



Practical guidelines for a creative dance format for older ages



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Chapter

01

Background and introduction



Lights on stAge

Changing the image of aging

Lights on stAge promotes the access of the population +65 to dance as an artistic practice and as a tool for personal and collective development. The objective is to contribute to a change in the image of aging, promoting the participation of people +65 in artistic spaces and strengthening their community ties.

The core of the project consists of the collective development of a contemporary dance piece, working together all phases of the process, including conceptualization, research and experimentation, collectively. The protagonists of the project are the participants, who decide what they want to explain and how they can express themselves with their body and movement.

The realities of life and the emotional states of the participants provide the impetus for creation. The process begins by working on empathy and trust among the participants and ends up breaking down the stereotypes and physical and psychological barriers that contribute to the feeling of isolation and social exclusion.

The project Lights on stAGE has been initiated and is led by A.R.E.A. Associació per a la Recerca Educativa en els Arts Escèniques. In the frame of a transnational cooperation between A.R.E.A (Barcelona) and queraum. cultural and social research (Vienna) a pilot phase was carried out 2022/2023, realizing two creation processes in each partner country co-financed by the European Union and Fundació “la Caixa”.

The handbook is based on the shared experiences and learnings the two organizations had made implementing and evaluating the project. The aim of this handbook is to serve other organizations or professionals as a framework of reflection to start planning their own dance & creation projects for older people.

Healthy relationships

Strong together

Dance is a great tool for creating community and social interaction, as it connects people through the pleasure of moving. Participants connect with each other in a very specific way that involves body contact and the beauty of creating together. These new social relationships have a positive effect on health and well-being. In addition, new communities are encouraged through links between older people and cultural places where the participants rehearse and perform. Art centers, on the other hand, have the opportunity to involve an underrepresented social group and are encouraged for a more inclusive approach with a broader perspective on older people's potential.

Active aging

Dance, learn and create together

Older people need accessible opportunities to actively participate in cultural activities. They often find it difficult to participate in something that is generally labeled "high culture" or see themselves as "artists." Through Lights on stAGE participants have access, at no financial cost, to specific dance proposals for their age, thus overcoming economic and psychological barriers. To ensure an inclusive and empowering approach, the creation process is based on the principles of community dance (Foundation for Community Dance 2001). The process provides participants with cognitive and physical stimulation, developing personal and interpersonal skills.

Self representation

New images

Lights on stAGE offers participants the opportunity to connect with their inner artists. Participants gain tools to express themselves and actively engage with their ideas and movements. This is how active participation and personal autonomy are created to represent oneself, enhancing self-esteem. By showing the result of their creation in public, they break with the stereotypes they face. The show provides broad recognition of the creative potential of older people on the cultural agenda.





Chapter

02

Collective creation processes

Learning to create together through dance

In a society where the body and age are normally anchored to normative, exclusive and limiting patterns, we must consider the possibilities offered by the language of movement as a tool for participation and as a vehicle for mediating relationships between people, not just as spectators but as storytellers. It is within this framework that we understand that contemporary dance must also be conceived as a social tool, a means of expression, reflection and dialogue that allows us to build together. We believe that it is necessary to create spaces for learning and participation where social and communication skills are worked on indirectly and through another type of learning technique in contemporary dance, where the different groups, autonomously, can discover the possibilities that this body language offers to them, which they possibly discarded up to now.

The creation processes are developed under the premise of the Triangle of effectiveness to achieve the balance between the **process**, the **people** and the **result** during creation. Productivism, materialism and dominant consumerism make results normally become the main objective. With Lights on stAGE we support the importance of obtaining a good result (we will develop this idea further below), but we insist on the need to also focus on caring for people and the process. In the same way, we believe that focusing only on the process and the people could be frustrating for many participants and even not very beneficial for the project. This is why we base ourselves on the balance between these three elements.

The project is based on the collective creation of a contemporary dance piece, working together in all phases of the creative process, from the design of the idea to its exhibition.

The protagonists of the project are the participants, who decide what they want to explain and how, being they are the ones who finally stay on stage to interpret the piece that results from the process of collective creation.

