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Dance as a Tool for Sustainability: Possibilities and Limits

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Dance as a Tool for Sustainability: Possibilities and Limits

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Abstract: This study argues that the art of dance can be used as a tool for sustainability, including matters of human rights, political oppression, awareness in environmental and ecological destruction.

This thesis explores possible ways for dance to contribute to sustainable development and whether these ways are effective. It also seeks to locate the possibilities and limits of dance in comparison with other forms of art that can also be used to promote sustainability. The research was conducted by gathering data from a variety of sources including interviews, videos, a literature review and personal observation.

Dance was found in many instances to be a successful way of addressing sustainability issues. The advantages of dance over other forms of art include its familiarity for most people; its capacity to uplift people's feelings; the ease of combination with other forms of art; and the variety of choices in moves, styles and ways of addressing pressing issues. The drawbacks of dance, include the fact that dance is nonverbal and not easy to preserve or describe; as well as practical limitations facing the people involved with dance and not the art form as such.

The findings from this research offer insight into the current and potential future impact of dance on sustainability issues. Dance can contribute to diverse dimensions of sustainable development, though this impact is somewhat constrained by the low status of dance in many educational systems.

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Keywords: Sustainable Development, Dance, Art, Education for Sustainable Development, Activism, Education

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Summary: Sustainable development is achieved when society, economy and environment coexist in harmony. In order for that to become a reality, all of these three aspects need to be confronted individually. Art has been used to address such pressing issues and dance was often a part of that, where the artists have used their art to express and to transfer specific messages to the public. Dance is functioning as a bridge among different cultures and can work as a catalyst in inspiring dialogues and making a change for a sustainable future but most of the times it does not receive the same appreciation in the educational field.

This study was conducted to explore the impact and the results of dance as a resource in sustainability efforts. The aim of the following research is to observe how dance can be used for sustainable development and whether dance has certain advantages in comparison to other forms of art in favor of sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development tends to be ensconced in these issues that are represented with dance, since the education in these cases is aiming to create thoughts and behaviors that will benefit human development in a sustainable way. How much can a dancer express through the movement of their bodies? How many and which issues can a dancer address? How much can the audience understand of that movement? How much can someone be educated by dance? What are the obstacles and the advantages that dance faces? Can changes occur through dance?

Going deeper in movements and organizations that are using dance as their main tool for action and mixing that with current theories; this study was able to examine the length of communication there is, today and until today, between the dancers and the audience. The research is carried through with the use of qualitative methods in a mixture with theories, videos, blogs, social networks, interviews, official web-pages and personal observation. In this research it becomes obvious that dance can work as a tool to promote sustainability since it is presented to be quite effective with many advantages and fewer drawbacks. The findings offer insight to the impact of dance on sustainability issues on being of big importance. It is concluded that dance can educate and raise awareness but in order for it to make a change we need to change our educational structure so that people will be able to see its importance.

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List of Acronyms

UNGA : United Nations General Assembly

ESD: Education for Sustainable Development

UN: United Nations

UNEP: United Nations Environmental Program

DESD: Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

IISD: International Institute for Sustainable Development

IR: International Relations

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation

ECO: Environmental Conservation Organization

HH: Hip-Hop

1 INTRODUCTION

“There are two very clear indications of real science and real art: the first inner sign is that a scholar or an artist works not for profit, but for sacrifice, for his calling; the second, outer sign is that his works are understandable to all people. Real science studies and makes accessible that knowledge which people at that period of history think important and real art transfers this truth from the domain of knowledge to the domain of feelings.” - Leo Tolstoy (Tolstoy, 1997:196)

People stand or sit all around this room and look at him while waiting. Waiting for what the man standing in the middle is going to say. Most of the people in this room are kids, kids that look like they might have been quite sick recently, some of them have their face covered with masks, a few others are intubated, while others are lying in their beds. It looks like it is going to be an important speech. However, the man in the middle does not look to be a doctor, nor a CEO, nor a professor. He looks quite normal but at the same time he looks as he does not belong there. A tall man with a white shirt, a round black hat and glasses stands in the middle of a room while everybody is staring at him. Suddenly, a strange bass beat comes from that same big grey room. The beat gets louder and the bass turns into music. A music that does not contain any words. Just music. The man in the middle starts to do some unnatural and sometimes fast moves. The kids start to clap and smile all around and the man in the middle gets even more frenzied. Then, another guy comes in the middle while the first one calms down and takes some steps back before he stops moving. The second guy, though, appears to make unnatural moves as well and then after a while he stops while another one comes to the front and then another one and then a group of women and so on. Some of them were moving upside down (hands on the floor and feet in the air), others were moving in individual weird way, while others were more synchronized. After a while the kids blended in with the strange people in the middle of the room and they all start to move in an unusual way. No matter how bizarre they move though, they all appear to be happy.

This scene is captured in a video by the ‘Association a la Bonheur’ organization. It shows dancers performing in a children’ hospital called “Hopital D’Enfants Margency (croix-rouge francaise),” which belongs to the French Red Cross. The children there suffer from severe diseases.

Social movements and activists often turn to acts which include art, such as the one described above, in order to pass their messages to the people in a more interesting and creative way. Being a dancer myself, raised in a rural family, I became aware of sustainability issues at a young age. In this thesis, I seek to explore how dance can be a resource for sustainability efforts. To do so, I have drawn upon networks of dancers and activists to explore with them the possibilities and limits of dance as a medium for change. I consider dance to be one of the most important forms of art because not only does it combine other forms of art, but it also expresses everything through body language, movement and physical interaction beautiful to watch and hard to do. The only means of communication for a dancer is the body that expresses everything that the dancer feels, or wants to express. Sustainable development is achieved when the

society, the economy and the environment can coexist in harmony (Lamb, 2011). For that to happen, not just for today but also for the future generations, all of these aspects need to be confronted individually or in smaller unions in order to solve them and move on to the greatest vision of living in a sustainable world. Art has been used many times to address in a more creative way social, economic and environmental issues and dance has often been a part of that procedure especially on the subject of human rights (Jackson, 2004). However, how much can be expressed through this body movement, and how much non-dancers can comprehend, is an open question which I explore in this research.

1.1 Problem Background

In 2002, the resolution for a decade goal was adopted by the UNGA and was called United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, or DESD (Journal ESD, 2007). The vision of the Decade (2005-2014) was, to have a world in which everyone would have the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviors and lifestyles, required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation (UNESCO, 2009-2014).

At the same time, Ken Robinson claimed in a TED talk (2006), that every educational system on earth continues to teach children with more or less the same strategy. Whether or not he exaggerates, he makes a plausible case for how the educational system tends to work and the place that art has inside the educational system. The culture might vary from country to country, the language, the political system might change but the hierarchy of subjects when it comes to education remains roughly the same no matter where you are in the world. At the top of the ladder are languages and mathematics, followed by the humanities and at the bottom of the scale come the arts. Music is often given more status than any other form of art, and usually at the bottom of this hierarchy within the arts is dance (Robinson, 2006).

As the field of education for sustainability grew, psychology became a source of understanding peoples habits and preferences, and the benefits of the arts became better known; the arts were used to encourage imagination as well as empathy in order to focus on the development of humans (Caton, 2014).

Dating back just a few years, the thought of dance being used as a helpful tool in the pursuit of sustainable development might have sounded absurd to some people, in and out of the academic world. Today, researchers are using the arts to discover, educators are using the arts to teach, citizens are using arts to protest, 'we' are using the arts to relax and enjoy. This happens because, the hypothetical space and the reality that we place in our thoughts through the arts allows us to step out of our personal spheres and stand at a point where we can critique the real world (Barone, 1995), since we can place ourselves in metaphorical shoes of strangers in imagination.

UNESCO, recognizing the importance of arts as a part of education, tried to promote two approaches: the "learning through the arts/culture" and the "learning in the arts/culture", in order to impact positively on those societies and help their development and promotion of sustainable development, while researching how art,

any form of it, can be used for educational purposes and lead in grasping the significance of the existence of cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2009-2014)

So it does not come as a surprise that there are people that want to combine all of the above, (education, art, dance) and try to make a difference in the world or simply make a difference with whatever they think it is lacking from our society today. In the same spirit as UNESCO promotes 'Art Education', my research in this study examines the way that dance can promote sustainability.

1.2 Aim

Studies have shown that art can assist our society in many different ways, such as multi-skilling, focusing on memory retention, enhancing the understanding of various and difficult concepts, increasing concentration, promoting empathy, and adding to the enjoyment of learning (Dickinson, 2002). This study is aiming to understand how one specific form of art, dance, can work as an educational tool in favor of sustainable development, through the processes of activism and other social engagement. In order to explore whether and how that is possible, I pursue the following research questions:

What are some of the ways that dance is being used today to promote sustainability?

What are the particular advantages of dance as a tool to promote sustainability?

What are the particular drawbacks of dance as a tool to promote sustainability?

Is dance an effective means of promoting sustainability?

1.3 Delimitations

Even though it is important to search more deeply into art and art issues -especially since the term 'art' alone contains a large number of expressive styles- unfortunately the scope of this thesis cannot cover or analyze all these forms. This study is a research with specific limits of scope, so it will focus on only one expression of art, namely dance. Furthermore, this thesis will examine only how dance can be used as an educational tool for our society today. This will not be examined in general, how dance can be helpful for the society, but only as a part of civic engagement and activism for sustainability purposes. Other educational tools that have been used for sustainable development, either through activism or other forms, will not be included. Last but not least, it was not possible to make field trips for the purpose of collecting firsthand data, due to financial constraints and time limits.

2 METHODOLOGY

“Let us read and let us dance – two amusements that will never do any harm to the world.” – Voltaire (Lloyd and Mitchinson, 2008)

The aim of this study is to observe how dance can be used in sustainable development (SD) and whether dance has certain advantages vis-a-vis other forms of art in this particular field. In order to carry out this research, the use of qualitative methods seemed most appropriate. In this chapter, I present the methods I used, which drew upon a spectrum of theoretical concepts, articles, interviews, videos, blogs, photography, social networks, official web-pages, personal observation, etc.

2.1 Data Collection

The procedure of data collection is usually a very intensive process that reveals to the researcher what is and is not viable (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Qualitative research is a process of writing for the most part, either keeping field notes or writing down the narratives. However, all this offers the chance to the researcher, for multiple discoveries such as the discovery of the self, the problem and the subject of course (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

The data collection was a combination of several sources such as official websites, interviews, general observation, videos and of course literature that states facts, realities, and thoughts that could be agreeable or not. However, in qualitative researches, the question of “how much is enough?” is frequently there, so the difficulty of knowing when to stop or when to pursue more data was often an issue, thus the time and resources played an important part in solving this problem. Denzin and Lincoln state in their “Handbook for Qualitative Research” (2000), the texts nowadays tend sometimes to lead us to believe that the world is much simpler than it really is which makes the text use for a methodological research, a risky method to use sometimes. This makes the conclusion deriving from texts not to be reliable all the time, and that is, mainly due to adaptation of reality which is constantly changing and new facts are constantly adding up. However, the texts that were used for this research were chosen carefully and were used mostly as a source of information and methodology in past research on this or similar topic.

Consequently, in order to keep this study up to date and as reliable as possible, I went through with researching videos and the official sites of organizations/campaigns/projects. I also conducted interviews with some of the founders and members of these projects in order to get a perspective of the participants. This was because, no source is more up to date from the human source and as is stated in Reed-Danahay book, the voice of the insider is assumed to be more truthful than the voice of the outsider (Reed-Danahay, 1997), and that is why interviews and a personal observation has been added to this study, in order for the results to be as accurate, subjective, viable and adapted in today’s reality as possible.

2.2 Participant Selection

The representatives that were selected to be part of my research were chosen for different reasons such as their differences in music and dance styles. Primarily, the cases were chosen to have a wide variation in the addressed issues and in the national contexts. This was mainly because, as I already mentioned, I had to settle for a limited sample so I wanted them to be spread as widely as possible.

Before I start reading and putting down on paper my thoughts for this thesis, I used Facebook to get in touch with fellow dancers and choreographers from all around the world. My dance background was really helpful for that, since I already had quite some contacts in that area. I let them know about my project and asked them to inform me in case they knew something similar going on. As expected, I received several replies with information about different organizations, movements or projects that were running at the time. I also conducted an online research on Google, using the different combinations of the words “dance” “activism”, “human rights” and “movement”.

I followed 3 movements, 3 organizations, 2 companies, 1 individual campaign and 4 independent projects that were based entirely on dance activism or some parts of it. The majority of the information, about these movements, I gathered from their official websites, their official accounts on YouTube and Vimeo and their official pages on Facebook. I also gathered quite a few data from the interviews I had with founders of some of these movements and projects but that will be analyzed in the next section (2.3) of this chapter.

In this section I will briefly describe the movements that I took under consideration, for my research, and the independent projects that I followed. Furthermore, the source of each data will be presented in each section, what they try to achieve and how. The languages that were used in these websites, events and pages were mostly in English but Greek and French were used as well.

At this point, I would like to make it clear once again, that the approach on ‘dance activism’ in this research, is not a mapping of all the countless dance activists groups that exists in the world. I have just included some that were covering the selection criteria I used for this research. I imagine that there are a lot of things happening in this sector that I do not know and I did not include them. Nevertheless, I believe that the sample of 13 participants that I included in this study is sufficient to identify issues and patterns that may be of broader significance.

2.2.1 Participants

Vday is an activist movement that aims in ending violence against all women and girls, all around the world.

Hip-Hop Dance Conservatory, or H+, is a company that is based in New York. It was made by dancers and aims to pursue a sustainable environment for dancers where they can ensure viability within their art.

The WaNgui project is an organization in Senegal that is fighting to raise awareness in female rights in West Africa like FGC (female genital cutting), girls' education and forced marriages.

E.D.I.F.Y. is a dance movement in California that offers education and information for edified use of dance and the arts in general.

Hip-Hop 4 Hope is a non-profit organization that runs a charity project in Philippines and aims to use hip-hop (HH) dance and culture, to keep kids away from street violence.

