - not those specifically geared to people said to belong to our diversity and Indigenous people - too few applications are submitted by people with an immigrant background as well as racialized and Indigenous people.
- An in-depth knowledge of Indigenous realities is also a major asset. Thus, each First Nation should receive support from at least one person charged with transmitting the needs of artists to lending agencies and supporting artists with the process.
- Programs should consider the diverse realities specific to people said to belong our diversity and Indigenous people.
- Initiatives related to inclusion and equity must be favoured outside of Montreal.
- Grants in connection with issues of diversity and autochthony are frequently for lower amounts than they are for other grants [though some adjustments were made recently].
- It is difficult for organizations to be responsive, to jump on initiatives owing to grant submission deadlines or delayed response times [an exception to this criticism is made for the CALQ's Re-connaître program geared to Indigenous artists and organizations].
- It is difficult to finance long-standing projects that function well, since new initiatives or projects are favoured.

3.3 Organizations

- Organizations still receive insufficient support from lending agencies for their transitions and for implementing transformations linked to equity.
- The accountability required does not make it possible to assess the results of the action undertaken [quantifying the results is a growing concern].
- According to some people, dance performance venues should receive more support so that they can offer more opportunities to artists said to belong our diversity and to Indigenous artists.
- The Indigenous dance artists interviewed dream of having their own creative space. This would allow them to consolidate an Indigenous dance community and provide a place conducive to sharing and creation.

« Grants are required to implement systems, hire human resources consultants, and make changes. »

3.4 Diversification of boards of directors (BD), management positions and work teams

Arts councils should offer trainings and tools on best practices in diversity.

Programs must be developed in support of staffing and newly hired employees. Indeed, this is where the needs are most pressing. [Existing programs, such as DémArt (CAM), Prime et Subvention salariale (ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale) are deemed insufficient]. Proactive organizations should receive more funding, according to some people, and "bonuses" should be awarded to truly diverse work teams.

Time should be set aside and means should be made available to promote the continuing professional training of work teams.

Grant amounts are not sufficient to offer attractive working conditions to artists and cultural workers said to belong our diversity and to Indigenous communities.

Supports aimed at supervising stagiaires with an immigrant background or stagiaires who are racialized or Indigenous should be improved. [In certain cases, the salary grant from the ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale meets this objective].

According to some people, more resources should be dedicated to promoting occupations related to culture and the arts, notably among people with an immigrant background as well as racialized and Indigenous people, through advertising campaigns, tours in schools, day camps, etc.

3.5 Choreographers and artists

- Cumbersome procedures applicable to receiving international artists should be simplified. The same is true for the reception of dancers who are not as integrated into the dance community (training/supervision).
- Rules must be reviewed, as it is difficult for dance students from other countries to reach the number of hours required to change their status should they wish to stay and work in Québec after completing their studies.
- Support formats must be developed for artists with an immigrant background as well as racialized and Indigenous artists, including artistic formats, on the one hand, and formats related to career development and the financial means to benefit from them.
- Support should be available for drafting grants applications [this tends to be generalized in funders' practices].
- Assistance with logistical aspects and studio rentals is required, for example, in the form of a percentage of the creation grants received.

3.6 Divergent opinions

- The people interviewed do not agree on the rules that should govern the sharing of resources from funders, since the **“pie is small”** and is not getting much bigger. Several people see a **“dispersion”** of funds, and debate is required on several fronts. Organizations of what size should be favoured? Old or new? To what extent should eligibility be expanded to include other dance styles? What professionalization criteria should be adopted (training, experience, etc.)?
- There is no consensus on whether funders should encourage or even require dance organizations to act on issues of diversity. Elements in favour of such action are that government action forces organizations to act on this issue, be more transparent about the measures that are taken, and ultimately ensure that they have a concrete effect. The elements against are similar to those described below.
- There is even less consensus as to the use of positive discrimination and quotas as strategies.

« Action must not be taken solely to meet quotas but should stem from a deeply held conviction. »

People who are against it advance arguments along various lines. Some express their disagreement with the strategy:

- It is not the appropriate motivation for action.

- It puts people from an immigrant background as well as racialized and Indigenous people “in a box”, and some do not want their grants

and recognition to be based on these criteria.

- Such measures can provoke an “**imposter syndrome**” among people said to belong to our diversity as well as Indigenous people.

Other arguments attest to a resistance to change:

- Positive discrimination measures generate “exclusion”.
- They give rise to situations where the reception of people with an immigrant background and of racialized and Indigenous people within organizations is difficult and inadequate for them.
- They can also affect the quality of the work presented and the “**authenticity**” of works. [In response to this argument, other people

say that positive discrimination embodies a clear principle of “**equal competence**”; as a result, they do not understand the concern over a loss of quality].