The collective creation methodology is based on life experiences, individual and collective, as a source of inspiration. The realities of life, the emotions of the participants and their gaze on the world, provide the artistic impulse. They are the ones who decide what they want to explain and how, in this way a stage proposal is elaborated, through the facilitation of professional dancers and choreographers with experience in participatory creation processes.

Getting older and due to social structure, many people may enter in a phase of isolation or social demotivation. The methodological proposal establishes empathy and trust among the participants, supporting the destruction of stereotypes and barriers that contribute to this feeling of isolation or social exclusion. The objectives are to create a space in which they can explain their reality without intermediaries and offer new spaces of artistic expression that serve to generate dialogue, critical point of view and reflection, in a collective way. To achieve this, the facilitators of the process must minimize their role, suspend their own preconceived ideas and offer open spaces, free of limiting judgments, that allow the greatest diversity and freedom within the group to emerge.



“
***I learned to improvise,
 I learned to hear, to share,
 to listen and to use dance
 as a medium to convey
 internal feelings***
 ”

— Participant Barcelona 2022

Methodological approach

The project is organized in different units. The first block is made up of technical training combined with spaces for artistic research based mainly on improvisation guidelines. The technical training proposes that the participants experiment different concepts, while acquiring creation tools: group awareness, use of space, physical theater, voice, musicality and rhythm, observation and body awareness, among others. In the experimentation space, dynamics are also proposed to collectively discover the theme on which they want to investigate for the creation of the piece. It is a space for collective inquiry facilitated with *Non-Violent Communication* tools and Generative Dialogue, paying attention to the roles that are configured within the group and the underlying power structure in these roles.

The goal is to create a safe, creative and conscious space, where all voices and concerns can be collected. The body is a very powerful tool in this sense, since it democratizes processes in which, on the contrary, the control of the word and discursive rationality could generate hierarchies. We also use *Working Process Psychology* tools, which help to display parts of people that are hidden, marginalized or prohibited and that express themselves unconsciously through the body and movement, generating contradictory messages between what they think and say and what that really happens to them (called Double Signals). Ultimately, what we are looking for is that people can connect with parts of themselves that are more essential, perhaps unknown, and that they can be more of who they really are.

In the second block, with all the collected material, the collective elaboration of the piece is facilitated. Subsequently, two rehearsals are done, focusing on stage presence, memory and composition. In the last block, the participants carry out the exhibition open to the public. The exhibition serves as a closing and celebration space. Finally, there is a joint

evaluation session and possible continuity options. During the process, transversal work is carried out to take care of the cohesion and connection of the group. This is worked through dynamics during the sessions and creating spaces for formal and informal communication between sessions.

As we have commented at the beginning of this chapter, collective creation must also take into account the importance of the final public showing (result). Therefore, despite the fact that the final piece is not the most important end, it is a very significant element. The fact that a participatory process generates quality works, interesting for the public and communicable, is what makes the project become an act of public and collective communication, allows debate and reflection to be generated, criticism of the work carried out, motivation for the group of people who have carried it out, etc. If the process remains a class exercise that can only be seen within the group, it would be part of a training activity. By showing it to the public and taking it on stage, the circle of creation is closed.

Finally, the people who promote the initiative, or those who have the necessary technical knowledge (professional dancers), have a very important role. They have a specific responsibility and the need to assume clear principles that guide their participation in the processes since behind the word participatory, there can be hidden approaches that are more or less respectful of the autonomy of the actors involved. It is vitally important to keep this in mind.

“
"It is a very special way of moving. It moves my spirit in equal measure."
 ”

— Participant Vienna 2022



Chapter

03

Seniors as a target group

We are all unique, but the uniqueness of old age is more essential.

Working *creatively* with the target of people +65 was a special focus for us within the project. For our group, it was of great importance to come together for a pleasure-focused, creative process. Often, offers for people 65+ are in relation to health impairments, or for the prevention of illnesses or movement restrictions. Enjoyment of life and creative expression is not often emphasized, but only the preservation of motor skills.