Rafiki is a non-profit organization that in cooperation with the locals in Tanzania, offers support in youth and children. It also promotes equality and helps in their empowerment through art and dance.

Dance To Save Lives is a project, that goes on in Haiti and its aim is to keep the youth away from the streets.

Reformances is a company that is based in Paris and is using dance to conduct a research that is based in vocal and physical expressions and exams the connection among art, life and society.

Χορεύουμε Για Την Ζωή (*Chorevume ya tin zoi*) (*Dancing for Life*), is a project in Thessaloniki where they perform every year and they raise money that aims different causes each year.

The No Project is a project that is fighting against human slavery and aims on the youth awareness.

Stop The Traffik is a movement that acts on a global level and aims on the ending of people trafficking.

Association A La Bonheur (*Association of Happiness*), is a non-profit organization that was created to promote, and take part in the development of children with severe disease (such as leukemia, cancer, malignant tumor, etc).

Χορεύω Για Σένα, Για Μένα, Για Μας (*I Dance for You, for Me, for Us*) (*Chorevo ya sena, ya mena, ya mas*), was a charity project in Athens that was aiming to gather food for the local social kitchen 'Λαμπηδόνα' (Lampidona), of the area.

2.3 Interviews

Even though I had already gathered significant amount of information through the official websites and the existing literature, carrying out some interviews with the people behind the foundation of these, projects, campaigns and movements played an important role in this research. I was able to experience in first-hand the thoughts, the emotions and the difficulties that were behind the creation of these activities.

Unfortunately, constraints of money and time made it hard to conduct face to face interviews, so consequently the interviews were done via e-mail and Skype. In detail, there was one structure email interview (Leslie Scot- Founder and Artistic Director of

E.D.I.F.Y. movement), two more in context interviews, one by email (Julie Maris – Traffic planner of Duval Quillaume), and one by Facebook (Dieufel Lamisere-Founder and Artistic Director), two individual Skype interviews (Anna Clark – Founder and Artistic Director of The WaNgui project movement and Melina Chronopoulou –organizer of Χορεύω για σένα, για μένα, για μας project), and one group Skype interview (Safi Thomas and Yvonne H. Chow – Founder/Artistic Director and Education Director of Hip-Hop Conservatory). The Skype interview and one of the email interviews had the same core and were divided in three parts. The first part of each interview, were questions regarding information about each organization/movement/project thoughts behind its creation and the short-term and long-term goals. The second part of the interview was dedicated to thoughts for activism and its existence through dance, and finally the third part was consisted of questions focusing on dance as a tool of SD, the kinds and ways that could assist better in change, education, awareness and the benefits that could rise from the use of it. The Facebook interview and the remaining email interview were more in context and focused on answering the research questions.

The same general questions (appendix 1) and the same questions regarding their movement/project/company (appendix 2) were included in all the semi-structured and structured interviews (via Skype and e-mail), where I was aiming to get the answers from all of them but not in the same order since the Skype interviews were driven in a more open-ended and semi-structured way of questioning than the email one. The questions in the Appendix 3 were asked in the Facebook interview and the Appendix 4 was asked in the e-mail interview I had with Julie Maris for the ‘Red Light District’ project. During the Skype interviews, as it is already mentioned, a more in-depth semi-structured way of interviewing was followed (Silverman, 2010). This happened because the goal was to get the answers for the questions that were written but at the same time to give the interviewees the chance to talk about their feelings and ideas on the subject (Silverman, 2010). That also, led me to give more questions individually, since they were influenced unintentionally from their given answers.

In contrast to the e-mail interviews, those on Skype included more interaction between me and the interviewees. This made the conversation for both parts more fluent and comfortable and the interview felt more like a discussion than collector of data. All of the Skype interviews were recorded since, I did not want to interrupt the flow of the discussion and also I wanted to have the flexibility of using more data or reaffirming them in case that was needed.

All of the dancer interviewees are already exposed in the spotlight, since they are dancers and they are trying to reach out the public through their profession. However, all of the interviewees (including the non dancers) gave me their permission to use their interviews in this study as they were assured that the subject of this research is not possible to place them in a difficult spot.

The languages that were used for the interviews were English and Greek.

2.4 Observation

Participant observation is a method that is commonly used in humanitarian studies because information can be observed and gathered without the “subject knowledge” (The SRA, 2003), which makes the data collection more ‘pure’. In this research I did not have the chance to be a part of an activism project or movement. However, for many years I have been and still am a part of the dance community, which allows me to have a solid result of an observation that goes on for years. In my years as a dancer, I have seen people’s reaction towards dance and dancers’ reaction towards each other and the crowd. I know the feeling that a dancer has on stage and the effort behind trying to pass a message or just perform, and I have experienced the relationships among dancers which is a huge part of the actual organizing and acting for something or someone. I know the difficulties and the persistence that it needs to continue for months and years to create something that will last only for a few minutes but you have given everything you had to look the way it did.

I believe that this experience was vital for this research and helped me quite a lot, not just with the networking but also with the collection and processing of data. This happens because I can understand what a dancer is aware of and how a dancer thinks. I can also sympathize and understand the problems that occur in the lives of dancers that can range from work and money, to practice and creativity, to health and body problems. It also adds an extra view that is more personal and a first-hand experience on the explored subject that goes beyond theories and interviews.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

For a better understanding of the academic research that has already been conducted in the field of sustainability and art, literature was searched in the libraries of Uppsala University and the online ones that were able to access via the university, articles from journals and published papers. The keywords that were aimed for were, ‘dance’, ‘art’, ‘sustainable development’, ‘activism’ and ‘sustainability’. Of course the search was adapted in the new information that was gained with each reading of a new book, article, or paper and sometimes it got more specific with searches that were a combination of ‘art’ and ‘dance’ with the following: ‘human rights’, ‘education for sustainable development’, ‘social justice’, ‘tradition’, ‘socio-political issues’ and ‘education’. This occurred because the current research in this area focuses mainly in ‘art’ in general, in ‘art and education’ for achieving SD, where dance is included in the art with no special research, and in ‘dance, social justice and human rights’, where dance is used as a tool to express injustice. The research in this study focuses on the dance and explores the places where that specific form of art can enter, how much can it succeed on behalf of SD and how easy it is for people to use it as a tool for building a better tomorrow.

2.6 Ethics

Throughout this research, I aimed to follow the moral and ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council and the Social Research Association of the UK (The SRA, 2003; Werner, 2011).

Before the interviews, the participants knew the purpose of the research, agreed to cooperate voluntarily and were aware of the fact that these interviews were going to be used for the purposes of this research only.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

“Our lives begin to end the day we remain silent about the things that matter”- Martin Luther King Jr (Press Release, 2015)

3.1 Sustainable Development

As time passes, people's needs change and such changes affect our conception of what sort of development is sustainable. This makes the term “sustainable” somewhat fluid and difficult to define. Even today, the term ‘sustainable development’ is still an oxymoron for some, and it is prompting quite some different interpretations because it is related with those two small but at the same time really big words of ‘sustainability’ and ‘development’ (Redclift, 2006). The term was first introduced in 1987, with the publication of Brundland Commission's report on global environment and development, which presented SD as the: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”(World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), which is the most common definition that is being used to describe SD, until today.

Today, the International Institute of Sustainable Development on their official webpage has changed the definition a little bit but it has not been differentiated much from the one that presented back in 1987. According to the IISD, Sustainable Development has been defined as, taking care of today's needs without blocking the way to the upcoming generations to meet their own (IISD, 2013). IISD, categorizes that in two key concepts which are, the necessity of focusing and prioritizing the needs of the world's poor and secondly, “the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs” (IISD, 2013). The priorities are not always specific but the core, of these definitions, is the same. However, our needs, as I already mentioned, are changing day by day so this makes it impossible to be able to predict the future needs, in order not to block them today and at the same time, meet our today's needs. At the same time, the problem of the needs not being something that is the same everywhere in the world, makes the definition even more vague (Redclift, 2006). The priority of needs, changes from continent to continent, from country to country, from culture to culture, even from city to city.

Nevertheless, these definitions led the phrase to be linked mostly with environmental issues, mostly because the development should cause no negative impact to the environment (according to the U.N.), but at the same time it has been used differently, depending on the subject that someone would refer to (business, academia, environment) (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

One of the more lucid and helpful conceptions of SD that I have come across appeared in an article published in 2011 by Henri Lamb, who is an author, a chairman of ‘Sovereignty International’ and the founder of ‘ECO’ and ‘Freedom21.Inc’. In this article, Lamb provides us with the picture below (Fig. 1), where the definition of what SD really is or what it aims for, is a bit more understandable. We notice that SD is the point where the Society, the Economy and the Environment can live together and can be developed as one.



Fig. 1: The definition of Sustainable Development (Lamb, 2011)

In that article, he also makes two important observations. Firstly, that sustainable agriculture is something that farmers practiced since “biblical days”, long time before SD term appear in ‘Our common Future’ report in 1987. He also points out that since that report, ‘Sustainable development is government-approved development’, which means that no matter what one might think that SD is, if it is not approved by the government then it cannot formally go by that name (Lamb, 2011). We will come across the cooperation of SD with the government in the next subsection (3.2) as well.

In this research we will not be concentrating in one side of SD but in all three of them, the environment, the society and the economy. We will see how dance can work within these aspects, according to the representatives, in order to have a more viable, livable and fair world. All three pillars of SD can be represented through dance, as it is shown in this thesis, either directly or indirectly.

3.2 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

In order for SD to be achieved, education is of essence. It is really often that we hear that education is the most important tool for countries and people in order to flourish and develop. As it is mentioned by the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, in the DESD brochure, “*Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family*” (UNEP, 2005). This is the general rule that applies everywhere, mainly because if someone is educated enough,

the critical decisions and the dialogues in environmental, social, political or economical issues, can easily be taken, avoided, discussed or argued in the most effective of ways. The issues that are mentioned above are considered the most important issues of our generations since they surround our everyday life. At the same time those are the exact same pillars that SD is based on.

As it has already been mentioned, SD is the development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the future generations (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). In order for the above to succeed, we need people's awareness and proper education on what to do and how to react every time they come across with these problems, which might as well be every day.

ESD, is not just referring to environmental education per se, but it goes further beyond and aims to accomplish 'human development' by achieving the 'three pillars of human development, which are the protection of the environment, the social development and the economic growth' (UNDP, 2005). More specifically, education is the tool that we use to solve problems that concern our society, like gender equality, human rights, peace, poverty and others and ESD is the tool that is used in SD to helps us achieve a more sustainable life.

Conceptions and goals of education have varied across cultures and over historical times. In ancient Greece, for example, someone had 'paideia' (the total education of a person that aims to built the entire being of human) if he/she had developed body, mind, spirit all with a learning variety that ranged from mathematics and rhetorics, to gymnastic and music (Caton, 2014). Paideia was meant to focus the attention not in the superficial but in the core, in the thing that mattered the most, in the substance (Caton, 2014). In different times, different types of education were performed, and different subjects were promoted. Even at the same chronological time, different forms of education have been practicing to different areas of the world due to different needs. According to UNESCO, ESD is "an umbrella" that takes under its protection all the types of education that have already been practiced and the ones that are going to be created (UNESCO, 2009-2014).

However, it is not important just to be educated but to put your education into good use. In the next 30 years, according to UNESCO, more people worldwide will be graduating through education than since the beginning of history which automatically implies that the educational degrees will no longer be worth what they used to (Cardin, 2009). The degrees alone do not mean anything by themselves, unless they are put in good use, and this will be achieved by finding innovative and new solutions in the problems that we are facing today. The majority of the universities today promote the production of competitive workforce and not the creation of 'fully developed citizens' (Caton, 2014), as ESD requires. This is mostly happening because we still see education today as a luxury good that is only available to the few privileged ones as opposed to the majority or the not so fortunate. This makes education a factor that contributes more to the problem than to the solution and according to Gadotti, we can try to adapt sustainability with different ways to different realities but we cannot eliminate the problem completely, only to reduce it, and that is happening because there is no specific ESD model that can be applied worldwide (Gadotti, 2010). The meaning and implementation of ESD does not only vary among countries but it can often differ within a country as well (Cars and West,

2014). In view of that, the efforts for ESD can often be misguided and often criticized and opposed (Helen Kopnina and Frans Meijers, 2014).

In order for ESD to be successful, it has to follow some important 'rules', such as, taking into consideration all four pillars of sustainability (environment, economy, society and culture), use a wide range of teaching techniques, keep in mind not only the global issues but prioritize the local ones and of course build communities that are based in good quality of life (so again create social tolerance, environmental stability, community based decisions) (UNESCO, 2009-2014). For the education to be helpful, the aim should be focused on changing the current system in a more respectful one, in a system that protects the life and the rights of its citizen and the life of the entire planet at the same time. This can only happen, if this education given, can spread into covering values and principles, that includes ethics, compassion, peace and understanding (Gadotti, 2010).

Kara Shaw and Rob Walker, in 2006 were referred in teaching techniques inside the IR, they made it clear that, it is really important for the teachers and the students to work together in a common motif and keep an active pedagogical way of teaching. In this way the students would be encouraged to be included in political, ecological and social matters, in order to work hand in hand and come up with results and answers for the existing problems (Maigushca and Thornton, 2006).

All of the above, are what ESD is aiming for, however this can be really hard to manage and quite difficult to achieve, and that is because ESD projects are mostly sponsored by the ones that would not wish for the system to change and would not like the educational pattern to avoid the production of industrialism. The ones backing up the ESD missions are usually governments, important and high-powered NGOs and the corporate elected few (Helen Kopnina and Frans Meijers, 2014).

In general, ESD is a tool of SD that works in a wider rank, by trying to obtain critical thinking and promote different behaviors of people that will aim in a more sustainable future (Cars and West, 2014).

3.3 Art and Dance

Since the environmental damage became so wide and excessive, the responsibility, for raising awareness and adopting proper measurements to try protect our 'home', became a matter for all of us. Different ways were used at times but not all of them were equally successful. According to Klaus Töpfer, the executive director of the UNEP from 1998 until 2006, the environmentalism's image is worthy but dull at the same time and it is impossible to reach people's hearts. He believed that the way of promoting the environmental friendly lifestyle, until that time, was not working because it was not cool or sexy enough for the image-conscious (Peatling, 2003).