- People in favour of positive discrimination measures maintain that they are required for as long as it takes to eliminate inequities, and that other contexts prove their effectiveness, i.e., parity between men and women. It is also a way to “**close the gaps**”.

« It’s really a delicate subject, one that provokes reactions, but if the status quo were egalitarian, there wouldn’t be a need for quotas. I think it’s a necessary, but temporary policy, therefore. »



Recommendations for Government Action

1. The Québec government should recognize the existence of systemic racism.
2. Funding for organizations and artists should be increased and funds should make it possible to act on precarity and its effects across the dance community, notably by hiring and supporting artists and cultural workers with an immigrant background as well as racialized and Indigenous artists and cultural workers - particularly in management positions - and ensuring their integration.
3. Arts councils should continue to be proactive on the issue and to develop measures to finance the costs and the time investment for organizations and schools so as to compensate for deficiencies in the broader social context: Procedural requirements related to the reception of artists from abroad, the greater need for training for newly arrived artists who are not familiar with the community, the need for original and targeted strategies that help certain communities gain a better knowledge of the dance training available, etc.
4. Financial and training/supervision measures must be created to help organizations and schools implement the required changes, including freeing up the time and the resources needed to plan and implement them.
5. The Observatoire de la culture et des communications (OCCQ) and arts councils should make a joint effort to produce and disseminate a statistical portrait of the employment conditions across the dance community and the presence, based on various categories of positions, of people with an immigrant background or people who are racialized or Indigenous.
6. Programs must do more to consider the wide-ranging realities within diverse ethnocultural and Indigenous communities.
7. Each First Nation should be able to benefit from a resource person from their community who helps artists and organizations draft and manage grant applications (including accounting).
8. A creative space should be created and funded for Indigenous dance artists.
9. It should be possible to finance information campaigns and initiatives in elementary and high schools or in places frequented by youth in order to promote the discovery of dance, its trainings and opportunities.
10. Efforts should be made to raise awareness among juries to better represent artists with an immigrant background as well as racialized and Indigenous artists.
11. Grant application forms must be greatly simplified.
12. Arts councils should further diversify their teams, particularly in management positions.

4. Dance Community

4.1 General evaluation

- The dance community must step up its efforts to mobilize around issues of diversity and autochthony, work better in concert, and promote greater solidarity.
- We observed that there are no interdisciplinary actions related to diversity between various groups across the arts community.
- According to the people interviewed, while the arts community guarantees formal equality, it does not succeed in being equitable for people with an immigrant background as well as racialized and Indigenous people.
- The various organizations are not at the same stage of reflection and transformation: For some, the issue of diversity is **“in their DNA”**, whereas others have made good progress, though some feel ill-equipped or are still resistant.
- The transformation of the community is demanding for the people concerned, as its impacts hit close to home on a daily basis. It becomes a weight, for some: Obligations to take a position, over-solicitation, a discrepancy between the efforts and the time invested and the results achieved. The non-sustainability of awareness initiatives and actions is also exhausting and demotivating. Concerted action is presented as a solution: for example, sharing resources between organizations, or agreeing not to present the same type of workshops at the same time.
- The people interviewed have observed advances, specifically when it comes to ensuring that artists with immigrant backgrounds as well as racialized or Indigenous artists have opportunities to invest in the community: More artists, more non-standard practices, better visibility on several stages. Several issues remain, however: It is often the same artists who are visible; the community, at least in certain sectors, is still elitist and white, and it remains extremely difficult for newly arrived artists in Québec to present their work.
- To this day, no big dance companies have emerged from our ethnocultural diversity. The people interviewed identified hierarchies in the dance community, which do not facilitate change: The big presenters don't move enough, major institutions and seminal companies receive the most support under the current system, and groups outside of Montreal have fewer resources and opportunities to welcome artists said to belong our diversity as well as artists from Indigenous communities.

I would say that efforts in relation to diversity and inclusion should not necessarily be perceived as challenges that play a constraining role in our main *raison d'être*, but rather as something that will further enrich it and help us succeed in that regard.

« I find the spotlight on diversity tiring, because as I jokingly say, we were never asked what we think, then suddenly, within a year, everyone wants to know what we're thinking. »

4.2 Principles to uphold

- Almost unanimously, the people interviewed uphold two main principles of diversification within the community: A major effort to bring about decentralization/ de-hierarchization, and the implementation of a more collective way of learning and doing together. Those who are from Indigenous communities insist on the idea of better listening in a bid to find common ground: “Hearing each other”.
- Show a willingness to change, which requires reflexivity, and to ask questions, and call the status quo into question. For some, people in the majority must also be aware of their position and privileges.
- Most people think that it is necessary to work “with” people said to belong to our diversity as well as Indigenous people, and not try to substitute for them. In certain contexts, or for some people, “the by and the for” is also a fundamental principal, and it must be applied primarily by and for the people concerned.