Age is characterized by originality in terms of personality development. We are all unique, but the uniqueness of old age is more essential, "shaped" by life and thus more diverse than that of young people. Old people have gone through a long process of development and have already made many decisions in their lives. Memories are inscribed in the bodies of old age, every wrinkle is an expression of decisions made and the feelings associated with them. (1)

Creativity can be described as a process requiring an individual to be open to new ideas and approaches, in order to seek an original solution for a problem or challenge at hand. Through creative activity, the individual deepens an understanding of self and cultivates purposeful or meaningful involvements. Older adults who engage in creative activities are strengthening a sense of self that is competent, efficacious, and capable of doing. (2)

People in old age have effective action strategies for coping with challenges - these are important prerequisites for creativity. (3) Beside this, they can afford to be "original" - a risk that is often not taken by younger dance participants. So they find more freedom in solving the tasks during the dance class. That means aging processes can favour the development of creativity and engaging in creative processes can have a positive impact on life in older

age. The challenge lies in engaging the participants without overwhelming them. While certain physical limitations may exist, there is also a recognition and acceptance of one's own bodily boundaries.

Regular participation in group dance can contribute to improved balance and mobility, enhanced strength and flexibility, increased endurance, as well as an overall increase in physical activity duration. Engaging in dance has been linked to positive changes in body composition, cognitive enhancement, and improved brain function. Additionally, it aids in enhancing independence in daily activities and reducing the fear of falls. Dance has the potential to enhance mood, boost self-esteem, and increase overall life satisfaction.(4)

Successful aging is closely related to coping skills and a positive attitude towards life and aging. Features of successful aging are a sense of purpose, interaction with others, personal growth, self-acceptance, autonomy, and health (2). All six features were represented in the Lights on stAGE Project.

Literature

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- (4) McQuade, L. & O'Sullivan, R. (2021): Arts and Creativity in Later Life: Implications for Health and Wellbeing in Older Adults. Executive Summary. Institute of Public Health. DOI: 10.14655/11971-1084888



Chapter

04

Practical guidelines for implementation

Experiences from local implementation of Lights on stage

Barcelona *Tens molt a moure*

The pilot group of the first 3-month long creation process consisted of 13 constant participants, all women in an age range from 65 and 78 years. In the search for participants, an open call was published via different networks (Instagram, whatsapp groups, mailings) and with the support of local institutions (neighbourhood centres, day care centres, etc.). The call revealed that there was a lot of demand also from people around 60 years. Apart from being 65+, the only requirement to register was the compromise of constant participation during the whole creation process. We considered a stable and closed group necessary for creating confidence between participants and for emerging fully into the creation process. The second group consisted initially of 12 participants (11 women, 1 man) between 65 and 71 years old, but one woman quit after two months for health reasons.

The two processes were held in two different dance & creation venues in different neighbourhoods in Barcelona. We considered it important to bring participants - a lot of them little familiar with creation centres - to these artistic venues in a twofold way: for the participants to offer them a professional artistic setting, but also for the dance venues and their regular public to generate awareness for another age group in their field of action.



The 3-month long creation processes consisted of weekly 2.5-hours sessions, two 3-hours general rehearsal sessions, the final showing and an evaluation meeting a week later. Many times, after the sessions, participants created their own social moments and went to have coffee together. It was very important to establish confidence between participants and to offer a space where they felt safe to express themselves freely. Therefore, we constantly offered playful group dynamics, improvisation tasks with partners and time for reflection.

The groups bonded very quickly which was very fruitful in unfolding their creative potential. In the first few sessions we focused on exploring different dimensions of dance (rhythm, physical theatre, textures, space/ composition, seeing) through playful improvisation tasks and physical exercises. From these sessions we collected seeds for the creation work. The public showing of the created dance pieces was a very empowering moment for participants as they earned a lot of recognition of their expressive capacity from the public.

a

Experiences from local implementation of Lights on STAGE

Vienna

Was bewegt dich?

The pilot group of the first 3-month long creation process consisted of 7 constant participants, all women in an age range from 65 to 71 years. They had very different dance backgrounds. Three of them were very experienced dancers, with around 20-30 years of dance experience. The others had between very little experience to none. Their physical abilities were quite homogenous, they were all relatively fit and showed durable fitness and motivation. One of the participants got hurt and couldn't join for the last few sessions and performance. All the other participants came nearly every week and missed maximum one session during the course. The advertisement took place through the general participants at Tanzwerkstatt, through colleagues in the scene, through personal contact and through advertisements such as the social media of the pensioners association of Austria.