Art has the ability to change and to adapt very easily on different times and needs and it has always considered being the 'cool' way for people to express themselves. In this research, art will be the means that the public is provided with to educate and raise awareness in different sustainability issues.

The definition for art is translated as the imaginative tool of human expression that is applied through, the creative skills of individuals or a group of people (Dictionaries, 2010). Art can be considered anything from music, acting, and painting to decorating and creating sculptures, to literature, to tactics and strategies to almost anything that does not follow the trivial way. It can even be used in our everyday life to describe something that is not necessarily the result of an artist's act. Different idiomatic expressions such as "*state of the art*", "*work of art*", "*to a fine art*" are being used to emphasize a good result, a fine work or something that requires high skills, techniques or technologies. The word art might be used for many things but in each case it is used to describe something good and delicate or something that is so fine that can trigger your senses.

Among the arts, acting and singing/music are the two forms that someone might think first when the word 'art' comes along. This can happen because those are the ones that we come across almost all the time in our everyday lives. We turn to music and singing when we are happy or sad; when we choose to relax or when we want to express something that we cannot find the right ways or words. We see acting when we open our TVs, when we go at the cinemas and the theatre. So it is rather normal, that these two forms of art come straight to our head when we think of art.

But what about dance? It is a form of art that most of the times combines the two most popular arts. Dance has a social meaning, and is serving as a tool to create an interactive platform for people to socialize, exchange information and learn more about each other (Giurchescu, 2001). As Safi Thomas mentioned, dance activism is not something that just happened, it has been around for quite some time and social issues have been addressed through dance and that has always been a platform (Thomas, 2015). Dance expresses a non-verbal expression of emotions and was used as a social platform even from the ancient times; and from back then until today the act of dancing benefits society in a number of occasions such as, strengthening ethnic identity, teaching children how to dance, entertaining, pre-marital interaction, re-introducing rules of behavior that were based in tradition, presenting social and high image, social integration and more (Giurchescu, 2001).

Every time dancers dance on stage or at a practice room or even free-styling, they do it having music on the background and playing an act of emotions that they are expressing every time their bodies flow with the rhythm. Dance is a form of social interaction and the dancer becomes the object that expresses and transmits feelings, ideas and experiences (Giurchescu, 2001).

3.4 Art for Sustainability

Art can stick in people's minds and hearts and can enter and affect situations and attitudes that nothing else can (Sarabhai, 2009). All types of art have a unique way to capture truths in everyday life such as problems, doubts, insecurities, and place them in a way that can be related to the public (Caton, 2014). Many people in the past have used this language to break barriers and raise social, ethnic, health and racial issues and not always for a generally good cause; Wagner for instance, was used by Hitler when he wanted to boost the Nazis and make them feel more pure (Sarabhai, 2009). The understanding among art and public and the ability to empathize with others, as

well as evoking emotional engagement among academic disciplines (Caton, 2014), definitely place the arts in a special ‘throne’ in people’s minds and hearts.

In the past, art has probably considered to be many things, such as: a fussing activity, a pursuit only for a few fortune ones, or even a pastime for the lazy ones. As times change, the belief of what art means, is changing with it, having it as something really important at times or the exact opposite at others. No matter what one might think, in reality art is one of the most incredible ways that humans used to express themselves and at the same time produce a ‘product’ that could catch people’s attention (Caton, 2014). It is not a secret that the arts existed more or less as long as humans existed. There are evidences for that since the beginning of recorded time (Dickinson, 2002).

The past few decades, we have more examples of art combined with sustainability issues in charismatic and classy ways. Of course, if the word ‘sustainable’ was not so newly introduced, we probably would have much more examples of that combination recorded in the years of humans history, because no matter how art is perceived by the mass in times, it was always serving the public in one way or another. According to Pounds article, in performance art the body of the artist is the one that while presented it becomes both stage and the subject of issue (Pounds, 2007).

“The arts are potent carriers of cultural meaning” as Dickinson mentions in New Horizons for Learning and he is right since the arts have also been used by researchers to gather data in different sectors (Sarabhai, 2009). Marion Kant’s essay describes how dancers and art movements can affect the state by embracing a political system or idea, like it happened in Germany with the Nazi ideology. She mentions that “the history of Germany in the 20th century and the rise of Nazism demonstrate how art as an ideological means assists a state in depriving its citizens of their rights. It also shows how art and artists can oppose it.” (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008:9). In the same essay, Kant mentions that there are numerous German choreographers, dancers and artists that cooperated with the Nazis in order to promote the Nazi ideology to the public and to keep the foreign influence away from their art (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008). She also points out that dance, unlike human right, is able to grow and develop in any type of society; “whether democratic or dictatorial” (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008).

In this following section, an example of art for sustainability will be presented. The example took place a bit more than a decade before the term ‘Sustainable Development’ was first introduced. The following case is about a theatrical play where the participants of the show (actors, singers, etc) as well as the show itself played an important role in overthrowing the government (Greek military Junta) that was governing in the beginning of 1970s in Greece after the coup. This theatrical play was performed before and after the events of the Polytechnic uprising (The Polytechnic concentrated the demonstrations of the masses of popular rejection. The uprising started in 14/11/1973 and finished in bloodshed in 17/11/1973 with several events and the tanks smashing the gates and running over the people).

The story below was not based in one specific source but in people’s stories, documentaries, and articles that I have been listening to or reading since I was a child. The details were also based on a documentary of a TV show that was called ‘Η μηχανή του χρόνου’ which means ‘The Time Machine’ and was referring to that play and its effects in people’s minds, hearts and actions (Μηχανή του Χρόνου, 2008).

That theatrical play is called 'Το μεγάλο μας τσίρκο' or in English "Our Great Circus".

3.4.1 Το μεγάλο μας τσίρκο (*Our great circus*)

(To megalo mas tsirko)

This play was first introduced in the beginning of 70s. Then, it was censored and an obvious target for the police of junta. At the same time, phrases of this play such as "the voice of people, God's rage" and "Bread, Education, Freedom" became revolutionary songs for the people and the university students that were fighting for freedom. The participants of the play (Karezi, Kazakos, Xylouris, Xarchakos, Kampanelis, Papagianopoulos, etc) were perceived as heroic figures by the public.

It was an allegorical theatrical play that described the new history of the Greek people and all the dramatic events with conquerors, from 1833 the arrival of Otto (the first king of Greece), until the slavery from German Nazis (when the play was introduced for the second time-Το μεγάλο μας τσίρκο 2-, it included the incidents of the insurrection of the Polytechnic as well). Through funny and dramatic historic events, messages against the regime (Junta) were passed to the people. The texts of the play were written quite smart from Kampaneli in allegorical form, so even though messages against Junta were passed to the public through the songs and the lines of the actors, they were not easy to be discovered by the interrogators. Before the play comes on stage, its script was presented to the censors, already censored and in mixed order and even with some parts intentionally to be 'cut' as a cover up.

The play was performed in a theater across the Polytechnic University (which marked the beginning of the revolution) and the participants of the play were often found inside the Polytechnic University to support the students and people that were inside the university fighting for their rights and against Junta. Later on the play was characterized as the most massive political concentrations of protest until the events of Polytechnic. Parts of the text of the show as I already mentioned were used by the revolutionary generation of the Polytechnic during the uprising (November 1973) in which Karezi, Kazakos and Xylouris (leaders of the theatrical play) took part. Even though, finding solid proofs was not easy, the leader of the show Tzeni Karezi was arrested and kept in isolation for a month, with the hope to break her and her colleagues' spirit and drop the show. Karezi's spirit and will did not break and she continued the shows as soon as she got released in November of 1973 and after the incidents of Polytechnic.

The theatre accepted everybody; injured people, people that were just released from prison, people that were mistreated by the authorities and by simple people that just went to see the show. Authorities were also there because they understood that something was terribly wrong for them with this show and that obviously they missed something, so they started to follow the play and note down the parts were people clapped the most. Since then, great pressure was brought to the ones starring, singing, and writing the play as well as the ones forming it. The two leading stars of the play (Konstantinos Kazakos and Tzeni Karezi) along with the writer of the play (Iakovos Kampanelis) were dragged to the military investigator every other day to explain parts of the show. Karezi was arrested again along with Kazakos. As soon as they got released they went back to the show. In their first performance after jail, the theater

was full of people again and at the end of the play, even though surrounded by police, the people stand while clapping and started to throw red cloths onto the stage.

‘Το μεγάλο μας τσίρκο’ was a theatrical play which was first introduced to the Greek public in June of 1973 and was able to combine different arts in an harmonic environment such as the art of music (Xarchakos), performing (Kazakos, Karezi, Papagianopoulos, etc), singing (Xylouris), writing (Kampanelis), dancing, theatre and many more. The artistic excellence was combined with talent and emotion but most importantly political awakening, as it stood proudly and with no fear against Junta and managed to be one of the main sparks that fired the fire of revolution. As I already mentioned this play was performed a few years before the term of SD became known and it acted without any governmental approval since it acted against the government. However, this play fought for social justice on the present and future and became a major proof of how much art can influence people’s minds as it was written in history as the play that made the most significant influence in the times of Junta and as the one that led the most massive political demonstrations. It can also be a huge example of how much art can be combined and affect sociopolitical issues. Creative activities, art as such, has a unique way of becoming political, which if following the necessary aesthetics, it can easily become a treat in the eyes of the audience (Bhargav, 2012).

Artists today, continue to balance themselves between their personalities and governmental actions, as well as providing tools to explore a variety of norms in society, to technology, life and self being (Pounds, 2007).

3.5 Activism

The public image of activists can vary over time and place. It can include images of activists as unemployed and lazy hippies that have an unrealistic view of the world, “trying” to make a difference by doing nothing important. However, they can also be perceived as small or big heroes of our everyday life that care more for the greater good than their own wellbeing. As time went by, and as the internet exploded, the activists started to have a wider understanding on what they are trying to do, how and why. Diana Balmori noted that “the importance of sustainability” is being valued today so much that is able to convert those who operate for sustainable matters into activists of different types (Balmori, 2013).

A simple and to the point definition is given by the Oxford dictionary, 3rd edition, which describes activism as a “ policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change” (Dictionaries, 2010). Today, in International Relations it has been quite important to raise awareness in local and global level, in notions that concern ‘civil society’ and ‘resistance’ (Maigushca and Thornton, 2006). Most of the activist’s methods include concerts, sit-ins, performances, marches, strikes, or mobilizations of group cleaning, reforestation and they are focused mostly in sustainable problems of human rights, education, environmental protection, political decisions, and many more. In activist movements today, the people that are more involved with raising awareness and make a change can equally be people from the academia, the arts and politics.

Of course the notion of activism and activists is not something new. It has been there for many years, even before the term was found. Due to external media, and networking it is easier now to learn about something that happened in the other side of the world, which makes activists and their actions more well known, and it also helps them, as well as movements and NGOs with similar actions to make their targets well known, raise funds and use the Internet for their own favor. According to an article that was published in 2009, in *Public Relations Review*, most of the NGOs that were focusing in sustainable development matters, human rights, education, environment, conflict resolution and humanitarian relief, showed that their main tool in media usage is their website, followed by blogs, video casts, podcasts, which can indicate that the internet is the most important way of communicating and sharing information about their organization and raise the necessary funds with publics and journalists (Seo et al., 2009). Today, the Internet and the social network has helped quite a lot of NGOs with activism moves to make their work known to the public and share their success and their needs with a broader audience than before (Seo et al., 2009), which makes it easier to find supporters to their cause. It also makes it quite easier for the movement to attract members but also quite interesting for the public to want to get involved. Either way, more and more people get involved with activism but it is not really easy for all of them to stay, because as Lo pointed out in his book, *“To remain active despite high penalties, requires intense personal commitment made not by isolated individuals responding to a media message but by community members who can meet face to face to affirm their loyalty”* (Lo, 1992:236). So no matter how easy it gets to be involved, a lot of people get involved for a short period of time but then they drop out for numbers of reasons.

However, not every change is a good change, not all activist activities are connected with SD, not all activist movements have the support of the public, not all of them work the same way and not all of them have the same techniques on how to attract members or how to use the media. Also, other than the techniques, the movements tend to also differ on their demands and on their means to act. There are quite radical groups of activists that in order to succeed at what they represent they need the political, the economic or/and the social system to make some fundamental changes, which seem to be unrealistic by the view of the most ‘institutional power holders’ (DeLuca, 1999). At the same time there are groups of activists that work with pressuring their targets with acts of humiliation , terrorism, or boycotts, which are considered quite radical groups of activists and tend to be the groups that use militant means more than any other more mainstream group (even though it has happened) (Derville, 2005). Others might be satisfied by making the ones they are opposing against to pay attention at their demands, or maybe just by bringing awareness, or helping situations and people.

3.6 Dance Activism for Sustainability

“I believe if you can breathe, you can dance” – Alito Alesi and Sara Zolbrod (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008:329)

Dance has been used and is being used as a way of asking questions to the public and to society and as a way of embracing differences and changes of people cultures and

governments, as well as including the public as part of these issues,. That is the reason why dance has been used from the people as a tool for social activism both in the past and today (Bhargav, 2012).The art of dance has been described as the ‘vehicle for building community and understanding across social boundaries’ since it can be ‘the antithesis of the values of modern-day capitalism’ (Phillips-Fein, 2007). Peter Lovatt in his TEDx speech in Oslo, claimed that anyone practicing structure dance can have their mental processors being speed up and that is obvious either by solving convergence problems or by coming up with creating acts in finding solution in diverging problems that can be verbal, physical, musical, or mental (Lovatt, 2011). Maybe that is why we can find dancers being involved with issues that have much more to do than just entertaining others. Dance is something that is continuously developed and cannot easily remain intact and always the same just as it cannot be repeated once it is over and can only be remembered if captured in pictures, described in written or passed on to other dancers (Phillips-Fein, 2007). Still we find many examples of dance being used as a tool to raise awareness in important matters that were easily traced in activities that got sustained in one way or another, like the African slaves that fought against colonialism through their dances in order to maintain their origins and personalities, or examples of dance being used to celebrate or worship religion or even against everyday matters such as discrimination, HIV/AIDS, poverty, etc. (Bhargav, 2012).