In relational terms, the people interviewed propose to:

- speak for themselves and not on behalf of others.
- accept to decentre themselves from their own experience.
- be proactive when meeting others.
- ensure that they have a diversified team and networks, which makes it possible to consider new practices and better adapt to specific contexts when there is listening and mutual influence.

In terms of management, it was suggested that:

- actions be consistent.
- choices be explained.
- time be set aside to achieve the desired transformations and act with consistency.
- actions be taken across all the organization's component parts.
- reception conditions for people said to belong to our ethnocultural diversity be monitored for transparency, accessibility, openness to criticism, attention on not instrumentalizing and using people for marketing purposes, etc.

4.3 Practices

- ▶ The people interviewed observed a certain decompartmentalization in the definitions of and the borders between different dance worlds, along with a greater openness to a diversity of practices—detectable with urban dances as well as dances by Indigenous artists, people said to belong to our diversity, and people living with a disability. However, some sectors remain niches and are more “closed”. This is particularly true of classical dance, according to many, and even then, things have begun to change.

◀◀ In my experience, the doors are not open to new immigrants. [They are only open to people from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds who have learned, over time, to navigate the system, because they have already integrated it. ▶▶

- ▶ **Still, it is necessary to continue reviewing the definition of contemporary dance to ensure that it includes dance styles that have been excluded to date.** Other than the definition itself and the access to funding, stages and recognition that it allows, the people interviewed identified elements that render the redefinition of the dance sector more complex:
 - A generational issue in the attachment to current criteria: The latter were proof of “**excellence**”, as were the tools implemented during the difficult fight to have contemporary art recognized.
 - According to some, the review of criteria renders quality criteria and the limits of the professional field too vague, while for others, in contrast, it allows new forms of dance and artists to access the means to create and professionalize.
- ▶ The professional community and audiences assume that there is a strong correlation between a person’s ethnic origin and their artistic practice. Labels are attached to the practice, and assessments are made according to what is expected, for example from an Indigenous artist and whether the latter is “too” Indigenous or “not Indigenous enough”. In addition, the cultural representation underlying the judgment made is often biased, reductive, and sometimes clearly racist.
- ▶ According to the people interviewed, it is not rare to see Indigenous artists reproached for their cultural hybridism, which informs the creation of their art. They are often “**stuck in the past**” and denied contemporaneity. Many Indigenous artists also have a different conception of creation, one that is in contradiction to the system, such as it operates, particularly when it comes to considering their community.

4.4 Organizations

« Efforts to bring about change give rise to a great deal of emotion, in fact. »

Mission, planning and changes

- The issue of diversity must be included in mandates or strategic plans for purposes of planning and freeing up time and resources. Conversely, the measures to put in place become more time-consuming and seem much more complicated than they are.
- General regulations are required (or must be reviewed) to favour better inclusion.
- The expectation is that changes will not be brought about without certain difficulties, including internal disagreements, reactions from long-standing allies (artists, member groups, philanthropists, etc.), even audiences.

The following solutions have been proposed: Coaching, access to training tools, sharing experiences and expertise, and the ability to benefit from resources (financial and human) so that there is time to do things the right way, without adding to workloads. It was suggested that Compétence culture develop training geared specifically to cultural administrators [since 2022, the RQD has offered a training activity entitled *Comprendre les enjeux de l'inclusion et de l'appropriation culturelle dans les arts* (Understanding issues of inclusion and cultural appropriation in the arts). It is also essential to establish indicators and times for evaluating the actions taken.

Adaptability of premises

Organizations and their studios are not always easily adaptable to certain requests, and this is even more true for requests from people living with a disability.

Internal actors with organizations

IN GENERAL

➤ For members of the organization who do not have an immigrant background or members who are racialized or Indigenous, the reflection can also be emotional and demanding. For some, it is difficult to navigate between errors made in good faith, reproaches and self-criticism.

➤ There are two tensions, perceptible in the discourse of the people interviewed:
(1) Between an exasperation with what is referred to as white fragility and the idea that, for there to be a conversation, white people must also have the space and the confidence to ask their questions and express their resistance and opinions.
(2) Between the importance of taking the initiative to better know and understand, and that of consulting people in communities in order to improve the organization's practices.

➤ It was suggested that team confidence and mutual recognition should be fostered to allow all the people present to reflect upon their biases and carry out discussions that can be difficult.