The open call (advertisement) was opened to all genders. The participants who signed up were all female. In the feedback several participants mentioned that it was meaningful for them to have felt a strong, female group. The group was closed, meaning that once you sign up, there is a commitment to join every session and people can not join on a drop-in basis or join later to the process. Three participants knew each other in advance, which created a trustful environment amongst them. In general the group feeling was very supportive, motivated, excited and thankful.



The second group consisted initially of 17 participants (all female identifying) between 65 and 82 years old. The advertisement of the second round started much earlier, since the people in Vienna mentioned that they need time to plan ahead. Also the advertisement was broader, with more publications in local newspapers or through contacts to institutions and associations specially for this age group.

The two processes were both held at Tanzwerkstatt in Vienna. The 3-month long creation processes consisted of weekly 1.5-hours sessions, general rehearsal sessions, the final showing and audience talks after the shows. We offered in the lessons warm up tasks, physical practices, small fixed movement sequences across the floor, improvisations alone, with a partner and with the group, as well as time for reflection. In the first few sessions we focused on exploring different improvisations and formed the choreography out of those. In addition we discussed the question "what moves you?" with them and weaved their answers into the performance. The participants were excited and proud to show their dance on stage, the audience was giving moving feedback and the general resonance to the project was very positive.



b

Practical guidelines for implementation of a creation process for people +65

These guidelines, based on our experiences of the pilot implementation of Lights on stAGE in Barcelona and Vienna, provide some useful questions and comments, if you plan to organise and implement a dance creation project for people 65+.

The questions serve to reflect on issues regarding participants, venues, timing, the creation process and group management.

Participants

— What group size do you desire?

We recommend 10-16 participants (depending on the size of the space).

— How many participants do you need to create a group feeling?

We recommend a minimum of 6 participants.

— Do you invite all genders?

We had positive experiences with women only groups, since no man signed up. Being a group of women only created very strong ties between them. If you want to include more men, try to search for multipliers/institutions which specially address men.

— Where can you advertise to find participants?

We recommend local newspapers, institutions for elderly people, community Centers, existing local whatsapp groups, etc.

— What are the social backgrounds of the participants?

Our tip: Be aware how you can reach and include people from lower socio-economic status. Also if participation is free, it is maybe more difficult that information reaches people who normally do not participate in cultural activities.

Distribute the advertisement or open call in a fitting time frame: in Vienna people liked to have enough time in advance to plan, in Barcelona it needed to be not too long before the course started to get people's interest. Make it clear on the advertisement / open call which age group is invited, how many sessions take place, where is the location, how is the selection / registration process structured. Options for the selection / registration process are first come first serve principle, a selection through sending a motivational letter or an open class (including forming of the group after that encounter). Alternatively you can organise a first encounter or info event before the course starts.

In the Lights on stAGE project there was positive feedback about having a group with different levels of dancing experiences or creation experiences prior to this course. Also a diverse range in age (around two decades) was received well. There was a demand discovered to also include the age group 60+. This diversity does require flexibility of the project leaders as well as the participants, to be open to exercises and conversations that might be above or below one's level of knowledge. The content provided in the classes thus needs to be opened enough to provide experiences to everyone participating. In all rounds of the Lights on stAGE project few men registered. There is a power to having a female only group, the participants felt empowered and supported by this fact. Places where participants were found included: Whatsapp groups for elderly people, community centres, local newspapers, institutions for elderly people and especially through personal contact.

“
***In dancing,
 it's a very
 special kind
 of movement,
 because it's just
 so interactive:
 we move each other -
 we move
 together!***”

— Participant Vienna 2023

Setting and venue

— Do you prefer your project to take place in an art space or a space dedicated for elderly people?

We recommend bringing elderly people to art spaces, since it is special for them to be in a different atmosphere. Also for art places it opens up a new perspective, having a different age group as protagonists in their venues.