“Dance is something that is able to prosper in any type of society, unlike human rights”,

Jackson and Shapiro-Phim wrote in a book that they edited, called ‘*Dance, Human Rights and Social Justice*’. In this book they collect articles that were written from dance related people (choreographers, dancers, educators, critics, therapists or a combination of the above), that are referring to the close relationship of dance with any type of human rights that targets violence or discrimination. The book is also focusing on how dancers and dance groups are being used to promote different ideas. Some of the stories and examples of dance activism are mentioned below.

One can find many examples of dance related people that have tried to sustain the essence, the purity and the act of dance. We can find extreme examples of dancers collaborating even with the Nazis thinking that, that is the best way of helping and promoting the dance as such, like Laban and Wingman did in Nazi Germany (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008:10). On the other hand, choreographers such as Germaine Acogny (Senegalese/French) and Birgit Cullberg (Swedish) are well known for their choreographies that express human feelings from severe incidents such as genocides or wars and their fight through their art against loath, terror or revenge; feelings that can easily take us over. Acogny claims that her only way of shading a light of hope to people’s hearts, is through her dance, where carefully connected body moves can create a body language to fight this horror that surrounds us. At the same time, pictures of Cullberg’s dance plays, are representative of political active moves that ‘take a moral stand’ and raise awareness in the inequity and promote ‘social change’(Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all humans are equal with the same rights (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights). However, these equal rights that everybody suppose to have, are violated everyday and are still a luxury

today, for a few chosen ones, since it is not a rare thing to be violated in almost every corner of this earth. Many choreographers have ‘talked’ about this through their work and many dancers have protest about it through their ‘bodies’.

In Taiwan in the 50s there was a movement called ‘Minzu Wudao’ that was introduced by the Chinese Nationalist Government in the society of Taiwan. By imposing it in soldiers, with the saying that General He first said “*good soldiers are model of good citizens*”, and to all the members of the society regardless of their sex and age, they aimed to use dance as a means to inspire power and increase the fighting spirit and the energy on the nationalist culture of their society and in anti-communism (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008:37). It was clear to them as well, that dance and human rights are quite related through experiences of abused and punished dancers in societies where dance is banned or their degradation in rehearsals and so on (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008:x).

This can be also found working the other way around, especially in places where dance is not perceived as something joyful and free to do. In specific parts of the world such as Iran, dance in general or types of it are still prohibited and the act of dance can cause serious punishments like public flogging or prison, high fines and even death in some rare cases (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008). One of the most recent examples was the well known song by Pharrell Williams ‘Happy’. A group of people from Iran, made a YouTube video of the song and named it ‘Happy in Tehran’. The video definitely did not make them ‘happy’ for long since it caused the imprisonment of the mixed-sex/young participants because they danced together in a western song and uploaded on the web (Stableford, 2014). In these places, dance can act and can work as a tool of political resistance of these oppressive legislations and governments more than any other place in the world. The feelings that dance can cause can be so strong to the viewer as well as the participant that places dance in a difficult spot in certain countries such as Yemen or Turkey, and the ‘free use of one’s body’ as an act of high risk. The word ‘dancer’ alone can be the cause of a great insult in countries like Egypt for example (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008:76).

In spite that, dance works as a connecting link of our soul, body and mind to the surrounding environment, either people or sounds or nature. It helps us to get in touch with the energy that comes from within and gain control of ourselves while feeling free at the same time. It prepares us to make changes (The Campaign, 2015). These changes are often connected with matters that explain the sociopolitical matters by becoming a working members in communities and composing pieces with multiple meanings (Phillips-Fein, 2007). Other than human rights, issues that are connected to the ecosphere and the environment can also be addressed through this creative activity is called dance.

Sardono is one of the choreographers/dancers that aimed his work in raising people awareness in ecological destructions and has focused a lot on catastrophes that took place on his country, Indonesia, such as the devastation the rainforest and in more recent tragedies such as the tsunami of 2004 and the earthquake of 2006. His actions have become the source of inspiration for many dancers and artists that have also turned the interest of theirs in ecological and environmental problems (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008).

Why do they choose dance? The more simple answer would be because that is the one thing they know how to do best. They know how to control their body and how to transfer their message from their heads to their bodies. The same signs might not mean the same in all parts of the world but everybody understands the body, because everybody has and uses it and all people can relate to it (Phillips-Fein, 2007). Lovett, in another speech of his, explained that other than the joyous health improvement dance offers much more than we think. Three reasons that are quite important distinguish dance from any other form of art or exercise; the social, the physical and the cognitive aspect of it that causes changes in your brain (Lovett, 2012). This explains why people can stay committed to dance and why they choose it to make a change.

There are many artists and dancers in India who chose dance to address the problems in their country. They do it with the creative way that they know best, as I already mentioned. Dancers and choreographers such as Chandralekha and Sarabhai have both raised awareness on matters such as female rights, violence and conflicts. Other than these issues that have been addressed, there are still many ecological or equality or class issues that need and wait to be addressed by dancers since dance activism is something that can work quite well in this country (Bhargav, 2012).

Further in the 'Dance, Human rights and Social Justice' book it is easier to notice how dance can work as a bridge among different cultures, languages and communities and work as the tool for a much better tomorrow and how it can act as a healing processor for 'wounds of torture and trauma' (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008:xv).

Dance can be used as a 'creative force' that helps youth in general and street youth with finding themselves. In placing them in a state of mind where they come out of their shells, they feel free, able to express themselves, their existence does not get suppressed; a place where they belong. Youth that might have been through traumatic experiences such as war, might be under a lot of emotional or psychological stress, might experience street domestic violence or any other type of violence and many more. It is also emphasized how useful dance can be in healing (which may also be used in traditional rituals) that focus the therapy directly to the body. Dance as therapy reaches almost every aspect of a human being, from 'soma' -body- to 'psyche' -soul-. It can influence the humans as psychotherapy as well as physiotherapy, and that is why dance can be characterized as 'holistic' in the case of therapy and can also become a powerful way of sustaining group dynamic, unity and solidarity. This does not only work with able-bodied people but with disabilities as well, as it gets confirmed by Alito Alessi and Sara Zolbrod in the same book. He claims that everybody can dance, including persons who have no hands or legs, or the ones who cannot move much more than their eyes, as all bodies are born with things that they are able and disable to do, but none of the two can define our ability to dance (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008).

Dance encompasses an extraordinary combination of people, culture, environment, politics, past, future and spirit; it gives people opportunities to escape from the reality, travel in a better place and at the same time the power and the strength to adapt on their community, in here and now or just change their realities on something that might fit them better. I think that can be a reason, why dance is already being used successfully in prison programs, since the prisoners exchange their spots for that of

the free spirit, the free body, the free life, the dancer. These examples are again visible in the same book where we can find Refeedie describing her experience from when she was teaching Palestinian folk dance (dadke) in refugee camps in Palestine. She explains how amazed and happy she got when the kids, that she was teaching, managed to get their minds off the screaming and shooting of their everyday life, for an hour and be happy and concentrated on putting a together a 'dadke' piece (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008:3).

After all the above it is only fair to admit that dance can be taken and used as a powerful way of addressing such issues (Bhargav, 2012). Dance can be used as a powerful tool to raise awareness and reflect on important subjects while awaking people's consciousness because it is the social movement that shifts and changes are part of its identity (Phillips-Fein, 2007). Social progress in a fair and livable world (Fig. 1) is a necessary condition if having a state of SD is what we pursue, according to 3.1.

4 RESULTS

“Wherever a dancer stands, is a holy ground”. –Martha Graham (Stewart, 2000)

The results of the data collection are reviewed in this section. The participants are presented in detail and quoted according to their websites, the structured and semi-structured interviews that were conducted by e-mail, Skype and Facebook and were based in the research questions of this study and their work in their projects. The data collection consists of three movements, two companies, three organizations, four projects and one campaign and from six interviews of members of the above. Furthermore, details from videos or their websites have also been added if they were worth mentioning.

4.1 Vday: (movement)

“Dance is one of the most powerful forces on the earth and we have only just begun to tap into where it can take us. The struggle of humanity is the struggle to return to our bodies” (The Campaign, 2015).

Vday is an activist movement that aims in ending violence against all women and girls, all around the world. This movement was established on the 14th of February (Valentine’s day) in 1998, from Eva Ensler, which after her world winning play “Vagina Monologues” she inspired women around the world to share their stories with her, which were containing matters of rape, domestic violence, sex assault, FGM, etc.

On their website they mention that the human body has been hurt through the years with oppression, trauma, shame, cruelty, violence, exclusion, rape *“and we have been forced to flee our bodies” (The Campaign, 2015).*

Ever since then, Vday movement is trying to reach people through performances, word of mouth, internet, media and protests. On Valentine’s Day 2012, Vday launched a campaign named *One Billion Rising*, which was mainly the next movement within the existing movement of Vday, and was aiming to raise awareness through dance and flash-mobs. Every February since then (at Valentine’s Day), people from all over the world gather around, dance, and address an issue that demands attention.

For the first two years, this campaign was named *One Billion Rising* (2012-2013), and was focusing on; raising awareness and engaging people worldwide to end violence against women, on a global scale, without focusing on tribes, class or religion. The next year, the campaign went by the name *One Billion Rising for Justice* (2014), and it brought to peoples’ attention, how violence against women is combined, connected and impacted by economics, environment, gender injustice and racial issues. That specific campaign was covered from media such as, The Guardian and The New York Times, due to mass participation from around the world. More specifically, One Billion Rising for Justice manage to have women, men and children from more than 200 countries, to go out of their houses, jobs and obligations, to dance, rise and

demand justice. The places that they danced were places with big or small importance like, streets, police stations, embassies, churches, sites, schools, offices, courts, environmental sites, military courts and governmental offices (V-day, 2014). Isatou Touray, the global coordinator in Gambia, pointed the importance of everybody coming together in unison to fight against these issues that leads to violence against women and that:

“It actually forced those who were giving deaf ears, for those who are taken for granted, some of the issues affecting women to recognize the factor, on the whole. The whole world is now speaking and we have to listen.” (One Billion Rising for Justice, 2015)

This year the campaign went a step further and demanded, after the awareness and justice, for actual changes. On the 14th of February 2015 the *One Billion Rising Revolution* (2015) went to the streets again, in many-many countries around the world to demand the actual changes to become reality (The Campaign, 2015).

Vday supports that violence against women is likely to end only if we take under consideration important factors such as the environment, the war, the poverty and racism (“One Billion Rising Revolution,” 2014)

“Vday believes art has the power, to reach, transform and inspire people to act”(What is V-Day?, 2011).

The Hollywood actress Charlize Theron is one of the board members of Vday and she stated that she is rising through dance. She continued by saying that dance makes us more connected into what we are fighting against, especially since we are doing it in an enjoyable way and not in an aggressive way. *“Have you ever seen anybody dancing without a smile on their face? I think it’s pretty impossible to dance and not smile, not feel light, not feel like the world is ours. We are all somehow interlinked and our humanity lies on each other and I think dancing maybe summarizes that in an off-beat way. When we all dance we’re kinda on the same rhythm and maybe that is in a way a recognition and understanding that we are all together in some weird way” (I Am Rising..., 2013)*

4.2 Hip-Hop Dance Conservatory: (company)

“We’re going to built an arts pavilion in the city that is going to serve as a hub for artists where they can go there for anything they need to create or promote or anything else they need.”(Chow, 2015)

Hip-Hop Dance Conservatory, or H+, is a company that was made by dancers and aims to pursue a sustainable environment for dancers where they can ensure viability within their art. This becomes a reality when the dancers begin to be a part of a think tank where they are armed with pedagogy, infrastructure, and advocacy work, a high range of repertory, medical research and design on a combination with their dancing skills.

It started 25 years ago, from Safi Thomas (founder) as a community service organization (together with the YWCA, at the time) in Harlem, that focused on teaching the kids how to dance, while keeping them away from the streets and while

educating them in teen problems and violence, teen pregnancy, HIV, sexual assault and drug abuse. It started focusing just in hip-hop but today it has expended to dance and dance community in general. In the interview that we had he stated that the reason for starting this company was because he wanted to keep the hip-hop culture and dance in having a more sustainable, and professional environment as other dance styles (ex ballet, modern) and at the same time gain a more educative and gender equal environment among the dancers inside this culture.

“I witnessed misogyny, disrespect and a variety of other issues surrounding that in my profession, so I wanted to make a company that is centered around these issues and develop dancers with providing them professional trajectory and also prepare dancers to have the tools to be self sustained by providing education, professional development and teaching them about the industry as well”. (Thomas, 2015)

Safi Thomas claims that he faced quite some problems when he started the company that had to do with finding financing help and a space to train and practice. People were reluctant of trusting or promoting anything that contained hip-hop in their name or style. Later on, after hip-hop became a trend and after dance studios realizing that they could get money out of it, only then they started accepting hip-hop but even today they still have a negative position against hip-hop because most of them are still not in a position to separate the dance, the culture and what they see on TV.

“Today we have a lot of things that supports us individually but there is nothing that is inclusive of the art form and nothing that is far reaching” (Thomas, 2015).

Through the years, *“the structure has shifted from just dance and education, to a broader perspective which covers the six pillars of the conservatory”* (Thomas, 2015) that are mentioned above. This is covered by courses that explain, how hip-hop dance is connected with these pillars and by teaching the students, how to go beyond “just knowing the moves”, to “how do I approach my practice from a scientific base”, to “I want my art form to evolve”, to “I want to build work that is going to last beyond my lifetime” (Chow, 2015). Yvonne H. Chow, the educational director of the company, mentioned about these different subjects that the six pillars are aiming to show how hip-hop dance is connected to all these things (pedagogy, infrastructure, advocacy, repertory, medical research and design) and make the students understand that their dance is something beyond the moves and that is connected to their body, their carriers and finally the entire world. She also mentions that in our everyday life we have all this courses that we take in school, where art or dance might not even be included at all because it is not as important as math and science and history. However, she continues that if we want to build a culture of sustainability for artists, we have to realize that dance contains math and science and history and is connected with everything that surrounds us (Chow, 2015).