MANAGEMENT

➤ These are positions where the situation is least advanced, according to the members of our cohort. There is very little equity, and that's where community resistance is highest.

➤ As potential solutions, the management of the organization clearly must initiate or support action in favour of diversity. As well, it must develop and sustain real forms of power-sharing. The following examples of effective strategies were given:

- While having a clear organizational chart, people who perform a variety of duties help de-hierarchize and favour multiple contributions.
- Appoint a person to represent dancers.
- Share decision-making power related to programming through the creation of diversified selection committees.
- Establish a curatorial team rather than a single person.
- Establish co-director positions.

It is important, however, to avoid power-sharing across multiple advisory committees or in areas where there is no real power.

When it comes to ethnocultural equity, I get the impression that it is non-existent [in] positions of power. There is little or no equity.

EMPLOYEES

➤ The Indigenous people, people with an immigrant background and racialized people interviewed spoke about various experiences with racism. The arts community, they asserted, is incapable of offering employees an environment free of racism. There are disparities in salary, their competencies are regularly called into question, and people they meet for the first time are not inclined to believe that they hold positions of power.

➤ Recruiting Indigenous people or people said to belong to our diversity is difficult on all levels, but even more so for cultural workers when management and administrative positions are at issue.

➤ In addition, some recent immigrants or people whose life experience has been or remains difficult are calling for more training and oversight, and this can have an impact on the work team.

➤ The people interviewed suggested **a few strategies** for mitigating these difficulties:

- Establish a hiring policy that is sensitive to issues of diversity.
- Include an anti-discrimination message in job offers.
- Offer flexibility in schedules and other working conditions to accommodate certain employees.
- Directly solicit Indigenous people

as well as people with an immigrant background and racialized people.

- Recognize prior schooling and experience acquired in other countries.
- Act as a place of awareness-raising for all workers, both in terms of the work itself and in discussion and paid training spaces.

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS AND OTHER BODIES

➤ It is difficult for several organizations to have joint bodies.

➤ Also noted was the presence of tensions: BDs that require diversification, which management does not want to follow or, conversely, managers or employees who feel that the BD is resistant to change.

« We don't always reach a ratio that is representative of our society. »

MEMBERS/PARTICIPANTS/ARTISTS - PEOPLE TO WHOM THE ORGANIZATION OFFERS SERVICES OR WITH WHOM IT HAS CLOSE TIES

➤ The people interviewed favour the creation of lasting ties, where possible.

➤ Regarding admission conditions and other regulations, the interviews generated the following suggestions:

- Adapt residencies to make them accessible to young artists.
- Consider varied experiences, ranging from dance schools to nightclubs.
- Allow self-taught people to access technical classes.
- Consult people so that courses and workshops are offered at convenient times.
- Offer affordable rates.

➤ Regarding strategies used to recruit artists and participants and to attract audiences, the following suggestions were made:

- Draw on different networks of people working within the organization.
- Create a list of contact and resource people.
- Establish direct contact with key people in communities through a resource person or someone with close ties to it.
- Deploy efforts to ensure that people with an immigrant background as well as racialized and Indigenous people respond to calls for projects.

➤ On the subject of consulting people with close ties to the organization and proposing support measures, the following suggestions were made:

- Hold discussion groups to see how the organization can better support its members and adapt its halls and equipment.
- Establish a known dancer remuneration policy.
- Offer show opportunities to dancers with less experience to contribute to their training.
- Offer administrative support that continues when dancers leave the organization **“to help them get started on the right foot”**.
- Provide closer support to artists, particularly when they come from abroad or encounter difficulties with the language related to extra-artistic issues (e.g., immigration, taxes, etc.).

Communications

- Communications in connection with issues of diversity or with Indigenous communities are, for many, complex, sensitive and delicate. A person working in communications tells of feeling “**hypervigilant**” and “**illegitimate**”. To counteract this stress, the suggestion is that careful consideration be given to the organization’s communications (with special attention on word choices) and that it should always be possible to justify them and consult colleagues to ensure that they understand the message.
- **Attitudes to avoid were identified:**
 - **Acting with opportunism and tokenism.**
 - **Cultural appropriation**
 - **Talking a good line not rooted in concrete and real actions.**
 - **Communications tools that do not represent or that inadequately represent Indigenous people as well as people with an immigrant background or racialized people.**
- For some people, organizations must adopt bilingual communications linked to communities (notably Indigenous communities) when there are collaborations or closer ties are desired.
- There is also a debate around policy positions adopted by organizations. Between **(1)** the adoption of a clear position; **(2)** positioning in terms of the selection of works and artists rather than the expression of opinions; or **(3)** the fact of not expressing oneself in the public space, but acting internally, so that there is no consensus on the legitimate or appropriate way to demonstrate the organization’s values.