— Who will be able to reach the venue and who won't? Who lives in the neighbourhood of the venue?

Our tip: Be aware that by choosing a place and venue some people will be more invited to come and some less, depending on their commuting, knowledge of the place, proximity, etc.

— Is the venue accessible for wheelchairs?

Our tip: Be aware whom you include or exclude through features of the space.

— Can you do a performance in that venue?

It can be helpful for the participants to rehearse already in the space where the performance will take place. If that is not possible, plan enough time for the participants to get comfortable in the performance space and also calculate the additional costs that might arise.

In the Lights on stAGE project the venues were dance and creation spaces. It provided a creative stimulation for the participants. For many those spaces were new and it helped them to be open to new experiences. Also the spaces are already facilitated for movement through having a professional dance floor and sound system etc.

In the sessions there were chairs provided at the side of the dance floor, so that people who needed to take a break could sit down at any time of the session, relax and find back their strength. This option was used sometimes, but never excessively. Participants always wanted to come back to the dancing as soon as possible. There was water and glasses provided for the participants. Having the space opened half an hour before the class started and nearly half an hour after the end, helped participants to arrive in their own timing, be relaxed while changing their clothes and get ready.

“
**As long as
 I can,
 I want to experience
 new things and
 try out
 new things.
 And
 I can do that here.**
 ”

— Participant Vienna 2023

Timing

— How long is your creation project?

It is up to you and your vision of the project. In Lights on stAge the creation process for each round was three months long with a final showing. In Vienna and Barcelona, due to demand of the participants for continuation, after finishing the creation process a continuous course was installed, which is now structured in terms and more focused on long-term learning.

Do you structure it in blocks, terms, or in another way?

Think about which format suits your vision. In Lights on stAge the structure was in blocks and corresponded to local trimesters. Having a fixed start

and end of the creation process, helped that people stayed committed to the whole process by constant attendance.

How many sessions take place?

We recommend weekly sessions to keep a consistent working pace.

How long is each session?

We recommend a duration of 1.5 - 3 to hours per class.

When, how and how long is the performance evening?

We recommend having the performance evening as the cumulative event of the project, at the end of the process. To be able to provide a professional context (stage, lighting,..) to value the work of the participants, try to do the performance in

a theatre or dance centre. In our project the dance pieces were around half an hour long and we offered audience talks afterwards.

How do you structure each session?

We recommend keeping a consistent structure of the sessions with welcoming rituals, warm up, movement exploration exercises and cool down at the end. It will give stability to the participants to know which structure to expect each week.

In the Lights on stAGE projects each creation process took three months. It gave a good time frame to immerse into the process while still being short enough to keep the project character. In Vienna the sessions were around 1.5 hours whereas in Barcelona the sessions were up to 3 hours long. The classes occurred weekly, which kept the participants engaged while not exhausting them. In the groups there was a big need to connect to each other socially, to have time to chat and get to know each other. With time the participants were forming stronger bonds, which led them to stay together after the classes and go to a cafe together. In Austria there was an audience talk after the performance part of the evening. The audience responded well to this format, participated in a motivated and encouraging way.

“
Now
I can be much
more sociable
than I really
was and see
the qualities
of others
 ”

— Participant Barcelona 2023

Creation process

— Do you want to focus on the process or on a product?

We chose to create a product for a final showing but gave lot of importance to the process.

— What are the benefits of making a public performance?

The moment of showing creates visibility for the age group, which is an underrepresented age group in the public, especially in the light of empowerment. The elderly people want to show that they are full of life and have a lot to express.

— How do you structure the creation process?

We recommend structuring the process in some weeks of thematic focus, an explorative phase which is based on

encountering each other and the dance. After some weeks, move towards the creation and bring that into the centre of attention. (for more details see chapter "Collective creation process")

— How do you level the contributions of the participants with the choices of the choreographers?

We recommend to welcome contributions of the participants and to support them in bringing in their insights. Yet it is important that the choreographers / project leaders will stay responsible for the creation as a whole.

— How do you keep the atmosphere supportive?