Today, ‘Hip-Hop dance conservatory’ is a dance company that is focused on all of the above, and along with the help of the ‘Theatre of the Mind’ (the official repertory and production company of the H+) is transferring their work to the audience. Furthermore, they collaborate with a lot of different organizations, both for activism and just for the dance itself they also support a lot of different dance organizations, whether or not they support H+ (Thomas, 2015).

Chow stated, that in our society today the artists are the background and even though they (artists) will create art no matter what, it would be so much better if it had governmental and societal support.

In the Skype interview that I had with both the Artistic director and the Education director of H+ some important observations were made, as they are presented below, regarding activism and dance as an educational tool, as well as mentioning the advantages and the limits of this form of art.

“Activism must be driven by the oppressed party, not given the framework by the people that are doing the oppressive” (Thomas, 2015).

Safi believes that people consider dance activism to be more based on what they see in movies, the concept of seeing a problem gathering your dancer friends and dance about it, but that does not work because it might make people feel good but it will not stay.

“Any form of dance activism has to be done in front of a mindful audience and open in the issues that you are presenting, and it could also be done a little bit more surreptitious so that you allow persons mind to glint it on their own” (Thomas, 2015).

He mentioned that an artist’s job is to show their views on the world and not ‘screaming’ activism instead. On the same view Yvonne answered that activism is essentially a foundation of art and that is why it does not have to be mentioned (that is activism) because that is what is suppose to be from the beginning.

“It’s about how you use what you are so great at and what you practice every day to talk to other people” (Chow, 2015).

She continued saying that art started as a form of self expression and it is supposed to be a platform for forum momentum. She also marked that the artists have the responsibility to say something, since they are the ones getting an audience, so that the audience will continue listening to them. She mentioned that when building meaningful art then that means that you want to make an experience that is going to touch people in order for them not to think the same as when they got in this experience. This is something that people should do by themselves and that the artists are not supposed to tell them what to think and how because that is not the point of art.

“If the people walk out that experience and still think on the same way as when they got in, then you weren’t really creating art with the audience in mind but for your own pleasure” (Chow, 2015).

Safi added to this that *“When you are dealing with the creation of the peace to represent a certain social ill, it’s all about the artist to be able to compose something that represents what you’re trying to pass across. You can’t run out of moves or issues to talk about, you can use whichever style you want, but it depends on how people approach it”*(Thomas, 2015).

He continued by saying that artists need all the variety that they have because they need to engage people on multiple platforms since they have to be consistent. He also remarked that people are more used to having modern dance expressing different issues that it becomes difficult for them to understand that hip-hop can be expressive

as well. He continued by pointing out the same thing as Yvonne that art and dance has always been a platform for social change and that we should not separate the activist part from the dance.

“Today we sometimes forget to notice that as artists we suppose to stand for something regardless. By calling your art activism you have already cut out a portion of the audience that doesn’t care about activism and just wants to be entertained” (Thomas, 2015).

However, he mentioned that by not calling it activism people might just come to be entertained and when they leave they might have taken something more than just entertainment from the show.

“The current fad of dance activism will die out eventually, however the social responsibility of artists in dance has never changed and they’re people out there that continue doing it, to create their art within the social activism, they just don’t call it activism” (Thomas, 2015).

Chow and Thomas commented also that they do not see themselves as activists, at least not as people see activism. *“How we see it then yes because we approach activism, not with making loud statements but more working out from the root. That’s our technique and for us as an art form these problems come from not having autonomy and sustainability (because we don’t have education, our own trajectory, our own businesses, etc). You have to go for the power-structure and you have to be educated in the same principles and the same methods with those that oppress you. So we are activists but not in the same way that most people view activism” (Thomas, 2015)* and Chow adds to that, that *“We’re more societal based (when you come from an advocate stand point) as a whole that can cover everything with a global perspective that focuses on what causes the problem and not just the problem itself” (Chow, 2015).*

When the discussion moved to the advantages and disadvantages of dance and if it can be more effective in activism in issues of sustainable development compared to other art forms, Safi and Yvonne answered with the following:

“Dance allows you to express whatever you want to express only be less literal. I don’t think that dance is a better form necessarily; I just think is a different way of doing it. However, if it is done properly (dance) it can be a more efficient and productive way to express your social issue. Dance is the only one that can bring together all the different arts in one (music, singing, images) (Thomas, 2015).

In the possibilities of using dance to express or to protest Yvonne added that dance hinges upon a human ability.

“We are all born dancers in the sense of we all want to move and most kids when they hear music they all start moving because that’s our part of expressing ourselves, and we sort of move further away from that as we grow up and we come to the point today where you are a dancer or you aren’t. When you use dance to reach people you remind them of where they started from as persons and it can touch a visceral place” (Chow, 2015).

As a limit to dance art form Yvonne added that dancers sometimes are not able to work together because they might not know how to trust and cooperate with other

people for the good of the art and not for their own status and show off. Safi adds to it by mentioning that professional dancers will join the company, since they appreciate the training aspect but they are not really going to stay around for the bigger aspect of the organization (the aim to create a new culture and a new type of dancer that has a wider responsibility of the dance community as a whole), unlike the newer dancer that are the ones that retained more.

“It’s not a disadvantage but is a challenging thing to recognize and we need to use it,..., dance is not about us individually, it’s about the message that we want to send” (Chow, 2015).

Safi continued on the limits of dance by saying even though a dancer or an artist does not have to take the emotion out of art, they still have to realize that if they want to present something to the crowd they should be talking about facts and not only feelings because whether we like it or not, this has no place in the business of the art. He continued with the following:

“After doing this for so long, I don’t see a disadvantage relative to it (dance). As artists (in a whole) there are ways that we approach art, that are detrimental to what we’re actually trying to do. As artists we’re extremely emotional, reactive, angry, undisciplined, non committal, etc those are the disadvantages, dance or art itself is not a disadvantage, it’s who we are as people who is the disadvantage. The inability to be emotionally mature, that’s the disadvantages for art. When addressing a lot of issues through art, you recognize that art is viewed the way it is, is kinda because as artists we’re not business minded, we aren’t thinking of the right things, we just think about ourselves or how we feel” (Thomas, 2015).

“Dance is supposed to change but sometimes it gets lost into time” (Chow, 2015).

As we moved to whether or how dance can work as an educational tool Yvonne as the Educational Director of H+ company answers that dance is most likely to work as an educational tool only to those that they will see it like this.

“I think that dance can be used as an educational tool for SD, but in order for it to be used; people have to shift their actual attitude towards dance. Right now people are looking dance as recreation, fun, something that kids do and as something that is not going to teach you anything important and not as valuable. So you can’t use dance as an educational tool if you don’t see it as something valuable and quite honestly, most people don’t, they might like it and get entertained by it but it doesn’t mean that they respect it and that they see it as something valuable. I think that a lot of the work that we’ve done in middle schools and high schools, has shown how much it can be a tool for sustainability just within someone’s personal life. You see that a person that’s using dance actually sees the value in the dance then of course it could be definitely an educational tool. If you don’t see dance as being valuable, and you just looking at it as a tool or as means to an end then you’re not going to achieve what you’re looking for” (Chow, 2015).

Safi, the Founder and Artistic Director of H+, carries on by saying that,

“Dance and education are not something that’s separate. We have to start to look at dance holistically and start to look at all the different things that connect to the dance, how we speak, what we read, what we learn, etc. I do think that dance can be used as

a form of one higher learning in education but also as a way of being able to have a more expensive education and develop people as a whole. Not just in the dance aspect but in so many different aspects of their lives” (Thomas, 2015).

4.3 The WaNgui Project: (organization)

The WaNgui project is a new organization that was founded a year ago by Anna Clark, and is fighting to raise awareness in female rights in West Africa through the use of Sabar dances (traditional West-African dance style). More specifically, it is a project of a dance tour that will bring these traditional dances in developing countries of the West, while raising awareness in issues of West Africa, such as FGC (female genital cutting), girls education and forced marriages, and mainly promote the development of women (mostly) in their early youth years.

Anna Clark moved to Senegal a few years ago to study Sabar dancing. While she was living and working there she came across many expatriates, also living in Senegal, trying to improve the world in some way. The people she met made her eager to be a part of this spirit. She stated, *“Even if I can sustain myself I can see that is still so much suffering”*. However, even though she wanted to help, participate and contribute, she faced quite some problems from the NGOs and the organizations that were acting there because they considered a masters degree to be more of importance than what she actually could do.

“Even though I am well educated in my field, it didn’t matter because it’s not in the academia. I got rejected too many times” (Clark, 2015)

After two years living in Senegal she went back to the United States and as she came together with her friends there and she was telling stories about West Africa she realized that they had no idea about what is going on in the other side of the world and that they did not believe her.

“There is a whole part of United States where I come from, and I think many parts of Europe that are just blind to the fact that these things still go on, because it’s not a part of their daily life. People don’t wanna read articles about how women are being mistreated, used and sold off. It’s much more fun to sit on Facebook and watch things that are fun and entertaining”(Clark, 2015).

So she thought that she would have to find a hook between something that is entertaining to watch and also inform people. Something that people would want to watch and will be able to catch their attention (dance), and then mention where these dances are coming from and the issues that they are facing in that country. She wanted to find a way to inform developed countries about the situation in West Africa. Anna also believes that in Senegal, people are ready for any kind of positive social change if it is presented to them and they are going to welcome it with open arms but in developed countries you have to be more careful in finding a way to access people.

“So we’re trying to find an avenue, because entertainment and art sells, so we’re trying to use that to make development issues a popular household thing because I think that these issues should be common knowledge and inform developed countries about what is going on in West Africa” (Clark, 2015).

The WaNgui organization is cooperating the last 8 months with Tostan (an organization that is focusing on strengthening the development of mainly West-African communities). Anna believes that movements like Tostan are successful to raise awareness and make a change in West Africa.

“I heard about TOSTAN and I contacted them letting them know who I am and what I want to do (use my dance company to promote their cause) and they were thrilled about it” (Clark, 2015).

This project is aiming in filming a documentary of the entire project, from planning the show to traveling to the west developed countries and performing it while raising awareness in West-African issues by showing and performing Sabar dances which shows another beautiful and not that well known side of west-Africa. In order to do that they are trying to raise the necessary funds. The tour will be mainly focused around the United States, where they will go in colleges that mainly have African studies programs and cultural study programs, and there they will perform shows of Sabara dances and also give lectures to raise awareness on the above issues. The dancing company of WaNgui consists of 9-10 people, where all of them, with the exception of the founder Anna Clark, are coming from west-Africa, which really gives the people a better insight on what is going on, since it is coming from members of inside the community that have issues.

In the interview that I had with Anna Clark when we talked about the existence of dance activism she mentioned that she believes an active dance community is a rare thing to find because most dancers (especially the new/young ones) are very self-centered and more focused on their own problems as she was as well a few years back. She mentions that due to the necessities of the art form, dancers generally need to focus on taking care of themselves which often consumes valuable time that one could use in taking care of others. So she believes that dance activism exists today but not in that big scale as we would all prefer.

“You hear of activists all the time but they are mostly involved in politics, on the government,..., and there are dancers with purely on the artistic side and to melt those two things or to use the one in the advantage of the other I think is a really novel idea and I would love it if dance activism existed as a field in the future”(Clark, 2015).

Anna mentioned also that in order for someone to be an activist, the knowledge of what is going on in the world and what need to be changed is necessary. Knowledge on how to change it and how to act in order for people to accept you (to help them) is also important so that the message will be able to spread.

“I think activist is someone that creates action and a movement so knowledge is the base of that and being able to spread your knowledge” (Clark, 2015)

Anna stated that she could definitely call herself as a dance activist because after all that is what she is doing.

“I would definitely consider myself a dance activist, I never thought of that as an actual profession because when I started this I didn’t have anybody else to look to as a reference, so I never thought it could actually be a title but if it is a job then that’s my job for sure, that’s what I’m doing” (Clark, 2015).

She believes that all different ways of dance can reach people (shows, flash mobs, videos, etc) and can be effective because all of them are trying to reach a big number of people at the same time. However, she strongly believes that virtual way can work faster and easier. The internet can be the most effective and most powerful one because everybody is 'hooked' to it, anybody can have access and it is an easy way for people to learn something or support a cause, so the only thing that the artist had to do is to find a way to keep people's attention.

"If we're gonna do something about human rights, it has to be in line with what they're used to, it has to be something fun that they can click on the internet right away and get the information in about 5sec" (Clark, 2015).

Anna in her project is mainly using live shows and videos/documentaries online. She also stated that she would love in the future to have a wide spectrum of different kinds of dances and be able to represent different cultures but right now her project is structured in a certain way (educational shows, lectures, classes, dance shows from Sabar dances), in uplifting and raising awareness for human rights in West Africa.

As a disadvantage in the art form of dance she replied that maybe the fact that dance cannot communicate ideas that clearly, could count as a limit. The fact that it is not verbal it would make it more hard to 'sell' a dance company, because that would require for someone to see it in person.

"But that I feel goes to any art because art is a creative process, it's not black and white but with the internet today you can capture whatever you have and show it to people. I don't see another disadvantage other than the not being verbal" (Clark, 2015).

Whereas for the advantages of dance she replied with the following,

"The musicality, the rhythmic aspect and the group dynamic add to the art of dance because they make it really positive. I have been around a lot of developing organizations in Senegal, and I notice that none of them has any kind of entertainment aspect or any fun things. If you look online; organization as Red Cross, USAid, Tostan, any of these people that are doing a great work, they still look like they're boring, that's why they don't access a huge-huge number of people,....., so I think we add to it because we bring that entertainment aspect and plus we make it positive, because a lot of issues that we're fighting are really not fun things to hear about, you don't want to spent your Saturday afternoon learning about how women are getting abused and mistreated and chopped off. We can light it up and also tell them that,....., this country also has a lot of positivity, look at the way they dance, the way they celebrate the babies and the marriages. This is an uplifting thing and I think that dance adds to it"(Clark, 2015).