4.5 Audiences

According to the people interviewed, the most regular audiences for dance are white and privileged. What’s more, the limited pool of spectators serves to inhibit risk-taking, with the result that audiences are not exposed to new practices.

Several potential solutions were proposed:

- Diversify shows to help attract new audiences.
- Offer artistic education work that is less Eurocentric, and place greater emphasis on cultural mediation in the case of shows that stray from the usual offer, with support from the dance company, if necessary.

- Directly solicit specific communities when a show may appeal to them.
- Create a specific position for liaising with communities.
- Offer mixed programming (featuring well-known and relatively unknown artists) to help the latter develop audiences.

5. Art schools

5.1 Update on the issue

- Evaluations differed among the people interviewed, depending on the teaching environment. At Cégep and at the university, the belief is that the situation has evolved, with a strong awareness and actions that are well underway. Some professional and recreation schools also included this issue in their strategic or action plans: for some, it is a priority, while others do not hold the same view.
- Classical ballet is also the style where it is most difficult to bring about change.
- Some pointed to the fact that the community requires a bachelor's degree in dance, saying that this requirement is no longer in step with best practices for learning certain styles from mentors or through masterclasses.

« [There is a sense of] momentum right now, where people feel a sense of agency and a capacity to take action. »

5.2 Role of art schools on the issue of diversity

It's the demand and the teaching capacity to adapt to individuals.

- Artschoolsmustreflectsocietyandtheevolutionofpractices.The same diversity that exists in the dance community - of dancers, choreographers and other actors - should also be reflected in the schools themselves, in the dances and the cohorts studied, whether that diversity is ethnocultural, sexual or gender-related, or related to disabilities, body differences, or atypical trajectories and styles.
- Schools are responsible for respecting plural identity development among their students and supporting the way that it manifests itself in the practice and analysis of dance.
- Their role is crucial, as they are the training ground for tomorrow's dancers and art teachers.
- They make a significant contribution to the discourse on art (history, conventions, hierarchical divisions, etc.) and the codes of excellence for gaining recognition from the community and securing funding.

5.3 Evaluation of the Teaching Community

Positions to advance

- Positions deemed essential for further diversifying the dance teaching community are as follows: openness, decentralization, the right to make mistakes, the desire to get informed and learn, staying humble and reflecting upon “**reflexes**”.
- Also proposed was the idea of better articulating the tension between a “safe space” and a “brave space”, since the arts constitute a difficult environment, and it is up to schools to prepare their students for this reality, at least in professional training programs. In addition, students don't learn enough about the realities specific to this community, leaving them ill-prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

Educational techniques

- According to the people interviewed, educational approaches must be adapted, as much as possible, to the uniqueness of students, and de-hierarchized. This idea is based on conflicting observations. We are in the presence of a community that is quite hierarchical, with a disciplinary structure that remains rigid, and a lack of recognition of diversified styles of practice. Many deem training to be “elitist” and marked by classical teaching whereby the “**master transmits knowledge**”.
- Dance students from different communities, notably Indigenous communities, do not always promote themselves, as there aren’t necessarily any spaces for this kind of affirmation.
- The gains made in recent years must be consolidated:

- For teachers, the focus must shift to learning “from” and “with” others.
- Pay attention to the vocabulary used.
- Encourage students to express themselves, consider their viewpoints and suggestions, and create conditions conducive to a safe environment where discussion can thrive.
- Strive to empower students and recognize different abilities.
- Invite artists and other specialists who belong to our diversity or Indigenous communities.
- Review the texts that are taught.
- Use the Universal Design for Learning - UDL¹.

1. See <https://institutedi2.ulaval.ca/centre-ressources/lignes-directrices-sur-la-conception-universelle-de-lapprentissage-universal-design-for-learning-udl-texte-integral/>.

Canons

- In keeping with the demands of students, at least in post-secondary schools, several of the people interviewed expressed an interest in seeing their schools integrate more dance styles—to discuss, study and teach them. Also mentioned was that teaching urban dances addresses the separate issue of recruiting boys.
- It was suggested that new courses be created, such as a course on “inclusive perspectives in dance”.

Students, increasingly, are activists and are demanding to see more than just the seminal works.

Training of teachers and joint activities

- Teachers and other actors in schools receive no training on many issues related to diversity and Indigenous communities. Continuing professional training must be offered in these areas. More delicate topics must also be subject to roundtables, trainings and debates.
- Closer ties must be fostered between the different actors in the community, and a broader logic of collaboration must be promoted.

Support for student initiatives and productions

- Highlight the excellence of work by students or graduates said to belong to our diversity or Indigenous students and graduates so that others recognize themselves and know that this occupation is open to them.