We recommend to stay attuned to the process and through reflection understand where the

performers have insecurities and struggles. Through staying in conversation about it, encouraging them and being a reflector to them, they will receive more and more understanding and confidence and as a result will start to support each other. The project leaders have a lot of power in this regard: if they are supportive with the performers, very likely also the performers will be supportive with each other.

In the Lights on stAge creation processes the first few sessions were focussing around themes such as physical theatre, rhythm, group dynamics, connection to the music, to shapes and forms. In each session there was focus on physicality such as alignment and mobility. Improvisation was a key method, through movement exploration tasks, the participants started to find their individual expression through dance and to explore different states and transform images into movements. After roughly half of the process the choreographers started to form the performance out of exercises and scores that have been explored previously. Both in Barcelona and Vienna the teams were asked reflective questions in order to bring in their points of view into the choreography.

“
**Never saw
this image
of a group
of elderly people
on stage**

”

— Audience Barcelona 2022

Group management

— Which teaching style do you choose?

We chose to teach in teams of two. It helped to keep the concentration of the participants and to reflect together and think together surely increased the quality of the project.

— How do you support the social aspect in the project?

We realised that social bonding was very important for the participants. We created exercises that helped to create connection between the participants.

— How do you incorporate feedback in the sessions?

We created feedback rounds during and after sessions,

according to the status of the process. Also informal talks after the sessions revealed fresh feedback of the participants.

— Do you have methods to work with group dynamics?

Especially the Barcelona team focused in the first sessions explicitly on group dynamics with specific exercises. One inspiration were social group facility practices by Otto Scharmer.

— What is the difference in group management in this age group compared to other age groups / younger people?

It is important to keep in mind that this age group is more vulnerable than younger age groups. Accidents can happen more easily f.e. when balance

can't be held anymore well. There is a heightened sensitivity needed of the facilitators to meet the needs of the group and to adjust flexible to what arises.

In the Lights on stAge processes group management was a very important factor, since there was a lot of interest of the participants to become a group and not to stay individual participants. Connection was of interest, exchange, hearing others perspectives and experiences clearly enriched the experience of the individuals. Exchange in the form of feedback was part of every session: either through specific reflective questions that were posed, through opened questions, experience reports etc. Often this happened directly after a specific task or at the end of a session. Some participants took specific roles in the group, like needing a lot of attention or taking a lot of space. It was a constant work to balance these needs and to give more space to quiet participants.

“
I have tried my whole life to move something, that is an inner need for me and also to always get to know something new. As long as I can, I want to move something - for me - and for others as well.
 ”

— Participant Vienna 2023



Chapter

05

Example session plans and examples of tools

Session plan

Example 1

Time	What	How
00:00h - 00:20h	Arriving/Warm up/ Group game	Icebreaker exercises, name games, activation focus/attention
00:20h - 01:20h	Investigation of movement and expression	Improvisation tasks (individual, pairs, groups) and movement exercises to approach thematic blocs like rhythm, space, textures, observing/seeing, etc.
<i>10 min water break</i>	<i>10 min water break</i>	<i>10 min water break</i>
01:30h - 02:15h	Instant composition tasks and presence on stage	Applying “technique” from investigation phase in frame of instant composition tasks
02:15h - 02:30h	Cooling down and session closing	Relaxing exercises, massage, reflection questions





Inspired by you

Example tool — 1 / Duration: 30'

Improvisation in pairs. One person dances for a minute and another person observes and notes aspects of the other that inspire them. Next, the second person dances inspired by the movement of the other and the first person watches. In the third round, the second person gives feedback to the first person and then she dances taking into account the elements that the partner has told her. At the end we give a little feedback, we write it down in the notebook, and we share it with the whole group. The roles are then reversed and the dynamic is repeated.

Sources of inspiration: What you have seen of your partner's dance inspired by you and what the partner tells you about your own "qualities".

Little monsters

Example tool — 2 / Duration: 20'

Phase 1. In a circle we play monsters. One by one, each person enters the circle and develops their monster. It is a free creation. Look for physicality and a sound to express your monster.

Phase 2. One person acts as a monster in the center of the circle and another enters into a conversation with the one who is already in the center. The second person emerges into the physicality of the first person and develops it further by transforming it when the first person leaves. Then the next person enters to start a conversation, etc.