In general she believes that dance is effective because it captures a lot of people, it is widely entertaining and people love to sit and watch it. Music, she continues, could also be that affective but in a show like WaNgui one is going to have a mixture of arts combined together like music, percussion, theatre, dancing. It is a show that is full of life in all different ways and the objective is to catch people's attention.

“I feel that dance is the most effective to do that because it draws people in, the audience and the ones that wants to participate, there’s not a person in the world that doesn’t love to dance” (Clark, 2015).

Anna also referred to the fact that she chose dance to act and not any other form of art.

“I chose dance because I am a dancer and when I found out what is going on here and I wanted to help I thought that I can only use what I know how to do to help, and my skills is dance” (Clark, 2015).

Finally, she believes that what they are doing in WaNgui through dance, and the long term goal of the movie, with the universities in the United States that is mentioned further above, is an educational job as well since their mission statement of that tour is to educate the students that are there to learn about African culture.

“We’re going to educate them about what is Senegal, what is West Africa, what’s the culture, what’s the history, what is good about it, what is bad about it, so it must be an educational job” (Clark, 2015).

4.4 E.D.I.F.Y.: (movement)

“Dance speaks sometimes louder than words”(Scott, 2015).

E.D.I.F.Y. is a dance movement that offers education and information for edified use of dance and the arts in general. The acronym stands for Educate, Dance, Inspire, Faith, You where the YOU part, according to Leslie Scott who is the founder and the artistic director of the movement, represents that “ALL dancers are called to educate, inspire and follow a Faith (high power of choice) and use dance to grow this world in to a better place” (Scott, 2015).

Even though it is very difficult in Hollywood, and those around the country trying to mimic Hollywood, to join a movement that is so counter to the current culture (Scott, 2015), E.D.I.F.Y. managed to stand up, fight and heal.

The movements aim is “Not to shame anyone” and to fight, through education, against tormenting youth, kids and adults. They also fight against female sexual exploitation, especially through dance and last but not least they offer inter-active seminars on Nutrition, Bullying and Sexualization of dance and its effects on people, use of social media in a constructive way, suggestions and advices for parents, etc. This movement is also trying to stand up to “the narcissistic way that most dancers are using their talents”, by promoting dance, “not as an ‘eye-candy’” but as a healer for people (Scott, 2015). The ways that they are trying to succeed this are several, such as the seminars of E.D.I.F.Y. teaching tours that are making a big impact so far, the project of the Midnight Mission that had the showcase on the 30th of April 2015 and of course the Y.P.A.D (Youth Protection Advocates in Dance) campaign that is running on the side (Scott, 2015). E.D.I.F.Y. is trying to reach people beyond the borders of California, through dance, and it usually aims to orphans, homeless and unprivileged communities. In some cases they also cooperate with other movements, such as the case of Uganda’s orphanage where E.D.I.F.Y. partnered with Christ

Chapel of the Valley, with a view to educate and advocate for recognition of the wounds the church has caused the LGBTQ community and in strive for reconciliation.

Leslie, in our email interview, mentioned that she believes in the existence of active dance community and that it can be quite effective in informing, educating, reforming, protesting and changing realities and E.D.I.F.Y is a proof to that.

“I have seen dance heal better than medicine prescribed by doctors,, I've seen girls confide in me about addictions, self harm, suicidal ideation and more and the connection was made through dance in my seminars, my music choices and the movement” (Scott, 2015).

In their visit in Mexico, Leslie described how dance transformed 62 young orphans by raising their confidence, their self-esteem, their joy and excitement.

She also described a couple of stories where students of hers changed the way they lived after the dance seminars of E.D.I.F.Y. The first story is about a student of hers that was in an abusive relationship and how dance empowered her in a way.

“A female student of mine was in an abusive relationship. She confided in me, after I taught a combo about domestic violence that sparked my further involvement in helping her move out to a safe place. From there, she kept taking my class and I kept teaching combos about a women's worth and what good men are like and not getting our validation from a man or material things or our looks. She used my classes as therapy. She is free from abuse and thriving today. She uses dance as outreach and is changing people's lives” (Scott, 2015).

The second story is about another girl that was affected by the social media and the hyper sexualization of dance.

“After she confided in me that she had been having sex with multiple boys and posting promiscuous photos for attention, she was 14, she deleted all her inappropriate selfies, fasted sexting and sex, and confided in her mother” (Scott, 2015).

Leslie mentioned that she would describe herself and what she is doing as an ‘Artist for Activism’ because she tries to use her artistic platforms to reach people and to bring social change through interactive, sharing, education and relational connection.

“I address issues that are counter to our culture such as the sexualization of children in dance and the mismanagement of social media for bullying and ego inflation. These behaviors are widely accepted and even encouraged and EDIFY wants to change that” (Scott, 2015).

She also added that in order for someone to be an activist, action must be taken to affect change and create resolution and reconciliation, not division and that is something that can be really hard to achieve.

Leslie believes that all different kinds of dance can be effective in dance activism and all different kinds of art are equally useful in good purposes. However, the most important thing is the change that happens through relationships and through bringing will to get involved personally. Relationships are the ones that can sustain something powerful in the long run.

“I don't think dance is better equipped than another art form however its current popularity does help a bit but I have yet to see the presence of dance on TV be consistently used for activism” (Scott, 2015).

4.5 Hip-Hop 4 Hope: (charity project)

Hip-Hop 4 Hope is a non-profit organization that focuses mainly in the Slum areas of Manila in Philippines and it aims to use hip-hop dance and culture, to help kids to concentrate their energies and focus, on positive aspirations and keep them away from street violence. Hip-Hop (HH) artists like KRS One have made statements in favor of HH by claiming that “If Hip-Hop has the ability to corrupt young minds, it also has the ability to uplift them” (KRS One) and at the same time many HH artists wrote lyrics supporting their culture like the following on “Waiting for the world to end” song that says “Teach the youth and speak the truth, show them what peace can do” (Rakim).

“Peace, love, unity and having fun” is the motto of HH and that stands for the following according to the leader of SAS crew (b-boy crew that were the winners of R16 Philippines, 2014), bboy Hogan

“Peace means no trouble. There is unity, there is no rich and no poor, everyone can be together. There is love, not just love for each and everyone but love as well for the thing you do. Having fun of course because you don't pressure yourself and that is where you feel free because you're just enjoying yourself” (KAIZENPICTURES, 2014).

In detail, Hip-Hop 4 Hope, is a charity project that started from young dancers in Freiburg, Germany and grew up to become an international project, with the help of bboys (break-dancer) from around the world, the help of Onesimo (local funding agency) and the help of social workers and film makers. Its main aim is to use break dance and hip-hop culture to help the youth in Manila to express themselves through dancing, create sustainable breaking training spots (starting March 2015), provide workshops, give an understanding to the positive notions that hip-hop dancing provides, and to shield them with street culture that does not include the street violence.

In the documentary Culture of Hope that was made regarding Hip-Hop 4 Hope in Manila, Philippines, bboy Moose (Breakdance World Champion, 2006) that he was born and raised in Philippines, remarks that when he was young instead of choosing drugs, or killing people he chose dance and that saved him in a way. He mentioned that,

“When I was young I had nothing. I started bboying because I wanted to prove myself to everybody and I think when I did that, I didn't even know what hip-hop is. Hip-Hop, for me now actually gave you, your name, your voice and your identity to be who you are. And I know. I'm here (Philippines) trying to show this to other people.... I'm glad I chose the way that I'm going” (KAIZENPICTURES, 2014).

Another member of the bboy crew SAS sees eye to eye to bboy Moose thought and claims that,

“Hip-hop can change the world and people’s mentality. You can use it as a tool to make people happy, to entertain them. Even though they don’t have anything in their life, but as soon as you show and share something to them about hip-hop, their world goes bigger and their imagination gets better. But you can’t just show them once; you have to be constant until they learn it. It’s like going to school (KAIZENPICTURES, 2014).

Bboy Hogan, the leader of SAS crew, mentions in the documentary that in Philippines the situation differs from other countries when it comes to dance.

“...in other countries they have studios nice clothes nice shoes. For us, we’re different (a member of the crew shows his shoes that are ripped off) because we don’t care about it. Even though we don’t have good shoes, good clothes does not mean that we can’t dance, for us it’s only about dancing because dance makes us happy and set us free, for us dancing has not restriction because it’s infinite, it’s a circle, you can do anything and anything can happen” (KAIZENPICTURES, 2014).

As for what dance and HH can offer to these kids another SAS member claims that even the kids that are troublemakers can be witnessed to change due to HH. Getting out of troubles will bring enjoyment in their lives. Bboy Moose adds to that by explaining how this happens.

“You see these kids which they live in a cemetery, no slippers, nothing, they are on the rooftops and sometimes they shake because they’re so hungry. If you gave hip-hop to them, they will not go and take drugs no more, when they have problems they will just dance or draw or MC or write, whatever they can do. Because you gave knowledge to them and they can use that stuff. Hip-Hop is needed to the ghetto” (KAIZENPICTURES, 2014).

4.6 Dance To Save Lives: (project)

Dance to Save Lives is a project that goes on in Jacmel in Haiti, by Dieufel Lamisere, and its aim is to keep the youth of Haiti away from the streets. This is happening by keeping orphans and homeless teens, occupied with learning modern dance and Haitian folkloric, by exposing them to the traditions and the different aspects of Haitian culture and art and by giving the kids the demanded resources to keep them safe. Dieufel decided to start this project when he went to Javmel once to visit and he gave a free class after. After the class he asked the kids if they would like to have a daily class and their answer was yes, while they described their lives and how hard it is for them.

“From that time I said that I must do something to help those youngsters” (Lamisere, 2015).

Through this project, the kids are educated in the world of dance (as performing artists, choreographers, dance instructors) and they are earning valuable experience of what it takes to be one (dancer), by touring and performing across the country. They are also aiming in creating a society where people understand the importance of dance in their culture. Other than funding, this mission is trying to keep ‘breathing’ by selling art work and accessories.

In the short interview that I had with Dieufel Lamisere he stated that he believes that dance can be use as tool to educate since that is exactly what he is doing with his children.

"I am teaching them dancing, plus English at the same time and well being" (Lamisere, 2015).

Finally he remarked that he is pretty happy with the Project and that the kids are learning many different skills in dance and through dance.

"They are amazing and they make a lot of progress. People believe in me and in the project. I am fighting to make my dream a reality"(Lamisere, 2015).

4.7 Reformances: (company)

"I am less interested in categories; instead what's important to me is to do art, to perform, and to have a real challenge when I'm on stage" (Reformances Company, 2015).

Reformances is a company that was established at the end of 2010, by Afshin Ghaffarian and is using dance to conduct a research that is based in vocal and physical expressions and exams the connection among art, life and society. The company is based in Paris, France and its name comes from the word performances and the word reform (réforme in French). Afshin Ghaffarian, the founder of the company, is a dancer and a choreographer, who comes originally from Iran and right now is working in Paris as an "artist in research". In an interview of Afshin in Reformances Company blog, he refers to his company name 'Reformances' as the 'state of being an artist',

"a powerful will of the artist to fight against any kind of inertia or habit. It's about a different way of looking at art, artists, and their relationship to society. It's about conceiving art as something united with our daily life, an active art that transforms us and does not reduce itself to simply decorative or entertainment functions" (Reformances Company, 2015).

Dance played an important part in Afshin's life, since he started dancing in his home country Iran, where it was forbidden to dance, as a form of expression and revolution on his side, and he also performed an underground play named Medea there (in the middle of the desert where it would have been safe) in 2007, with his group back then which was named 'Tantalos'.

"It was a great experience. It was dangerous, but in Iran danger is part of our lives every day." (Sage, 2010)

From Iran, Afshin performed in Germany and then in Paris where he lives, works and studies until today and is where he also formed his company. His performance in the theatrical play in Germany, after he left Iran, has been described as 'stunning' and

‘memorable’. In the article of Adam Sage in ‘The Australian’ website (2010) is described how Afshin, at the end of the theatrical play, *“he appeared with a green wristband in a show of support for the opposition Green Movement, holding one hand over his mouth to symbolize the country's repression of free speech and forming a victory sign with the other”*. After this he left Germany and moved to France for which he mentioned then that *“It's incredible to be able to do everything I was forbidden from doing in Iran,”* (Sage, 2010).

Then he described the art of dance as a vehicle to protest *“against the intolerance of the Islamic Republic”* (Sage, 2010). Today, five years later, after having gained more knowledge and experience about the world, he refers to the relationship of dance and Iran as something different.

“In my opinion, the problem is not really about dance itself but about the bad connotations which weighs down the word “dance.” In Iran, dance exists even in the official and public environments. It's just not called “dance”— it is part of “theater,” or “rhythmic gymnastics,” or “aerobic sports”. Unfortunately the word “dance” is linked with “vulgarity”, “prostitution”, “exhibitionism”, “nudity”, etc, which does not comply with the values of the Iranian society. For instance, in Los Angeles dances like C-Walk or Crip Walking are banned in most high schools because of their gang connotations. Similarly, in Iran, some forms of dance are treated in the same way, but at a larger scale, motivated by a similar fear, but obviously within a very different cultural context” (Reformances Company, 2015).

He believes that dance can work as a tool for stating political beliefs in the aspect of life but not for political parties, sides and regimes.

“The time when you try to deconstruct the categories or some prejudice and common perceptions in any society around the world by proposing the new ideas and a new way of looking into the world, you are doing a political action, even if you are not aware of it. But this political action cannot be reduced to a political position. In the sense of the life, everything is political; the way we talk, the way we behave, the way we consume, etc. They are all political no matter in which country we live” (Reformances Company, 2014).

He believes that dance and art in general can work as a “universal language”, however he also thinks that sometimes people are really far away from that language (Reformances Company, 2014).