Some elements concern post-secondary studies, to a greater extent, particularly university studies.
- Work in concert with students and support initiatives arising, specifically, from their involvement in student associations and departmental activities.
- In graduate studies, works by students also help advance knowledge and perspectives on the issue.
- In some universities, students created an anti-racism committee.

« Make more room for the younger generation of students, who are catalysts for change. »

Foster ties within the community and with others

- In post-secondary schools, there is very little collaboration between different artistic disciplines.
- Regarding regional dynamics, dance schools receive little support, compared to other types of dance organizations, like those that offer direct assistance to Indigenous people, people with an immigrant background or racialized people. It would be interesting, therefore, to go through the latter organizations to reach people and offer them the right artistic activities.
- The people interviewed stated that it is necessary to increase exchanges and collaborations between various institutional actors in dance:
 - Create more bridges between different schools and professional environments.
 - Foster ties with urban dance communities.
 - Promote greater contact between Montreal, Québec and the regions.
 - Stop working in silos and mutualize resources.

They also suggested that a guide to best practices and inspiring examples be created and updated regularly.

Promotion/admission/visibility in the public space

- Admission procedures in art schools are difficult for everyone, but even more so for people said to belong to our diversity or for Indigenous communities. Traditional constraints related to class, ethnocultural origin and income are still commonplace.
- This requires that we consolidate and review the way things are done to promote the admission of people whose training trajectory is not classical:
 - Rethink the way that auditions are held to emphasize talent rather than the career trajectory up to the time of auditioning.
 - Review the prerequisites for new immigrants and do more to recognize

Auditions were changed, as we were depriving ourselves of talent [...] Now we're open to raw talent.

training completed in other countries and contexts.

- Enrich the cohorts through the admission of foreign students.
- Create special reception programs (e.g., in Cégep, Tremplin Dek for people from the Inuit community).

All the people interviewed rejected the idea of awarding specific grants tied to the ethnocultural origin of students.

- It is more difficult for some first-generation immigrants to choose a career in the arts, as it is not something that some parents encourage, out of a concern with consolidating the family heritage. Indigenous people, people with an immigrant background or racialized people also have few examples to draw from when they try to picture themselves in the dance community.
- In general, too little is known about the dance community and its requirements.
- The classical model for integrating the dance community (start at a very young age and audition to become a dancer with a large company at age 16 and 17) acts as an impediment for many people, even though things have begun to change.
- **Certain initiatives were proposed:**
 - Showcase diversity in all its forms in promotions.
 - Present examples of people who have chosen an occupation in the arts and hold mediation activities for youth with the aim of demystifying the arts.
 - Find ways to better promote arts-related careers in high schools, e.g., for a post-secondary department, offer dance classes in high schools.
 - Share a list of possible career outlets after the completion of training in dance.
 - Develop specific promotional tools for certain communities, notably Indigenous communities, to show that there is a place for them in dance.
 - Do more to promote the well-being associated with learning to dance, and promote studies on the impacts of art.

◀◀ **Change the perception of dance. Greater emphasis should be placed on the notion that dance promotes well-being among those who practice it. Pique peoples' curiosity about our practices. Show that dance is a feel-good activity.** ▶▶

ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

On an organizational level, the data collected are similar enough to the dance community in general.

Desire for clearer institutional rules, while remaining flexible, given that we are close to the base, to people.

- The people interviewed said that very few means are put in place in dance schools - particularly outside the post-secondary circuit - to act on issues of inclusivity and counter inequities. It was suggested that this issue be placed front and centre in strategic plans at various schools and that a person be hired, at least in the largest schools, to act as a promoter and mediator in this regard.
- Schools encounter difficulties in hiring staff said to belong to our diversity as well as staff from Indigenous communities. This is even more true at the regional level and in management positions. A few people suggested the adoption of positive discrimination measures in relation to employment.
- Parity on boards of directors is an issue in several schools, as is ensuring better power-sharing in decision-making positions.
- Changing an organizational culture takes time, requires training, and can be met with resistance. It was suggested that adaptable policies be adopted, based on circumstances, and that a tension be maintained between an openness to the needs and suggestions of the “**student base**” and a certain formalization of the most effective measures (fluidity and sustainability).
- In terms of government support, the people interviewed stated that there was little data on the issue of ethnocultural diversity in schools, particularly in dance schools, and very few concrete support measures. It would also be important to support networking opportunities in connection with this issue, e.g., the “Fais ta valise” project geared to schools in disadvantaged communities.