Paint a picture

Example tool — 3 / Duration: 25'

Phase 1: Start stretched out on the floor. Imagine that the body is soaked in paint and you want to paint the canvas (space). First only we move on the ground and then we can change levels. Play with speeds, pauses, textures, etc. Look at all the parts of the body that you can use to paint this canvas.

Phase 2: We do “Solos” with the same idea of painting and using all the space. The group accompanies and supports the soloist.

Session plan

Example 2

Time	What	How
00:00h - 00:20h	Arriving/Warm up/Group game/Space	Meet in a circle Option: rhythm exercise Work on: alignment, standing, mobilisation Explore the space around
00:20h - 00:35h	Contact to others / stimulate circulation	Moving through space, get in contact with others, increase speed and size of movement to stimulate circulation
<i>10 min water break</i>	<i>10 min water break</i>	<i>10 min water break</i>
00:40h - 00:55h	Sequences across the floor	Easy steps across the floor, enjoying the music
00:55h - 01:20h	Improvisation	Improvisation exercises with specific focus, either alone, with a partner, or with the group
01:20h - 01:30h	Cooling down and session closing	Relaxing exercises, massage, reflection questions





Cotton wool

Example tool — 4/ Duration: 10'

Each person improvises for themselves. They choose a spot in the space where they have enough room to move. The exercise starts standing on one spot. The dancers imagine that there is cotton wool all around them. It's a soft wool and they enjoy touching it with all their body parts 360 degrees around them. In the next steps they start to move the wool away and look at what's behind the wool. With time the wool gets more and more thick and they need to use more and more muscle strength to move the wool. The exercise can bring them through space as well. Put specific focus on their usage of different body parts: Feet and legs, torso, arms and hands, head. Towards the end of the song, the wool gets softer again and more and more disappears.

Gentle pressure

Example tool — 5 / Duration: 20'

Partner exercise.

Phase 1. One partner (A) places the hand on the back of the other partner (B) with a gentle pressure. The partner (B) answers the contact with a gentle push towards the hand. The contact points stay together and communicate through the touch of the hand on the back. Change roles.

The focus lies on fine listening to the touch and to create sensitive reactivity in the back → fine body awareness raising.

Phase 2. One places the hand on different body parts of the other and invites them to follow. They use the listening to the body part to move into space with that. Change roles.

Phase 3. Let it become a dance that follows the logic of the dance: change the position of touch and the roles according to your flow.



The space around

Example tool — 6 / Duration: 10-15'

Phase 1: Everyone starts at a spot and imagines they create a bubble around themselves with their movements around their spot with legs and arms. First they try to increase the size of their bubble gently.

Phase 2: Increase the size of the bubble with strength.

Phase 3: Move around space with your bubble and be aware of the bubbles of the others and to keep your own bubble. You can have social moments in this phase, like bouncing back by the bubble of another, looking at each other, etc.

First take time for each phase and then you can fit all phases into the song.

Chapter

06

Testimonials

*Compilation of testimonials
from participants and the public*

"The project helped me in being able to do what I felt incapable of"

— Participant Barcelona 2023

"It is so good to take (back) the childlike nature in one again and to live."

— Participant Vienna 2023

"I'm not a dancer at all, but I'm so glad I dared to come here. It means so much to me."

— Participant Vienna 2023

"You made me opening up something, finding a new side of me"

— Participant Barcelona 2023

**“Evokes
the wish to be
around elderly
people”**

— From the public. Barcelona 2022

***“At a certain
point I realized,
It's completely
irrelevant which
age group is
there - there
were simply
people in mo-
tion and this in
a very touching
way.”***

— From the public. Vienna 2022

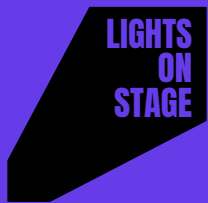
**“Way of
expression
is more impor-
tant than forms,
show this to
young dance
students”!**

— From the public. Barcelona 2023

***“It told me
a lot. I was
touched so
much that
I cried.”***

— From the public. Vienna 2022





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