His astonishing story of dancing life from Iran to France became a movie a year ago (2014) and it goes by the name of “Desert dancer” due to the underground desert performance in Iran. As Afshin states though, this is a movie inspired by his life and not his life in detail. However, he also mentions that the impact that the film had to many people reminded him how art has no border.

“It reminds me that we can only expand freedom of expression by expanding the horizon of possibilities before us, and by the act of expression in the face of obstacles. It reminds me to never surrender to any form of power that threatens our artistic existence, no matter where we are in this world. The fight for freedom of expression is the role of the artists themselves. I caution against those who would use this fight to push a political agenda, cloaked as advocacy” (Reformances Company, 2015).

Lastly, Afshin claims that *“the most important task of any artist is to try and contribute to a bridge that extends over our differences, allowing us to meet each other. We must help the narrative of those who believe in constructing the bridges instead of joining directly or indirectly to the warmongering narrative of those who just believe in war and destruction. We also have to be careful not to fall into the trap of portraying cultures that are deemed “exotic,” just so that we can capitalize on the fantasy version of that culture.* (Reformances Company, 2015). He finishes by pointing out that an artist should also be characterized as a constant protester no matter the place where they were born, grew up or the situations that have lived.

“When you are satisfied of the status quo, you have no place on stage” (Reformances Company, 2015).

4.8 Χορεύω Για Σένα, Για Μένα, Για Μας (*I Dance for You, for Me, for Us*)

(Chorevo ya sena, ya mena, ya mas): (charity- individual project)

Χορεύω Για Σένα, Για Μένα, Για Μας, was a charity project that was organized by Melina Chronopoulou in Athens, Greece and was aiming to gather food for the local social kitchen ‘Λαμπηδόνα’(Lampidona), of the area.

“It happened by accident, when Katerina, a friend of mine, that we’re in the same crew, proposed to combine the show that we were about to do with offers of food for the social kitchen of Lampidona where they have common meals for the homeless and the destitute, every Wednesday and Saturday” (Chronopoulou, 2015).

After this idea and the help of the municipality they thought that they could stage a bigger show, with professional dancers participating and instead of ticket each person could bring food to offer for the common.

Melina states for this attempt that she was very lucky to have people, friends and family around her, that supported this project and her financially, practically and psychologically.

“I am not sure if I would be able to do it otherwise. It was quite tiring and the bureaucracy was quite long and tricky but I was lucky that I found a woman named Olga Agapitou that was working at the municipality of Vyrona and she really helped me on booking a theatre and organizing everything I was supposed to on the bureaucracy area” (Chronopoulou, 2015).

The dancers gathered and they were willing to help the cause and as I mentioned above, the crowd brought food instead of money that was transferred in the social kitchen of the area. The event took part on February 2015 and with the help of the volunteers on stage (9 dancing crews, and 36 dancers in total of all levels and ages), off stage (organizing, gathering, etc) and under the stage (crowd), enough food was gathered to assume that the goal was achieved.

Melina mentioned that even though it was quite stressful to put everything together, at the end she felt quite happy and rewarded by achieving the goal. She commented that she would like to do something similar in the future but more organized and if possible in a bigger space.

“Because I see that there are many dance events going on, but there isn’t anything that does this as well (charity project). I had many things in mind after this, such as gathering money for kids with cancer, or give money to families with no other supplies, or pay some electricity or phone bills of specific families” (Chronopoulou, 2015).

She stated that she does not consider herself to be an activist because even though she would like to do it again, right now she is not that committed to it. She believes that what she did was the activist move but,

“if you do not act everyday then you cannot consider yourself as an activist. I don’t consider myself as one because in my mind activist is someone that fights everyday for something not because they did something one time. I don’t believe that something can change with one act per year. It needs constant projection, events, concerts, more often information to the public” (Chronopoulou, 2015).

Melina referred to dance activism as something that definitely exists and as something that can be supported in many different ways.

“I’ve seen people trying through their dance to pass specific messages, dance campaigns, videos, etc. If that brings results or not, that I think it cannot be judged by numbers but measured by the impact that causes to people” (Chronopoulou, 2015).

In order to connect activism and dance, Melina thinks that, the dancer has to reach a level of caring too much about a dance and a cause.

“I think that right now here in Greece there are people that can do that (dance activism) but not all of them, as there are people that they dance just because of the fame and money” (Chronopoulou, 2015).

As for the dance as a way to act, Melina allude to dance as a way of having further results other than raise awareness and puzzle people, but in order to do that it needs prosper ground, support and massive mobilization.

“I think that a more affective way is the one that reaches the most people. I think that flash mobs in central places are a creative way to promote something and reached many people but the videos, I believe, are more affective because more people are going to engage to it and watch it. However I am sure that each different way can reach and affect people in different ways” (Chronopoulou, 2015).

As a comment to her statement above, Melina mentioned that different styles can more easily match with specific causes, as for example the LGBT rights would be represented better with vogue style, whereas the same style might not work as good in another cause.

When the interview reached the point of discussing the possibilities and limits of dance as a way to act, Melina gave the following answer.

“The advantage of the art form of dance is that it can move people. Its immediacy and the body language can move and overwhelm even the ones that have no relation to it, unlike poetry or painting for instance. Also, the variety, you can play with costumes, expressions, theatricality, music can add to it quite some” (Chronopoulou, 2015).

As for the disadvantages of it, she remarked that dance can be not as direct as a speech would have been for example. However, other than that she does not find any other limits that relates specific to dance.

“In comparison with other types of arts I don’t think that dance has many differences since people will connect with what they want to connect. Maybe pictures and posters in the streets or music, concerts, singing and theatre are more or less the same with dance in protest matters” (Chronopoulou, 2015).

When the conversation turned to the ability of dancers to cooperate, Melina answered that is less likely for dancers to have the time and space to come together and organize something where they will give all their energy. She thinks that it has more to do with the lack of organization than with the dance as such.

“I don’t think that dance has less to offer. I think that it just hasn’t happened so far, as it happens with concerts for example. In general I think that, the artistic spaces don’t favor often the togetherness, cooperation and love, in these fields due to the huge competition that exists that brings negativity, which consumes time and energy that takes a lot from dance in matters as activism, shows, etc” (Chronopoulou, 2015).

4.9 Rafiki: (organization)

Rafiki is a non-profit organization that in cooperation with the locals in Tanzania, offers support in youth and children, equality, and help in their empowerment through art and dance. The word ‘rafiki’ is the word for ‘friend’ in Swahili and it was chosen to show the meaning of friendship that can work as a family in times of need and support each other by offering strength, support and care. It started as a small project in Norway named ‘Share from heart to heart’ and it continue to become this NGO called ‘Rafiki’ in October 2014 that is still based in Norway, while cooperating in ‘friendly’ bases (rafiki) with another NGO in Tanzania that is called ‘Mtoto Mchoraji’ and it is running by Dickson Charles (founder and director of Mtoto Mchoraji center).

The main goal of this organization is to build a center that could provide the teens with educational support in a sustainable community, in Bagamoyo (Tanzania), with studies in different kinds of art, supervision and welfare that produces certain amount of confidence and independence. The main vision is the equal empowerment of the youth (no matter the sex), through dance and art, through daily care and education (English, math, health care) and strengthen their willpower. All of the above will be

provided by dancers, artists and teachers from Norway and Tanzania. In their website they mention that “*dance and art plays a major part of the Tanzanian culture*” and that “*art is an important tool to heal and cope with daily challenges*” (“Rafiki,” n.d.).

4.10 Χορεύουμε Για Την Ζωή (*Dancing for Life*)

(Chorevume ya tin zoi): (charity-project)

This project was established 11 years ago, within the boundaries of ‘Χορευτικός Όμιλος Θεσσαλονίκης’ (Dancing group of Thessaloniki), and began from 5 dance teachers that wanted to do something to support the people of Thailand that were affected by the tsunami. Every year since then they perform; the money raised and the gatherings go to different causes each year.

The last three years they invite also groups from abroad that have their dancing education based on Greek traditional dances and in Greek culture in general. This year, 2015, a dance group from Belgium was invited to join the Greek groups that were taking part from all over Greece, and XOΘ of course. The money was given to two different clubs that supported people and kids with special needs.

4.11 The No Project: (campaign)

The No Project is a project that is fighting, as the title indicates, against human slavery and aims on the youth awareness through arts, music, dance, film, animation, sports, education, social media, journalism, writing, other. The eradication of trafficking is based in the passion of their volunteers and in the dedication, the artistic skills and talents of theirs. The volunteers of this global-educational antislavery campaign, includes dancers, musicians, actors and artists, teachers and researchers, journalists, lawyers, etc.

There has been many dance crews, dancers, judges, choreographers, producers, journalists, photographers (all of them as part of the dancing community), that raise awareness with, video, performances, posters, pictures and their constant strength and insistence. One of the most well known videos that have been published for this reason is called “Fight Human Trafficking” and is choreographed by Parris Goebel and performed by the ‘ReQuest Dance Crew’ that won the Hip-Hop World Championship in Las Vegas in 2010 (REQUEST DANCE CREW, 2014). This video was recorded in New Zealand and is aiming in purposes of education and raising awareness.

4.12 Stop The Traffik: (movement)

Stop The Traffik is a movement that acts on a global level and aims on the ending of people trafficking. This movement’s power is not based on dance but on the activists from around the world that are fighting to raise awareness in their community and to stop the selling and buying of people. Even though this is not a movement that bases its action on dance, there have been campaigns that went on for this purpose that were dance based.

One of the most well known campaigns, that was conducted on behalf of stoptrafficking.org was created by Duval Guillaume and was performed in Amsterdam at the windows of Moulin Rouge in the 'Red Light District' (*StopTheTraffik*, 2012). The creative team of Duval Guillaume, with Koenraad Lefever as Art Director and Dries De Wilde as Copywriter, created this campaign for a client of theirs that wanted to contribute to the movement of 'Stop The Traffik' with raising awareness (Maris, 2015). This video (that was used for that campaign) was published on April 4th 2012 and has proven very successful so far.

In my short email interview with Julie Maris, traffic planer of Duval Guillaume, said about the idea of the video that,

"It was a pro active idea for our client who is against human trafficking (www.stopthetraffik.org) as an awareness campaign" (Maris, 2015).

Julie mentioned that even though it is hard to measure awareness, if we take under consideration some facts such as the number of times this video has been viewed on YouTube and how many times it has been uploaded via several websites, we can assume that it was quite successful and that it fulfilled its purpose to inform and raise awareness on that subject.

"Even after two years, it is still being watched and shared ,, we of course noticed an increase of the number of people visiting the website of Stop The Traffic" (Maris, 2015).

Unfortunately, we were not able to get a documented and detailed analysis of this number.

Lastly, Julie commented on the fact that dance was used to promote this issue and if it is considered dance activism or not. She replied with the following.

"The campaign wasn't really about dance activism. The dancing was used as a 'false pretense' as often is told to (poor) women, to lure them. They promise them a dancing career but instead they need to work as prostitutes. In this case, it is sort of dance activism, but that's not the core" (Maris, 2015).

4.13 Association A La Bonheur (*Association of Happiness*): (non-profit organization)

Association a La Bonheur is not based in dance but dancers are a part of this organization. It was created by students and social workers and it aims to promote, and take part in the development of children with severe disease (such as leukemia, cancer, malignant tumor, etc). At the moment, the association is only for parents and their children of the Margency hospital (l'hôpital de Margency) that come up to 95 in total. A dancing battle was organized this year in Paris, where the funds were gathered for the association. It also organizes dance parties (raising funds) and dancing interventions at the hospital. Other than the economic help that is gathered from the events, with which dancers support the organization, they also support the kids and contribute in their psychological well being by visiting them in the hospital and performing for them.

5 DISCUSSION

“All children are born artists. The problem is to remain an artist as we grow up.” – Picasso (Robinson, 2006)

In this section, I will analyze the results and theory in relation to the research questions.

In the beginning of this study I cited Sir Ken Robinson’s TED talk where he mentions that dancing might not have a high place in the hierarchy of educational fields right now but it should have a high position in people’s hearts. He talked about how the education today kills the creativity of the kids and how the educational systems tend to educate the children “progressively from the waist up” and mainly focusing on their heads. In the same talk he mentions that intelligence is diverse and that people tend to act and think in the way that their experience of the world urges them to (Robinson, 2006). Humans tend to think according to what they have witnessed seeing, hearing or doing. This happens because the minute we come out in this world we start to mimic people, situations, moves and expressions. As we grow older we also tend to grow out of our creative side because our minds get filled with information and we only follow the ones that we think are useful. Perhaps that is why no matter how old we become, we still remember songs or scenes from our early years, because at that point our minds are blank and do not get occupied with many things at the same time. In that age all we want is to have a good time and move around.

Acting is usually defined by body movement and body movement is highly connected to art and especially to dance. In the theory section it was stated by Dr Peter Lovatt that dance speeds up our mental and thought processors. In the same TEDx speech he remarked that dancing is the most natural act of humans.

“We are biologically born and driven to dance. If dancing is an expression of our hormonal and genetic makeup it suggests that dancing is one of the most natural things in the world that we can do. So the idea, I think, worth spreading, is that dancing is a fundamental part of who we are; and can have a huge impact in our ability to learn.” (Lovatt, 2011)

In many of the interviews that are presented in the results section we can find the same thought and the same goes for the description of some movements. Dance is something that children love to do and something that nearly any baby wants to do when they hear music.

Something that we can also take from the interviews in the previous section was that the art form of dance was invented to entertain and to express people’s feelings, situations and to give them strength and that is what it tends to do. It does not change if the artist claims to be an activist or not. Activism and dance do not have separate meanings since dance was designed to act. If dance fails in its attempt to pass a message to the audience then this is not the fault of the art form but of the artists. In the data I collected - from the interviewees, the participants, the movements/projects, the literature review and my personal observation- shows that dance and art in general

has the power to make a change. If they were to ask, most dancers would say that art and dance more specifically has the power to act.