Recommendations for the Arts Community and Art Schools

1. Transformations undertaken by organizations and schools must be led by management, set out in action plans, and evaluated through precise measures established ahead of time. Orientations must be linked to clear objectives and predetermined ways of meeting them to ensure internal buy-in.
2. Agree to experiment while providing the means required for experimentation.
3. Develop communications tools for purposes of disseminating inclusion-related knowledge internally (best practices, issues, errors, solutions tried, etc.).
4. Pay special attention to building relationships of trust and promote mutual recognition within work teams and with people who have a relationship to the organization or school based on proximity, as changes are not easy to implement and can give rise to friction or even conflict. The dissemination of information is essential. Consultations or mixed advisory committees may be required (employees with various profiles and external people).
5. The organization and school ecosystems must also play an integral part in the reflection (artists, curators, partners, audiences, etc.).
6. Community organizations and schools must change the way they operate to promote de-hierarchization, cooperation and power-sharing, with special attention on Eurocentric and racist biases.
7. Trainings in schools must be less hierarchized and teachers should showcase the contributions of students and other actors in the community: learning within a more collective dynamic, “from and with others”.
8. Ensure continuing professional training for the entire work team and the members of the BD and other committees on issues related to diversity and autochthony.
9. To promote the more equitable presence of people with an immigrant background as well as racialized and Indigenous people, remove obstacles to hiring them (e.g., the non-recognition of prior training completed abroad and outside the usual circuits), show flexibility, and ensure that once hired, these people are not subject to discrimination. Steps should also be taken to ensure their presence across all structures and committees within the organization and the school, particularly in positions of power.
10. Diversify the profile of dancers admitted to schools – which requires changing the admission criteria and audition forms – and ensure that courses and trainings reflect this diversity.

11. Oversee the reception conditions for people said to belong to our diversity and for Indigenous people: transparency, accessibility, openness to criticism and adaptability, attention not to instrumentalize people and use them as marketing tools, etc.
12. Develop initiatives, practices, and relations with new people and communities overtime and do not require involvement on the part of people with an immigrant background, racialized or Indigenous people who do not help bring about concrete changes. The presence of a position dedicated to the development and consolidation of ties with certain communities is an asset that can serve to develop more in-depth knowledge and sustain the ties established. It is often appropriate, as well, to develop special projects “with” them and through which they have the means and the power to assert their needs and perspectives.
13. Review the criteria and formats specific to programs, services, residencies, trainings or activities offered to ensure that they don’t exclude people who should be able to benefit from them. Establish rate policies that account for unique needs.
14. Continue working to ensure the equitable presence of artists with an immigrant background as well as racialized or Indigenous artists within organizations and shows, by paying special attention to new immigrants and Indigenous people who encounter specific difficulties.
15. Diversify and adapt shows, activities, cultural mediations and communications by reflecting upon accessibility, specifically as it pertains to language and content.
16. Review the classical definitions of dance, particularly modern and contemporary dance, and the criteria defining the limits of the professional field. Make sure that schools do their part to review the history of the discipline, its conventions and hierarchies, and encourage them to include a broader diversity of artists and dances in their study programs.
17. For certain styles of dance, recognize the relevance of trainings that differ from that which is offered in the bachelor’s program in dance, for example through mentors and masterclasses.
18. Take steps to better train the people responsible for communications on issues of diversity and autochthony and give careful consideration to the positioning of the organization or school in this regard by ensuring a consistency between the discourse and the actions taken and the fair representation of people with an immigrant background as well as racialized and Indigenous people.

6. DAM/RQD

➤ What is expected of the two organizations:

- They should be consistent, both internally and externally, in order to lead by example.
- They should continue their political representations in connection with diversity and autochthony with the goal of offering new programs and resources.
- They should make an effort to convince other communities, including across the private sector.
- They should play a key role in networking, training and supporting organizations across the community.
- They should take steps to spur more collective and sustained action on the issue, notably by encouraging various arts-related sectors and organizations to take joint action.

Recommendations for DAM and the RQD

- 1.** In the dance community, lead a collective reflection aimed at better developing a shared vision of the orientations and actions to implement, without avoiding the prickliest issues and considering the disparities between the different institutions, areas of action, regions, etc., as well as differences in values, including generational values. It is vital to include dance teaching communities in this reflection.
- 2.** Lead a reflection on broadening the representation of diversity (i.e., ethnocultural, sexual and gender diversity, body diversity, diversity of life and dance trajectories, of practices, and of people with a disability) and the related actions to undertake, and the combination of different issues at play.
- 3.** Create, make accessible to the entire community, and regularly update an easy-to-access document on the different funding programs, as well as the effective and inspiring initiatives undertaken within the community.
- 4.** Pilot initiatives involving all the disciplinary associations in the arts sector for purposes of promoting joint action and mutual reinforcement.

Appendix 1 Cohort

From 2020 to 2022, we conducted **10 interviews**, including **seven collective interviews and three individual interviews**. The interviews involved two categories of actors: work teams with dance groups (collective interviews), and members of the management and work teams at the RQD and the DAM (two collectives and three individuals). From the outset, in accordance with our ethics certification, we have determined the following rules, which were accepted by the participants when they signed the consent form: Dance groups were named, but interview participants were not. As for the RQD and DAM, not only were the groups named, but so were the people taking part in the interviews. Since the RQD and DAM are invested in this research project and are part of its oversight committee, it seemed normal, for us, to identify the people involved in the research and their roles (oversight committee and/or participation in interviews). That said, it is important to note that members of the oversight committee were not given access to the interview transcripts in order to protect the anonymity of participants in dance groups. We also initiated a **collective discussion between artists and an Indigenous cultural worker**, which required that participants remain anonymous, with the exception of one member of the oversight committee. Finally, a discussion group was formed with art school teachers and administrators. As was the case with dance groups, the latter were identified, but the discussion participants were not.

The cohort included **50 people interviewed**, two of whom were interviewed twice (for a total of 48 different people interviewed). Out of this number, 13 had an immigrant background and were racialized (one person taking part in two interviews) and five belonged to an Indigenous people (one person taking part in two interviews).

The following five dance groups were interviewed:

Circuit-Est (November 3, 2021)
 O'Vertigo (January 18, 2023)
 RUBBERBAND (November 19, 2020)
 Studio 303 (October 29, 2020)
 Tangente (September 17, 2020)

We interviewed a total of 24 people in a variety of job positions:

Executive director or assistant executive director: 6
 Other directors (artistic, communications, administrative, production): 6
 Artist in residence: 1
 Curator: 3
 Communications: 4
 Cultural mediation and audience development: 1
 Programming: 1
 Services to artists: 2

The collective discussion between artists and an Indigenous cultural worker (November 22, 2021) involved five people from five different First Nations. Each participant had one or several roles among the following: young dance creators and performers, established artists, a doctoral student and worker with an Indigenous organization working to support Indigenous creation. This activity was organized and presented by Ivanie Aubin-Malo, with assistance from a collaborator/co-facilitator. Participants preferred to lead this discussion among themselves,

without the presence of the researcher and her assistant, as neither comes from an Indigenous community.

The discussion group with teachers and art school administrators (February 3, 2022) included 10 people from nine schools across several regions of Québec and covered the full spectrum, i.e., recreational, pre-professional, and advanced training. The following nine schools took part:

Académie de danse de l'Outaouais (Gatineau)
Dance Department, Cégep de Sherbrooke (Sherbrooke)
Dance Department, Collège Montmorency (Laval)
Dance Department, Concordia University (Montreal)
Dance Department, Université du Québec à Montréal (Montreal)
École Ballet Ovest (Montreal)
École supérieure de ballet du Québec (Montreal)
Quatre temps (Rimouski)
STUDIOS les Grands Ballets de Montréal (Montreal)

This activity was organized and co-facilitated by the entire membership of the oversight committee within the framework established by the communities of practice under the Observatoire des médiations culturelles (OMEC)¹.

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Lastly, five interviews were conducted with directors and members of work teams with the two organizations that requested this research study: DAM and the RQD (11 people). We went from two planned interviews to five, to account for the still-evolving situation provoked by internal crises at the two organizations. Thus, we conducted two interviews with people who played an important role in the transition but are no longer employed by the said organizations: Amélie Tintin (DAM) and Virginie Desloges (RQD). When new directors were appointed, we conducted new interviews. Finally, for the RQD, we also conducted interviews with several members of a non-permanent committee, the CACI, whose mandate was to reflect upon the place occupied by member artists within the organization across all forms of diversity, and the issues encountered. This perspective was rich enough to be included in the research.

Diversité artistique Montréal (five people)

1. Amélie Tintin: Interim Director (December 11, 2020)

2. Collective interview (February 9, 2022)

Tau S. Bui, Executive Director

Philippe Poirier, Assistant Executive Director

Simon Paradis, Consultant, Operations and Strategies

Myriam Larose Truchon, Director of Human and Administrative Resources

RQD (six people)

1. Virginie Desloges, Director of Finance and Administration (June 29, 2021)

2. CACI: Four dancers and members of the subcommittee (October 17, 2021)

Barbara Kaneratonni Diabo

Nasim Lootij

Gerard Reyes

Bettina Szabo

3. Nadine Medawar, Executive Director (January 27, 2022)

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 2. A short summary of the meeting is available at https://omec.inrs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/OMEC_5VF.pdf