The subjects that were represented in this thesis; in literature review and over the interviews, that made the dancers to act, covered the entire spectrum of SD from the environmental responsibility, to political and social equality and progress to economic development. The development requires economic growth, in order for that development to be sustainable, the economic growth has to be under social justice and without having any “negative environmental impact” (Lamb, 2011). Human rights, awareness in environmental and ecological destruction, art sustainability, equality, human development, soul and body healing, medical awareness and happiness are just a few of the issues that are addressed in this study (both in literature and in the result section). Matters of SD, like political oppression, have been addressed without having governmental approval since they worked against political regimes or governments. There are also many cases of SD matters being addressed before the definition of SD was introduced, ex ‘Our great circus’. The above situations might not officially be called SD but are definitely covered by the sustainability ‘umbrella’. ESD tends to be ensconced in these issues that are represented with dance, since the education in these cases is aiming to create thoughts and behaviors that will benefit human development in a sustainable way. Artists like Safi Thomas (Hip-Hop Conservatory) that was interviewed in this research stated that ‘education and art’ and ‘education and dance’ cannot be separated since that is the aim of art and dance from the beginning. The rest of the participants seem like they would have agreed with this opinion since all of them aimed in educating the public or their members/participants. Dance is functioning as a bridge among different cultures and can work as a catalyst in inspiring dialogues and making a change as Afshin Ghaffarian (Reformances) stated in his interview.

However, in one interview it was stated that dance can really act as an educational tool for sustainability purposes, only if people see it as one (Chow, 2015). Perhaps this is why sometimes people turn to art in their times of difficulty and need. Probably that is part of the reason why artistic forms of expression are banned in different political regimes. Not all humans have the chance to grow up in healthy environments where dance is allowed. Others simply cannot afford to take dance lessons or even watch a dance show and others are not lucky enough to have the luxury of time to deal with dance. Regardless, we can still find art jumping out of most unexpected places. Who has not seen graffiti in the most grey areas, or different forms of art, popping out from war zones, poor countries, or ghetto neighborhoods? There have been dance festivals, dance companies, movies, documentaries, videos that promote different causes. In many documentaries (that are not presented in this study) dance styles are shown to be created because people wanted a way out of the choices they were offered or their dull or even dangerous reality. Dance styles like traditional jazz, hip-hop, clown and krump, house or Melbourne shuffle are just a few of the dance styles that were created in the street.

I believe that most of the countries in the world have folk dances that got created in order to represent something. In my country, a lot of different traditional dances exist that were created in times of war and are still danced by kids, women and men in many different occasions. In documentaries like ‘Rize’, ‘Culture of Hope’, ‘Shake the Dust’, ‘Planet Bboy’ we can hear dancers express how dance saved their lives and how they turned to that form of art to express themselves and to find themselves. So if

we combine these documentaries, the literature review in chapter 3 and the interviews, it is not weird to find dance representing, protesting, educating, raising awareness and forming societies. Still, we can see difficulties be presented in dancers when they want to cooperate with non-dance movements or NGOs (Clark, 2015). It is often not that easy to do so because dance is not highly considered in the educational world, so it is not believed by many that dance can help or make a change in important matters and not just be a form of entertainment.

In the results sections we find differences among the projects, movements and organizations regarding how they started, where they act and why they fight for. These reasons might differ from cause to cause but they all fight with the same weapon and that is dance. Each participant is using dance to fight for the change they want to achieve, maybe not with the same style of dance but that does not really matter because as the interviewers stated it needs a variety to express your message and different types of dance might express better different causes or reach different people.

“We found that different types of dancing have different effects on peoples processing speed which is often linked with intelligence, problem solving tasks and their level of creativity” (Lovatt, 2011)

Consequently, not all of the artists use the same dance style to pass their message and this is obvious not only in the result but in the theoretical section as well. Hip-Hop, traditional dances, funky jazz, contemporary, commercial, street and structured choreographies are only some of the styles that are mentioned. Dance was chosen not as a means to an end but because that was their only weapon to fight back. All of them had faith in their style of choice which was also selected because it was the one they knew how to handle and how to work with. In one case only, the dance and the dance style were chosen as a ‘false pretense’ and not because it was the only option (Maris, 2015). Still, even in that case the use of dance remained a creative, helpful and successful way to raise awareness. Other than the use of different styles of dance we can also observe the difference in the ways of using dance. Some prefer flash mobs, others live shows, classes, videos, documentaries or pictures of dancers in action. A few of the interviewees commented highly on the importance of the internet in fulfilling a purpose since it is the one that can capture more people. I believe that most of the participants however, would agree with that since they all try to have at least some information or videos online to keep the people informed or raise awareness and funds.

Something that it is worth mentioning is that dancers do not separate their art form; dance is art and art is dance. When they talk about dance they refer to art as well. They show a certain respect for the entire spectrum of art every time they talk about dance. Even when they were referring to the possibilities and limits of dance, most of the interviewers replied that dance is not better or worse than any other type of art; it is just different. Moreover, the representatives that were not possible to conduct an interview with -and I based my data solely in their websites and videos or just in the literature- have also referred to dance and to art as the way to act. In addition, dancers refer to their art as not having much difference than any other form of art in the expressive side, since dance too is there to stand for something in a more kinetic way.

Maybe that happens for the reason that some of the interviewees mentioned in the advantages of dance, that it does not function alone, it usually co exists with other forms of art such as music, theatre, singing and others. In the possibilities and advantages of dance, the representatives did also refer to the fact that dance can capture a wide auditorium and that it makes people feel good since, as it is also mentioned above, humans are born to move. Consequently, dance has the ability to take them back in time and connect everybody as equals, as 'dancers'. It was also mentioned that dance can help artists to express anything they want since there are a great variety of moves and styles, as long as they have a clear view of what they want to express. Furthermore, besides the combination of moves, dancing does also enable dancers to combine different forms of art and use the musicality, the rhythmic aspect, the group dynamic and the positivism that dance offers. At this point I would like to add that dance can exist without music and just use voices, stomps or counts or simply nothing to dance on. However, it is not preferred by the majority of the dance community, since dancers can be more inspired in the existence of rhythm and often create choreographies that match specific music or create music that matches their dance.

Concerning the limits of dance, it was often noted in the interviews that dance might be limited by the absence of speech so you cannot transfer what you want to say or what you are doing immediately to the crowd but you have to do it indirectly. In the theory it was also mentioned that dance cannot stay since it is not something you can give or keep, it can only be passed from a dancer to dancer, so it is possible to be lost in time. This two were the greatest drawbacks of the dance as a form of art, since it is something that people have to experience it themselves (be present or be a part of it) in order to understand it. It is not something that is easily described or copied especially since it only transfers emotions and not words. However, this does not remain as a huge problem today, since we are able to record dance plays and shows with the use of a video-camera and spread it through the Internet. Even though, losses still remain since a dance piece can be stronger in direct contact with the public. Additionally, it was also mentioned that dance does not have a high status in education, as it is already mentioned, and it does not get governmental support, probably because it is not considered as something important. Lastly, a disadvantage that was noted by the majority of the interviewees was that dancers are the ones having disadvantages and not dance as an art. This happens because dancers could be too caught up on their selves (remain fit, healthy, uninjured, practice) and their problems (auditions, jobs, money) so that they forget the possible larger purposes of their artistic endeavor. Furthermore, the competition that exists in the artistic fields does not encourage solidarity in forming a combined act.

Lastly, all of the interviewees (including Julie Maris in the Red Light District campaign where dance was used as a means to an end) agreed that dance succeeded in its cause. However, consistency is necessary because doing something once might have an effect at the time you do it but it will fade out quickly.

All of the participants, the dancer interviewees and the ones discussed in theoretical lens, decided to stand up for something they believed. They chose different platforms, lived in different times, belonged in countries with different regimes and different backgrounds but they all chose dance as their way of confronting and perhaps changing the world. Nonetheless, dance has worked effectively in their attempt of addressing sustainability issues.

6 CONCLUSION

“Love responsibility. Say: It is my duty, and mine alone, to save the earth. If it is not saved, then I alone am to blame” –Nikos Kazantzakis (Kazantzakis, 1964)

During this research I sometimes got caught up in academic language and requirements that I forgot the fundamental reason why I chose this topic. The real reason is that I love to dance and at the same time I want to make the world a better place. So the only choice I had was to go with “sustainability and art”. The person that dances can make his/her life better both physically and mentally. Still it is not just the dancer that benefits from the dance but the viewer as well. The viewer can receive a vast amount of emotions that can be translated in information. These emotions could vary a great deal from happiness and joy to sadness and anger, but nevertheless the viewer is receiving something that makes them feel. That feeling could either stay as it is, (depending on both the auditorium and the artist) or it could transform to thinking of why, how and what. Why do I feel this way? How do I feel? What can I do about it? The bottom line is that if the feeling will be translated in our minds then we would not just capture the feeling but the thought behind it and understand the message that the artist wanted to pass on. As Dr Lovatt (2011) said, while referring to the people that perform the act of dancing, the process of dance is rudimentary on who we are and can have a huge influence on our ability to learn.

Dance, has the necessary requirements in between the arts that makes it ready to fight, protest, educate, transform realities and act. It is ready because this is what it is doing from the beginning of its existence. Dance was created from our need to move and our need to express ourselves nonverbally.

“Dancers, choreographers, performers, they too are responsible for making a society that accepts the ideals of “freedom, justice and peace” and takes responsibility, moral and political responsibility, for the ideas that their dances promote”,

Marion Kant remarked through the book of ‘Human, Social responsibility and Dance’ (Jackson and Shapiro-Phim, 2008:18). There are many setbacks in this world so the issues will never run out. All we, dancers, have to do is put our egos aside and struggle for a better future, while fighting these setbacks, in togetherness. Besides,

“the failures that we need to correct arise both from poverty and from short sighted way in which we have often pursued prosperity” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

This can only happen by adding the creativity that the art contains, in our educational systems where it can receive the same status as literacy since they are equally important (Robinson, 2006). Especially since art has both the creativity and the educational part within. Someone needs to be surrounded with art in everyday life, if we want to cause a change through it. Being in contact with art rarely might transfer information but cannot really change minds and attitudes. Giving the message once, or receiving it once, it might be enough for informing but not for bringing the difference, as it will be forgotten unless you are reminded on a daily basis.

Today, more often than before, one is likely to see dance activism on the internet or on TV. Even though dance activism, dance expression or simply the active dance community, is in action for so long, it was not included often in the media for reasons other than background entertainment. However, the media coverage is still not as big as it should be. Perhaps, this is because our material world concerns more people or because dance is still not a widely accepted form of protest, rather than a beautiful form of entertainment. Although dance is something nice to look at we must never forget that “art wasn’t supposed to look nice, it was suppose to make you feel something” (Rowell, 2013:165). Nonetheless, in a fast pace society as the one that we live today, even if one person is affected by each dance movement, or dance show, or dance video or simply a dance style, then it is a pretty good start. Treat your art with respect and it will respect you back.

To summarize, dance is a form of art, and often it is not treated in the academic world as a scientific topic, therefore, it was also difficult to treat my approach to this research as such. My arguments were drawn based on personal experiences and my deep passion for dance, whereby I try to connect the art of dance as an alternative to deal with issues of sustainability. Dance can certainly entertain but it can also raise awareness and educate. It is proven in this research that it is an effective way to promote sustainability. However, if we want dance to actually make a difference, then we need to learn how to appreciate dance and art from a young age and not just think of it as a hobby or something of less importance. We need to have constant connection with the arts, so that we learn how to appreciate them; and for that to happen we need to change our educational systems. That is the only way for people to learn the importance of the arts, and consider them as a tool for a worldwide change in our try for a sustainable future.

This research had many limitations with regards to time, resources and in finding available literature, but I feel that the samples were broad enough to be somewhat representative of contemporary dance activism in parts of the world. I applaud the dancers around the world who are using their art to strive for a better society; to borrow words from Martha Graham

“great dancers are not great because of their technique; they are great because of their passion” (Munsi and BurrIDGE, 2012).

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Appendix 1

Interview Questions: General

Activism:

1. Would you describe yourself as an activist? What does it take to be one?
2. Does dance activism exist?
3. How far, do you think, dance activism can really go (to raise awareness, inform, educate, protest, reform, change realities)?
4. Do you know any cases where dance activism worked in such a way?
5. Do you cooperate with other movements for activism and which ones?

Dance/Art

1. Do you think, from your experience so far, that dance can be used as a tool for education (in social, political, economic or environmental problems) and how?
2. Which are the ways dance activism can work better (flash mobs, shows, videos, photos, etc). Which one would you prefer to use and why?
3. Are some kinds of dance (contemporary, street, modern, etc) better suited for particular kinds of activism for SD? Elaborate.
4. Can dance be more effective in activism compared to other sorts of art?
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of dance (in comparison with other forms of art)?
6. Physical motion, musicality, rhythmic aspect and group dynamic. Do they contribute in choosing dance or taking from it?

Appendix 2

Interview Questions:

The movement

1. What made you take the initiative and create/start your movement/project/organization/company? What is the general vision of it?
2. Did you experience any difficulties, in the beginning or during?
3. Why did you choose this name/acronym/etc? What does it represent?
4. What are the short-term goals of the movement? By what means are you trying to achieve your goals?
5. Where do your money and supplies come from (other than donations from individuals)? Do you aim for sponsors?
6. What is the structure of the movement and how are the decisions made?
7. What are the criteria to accept an invitation (from country, organization, company, etc) and are you invited often?
8. Are you satisfied with what you are doing? Can you see the results from your efforts and how?
9. Is there an active "dance activism community"? How could you describe an effective dance activism community?

Appendix 3

Interview Questions:

Specific to
(Dieufel Lamisere – Dance to Save Lives)

- 1 Can dance work as an educational tool?
- 2 In which subjects and ways?
- 3 Why did you decide to start this project?
- 4 Do you think that your project is successful so far? Why?

Appendix 4

Interview Questions:

Specific to
(Julie Maris – Stop The Traffik)

1. How did you get involved? Why?
2. What is the idea behind it
3. When was this performed?
4. Do you, or your client, think that this campaign was a successful one with raising awareness?
5. How can you measure if it was successful or not?

