



Dance

Strategic Plan

2024-
2028

dudanceneni.com



Who we are

DU Dance (NI)
is Northern
Ireland's
only dedicated

**dance
development
company**



We introduce **young people of all abilities** and from a **wide variety of social, cultural and economic backgrounds** to dance and to performing and creative arts.

We work across communities which **often have limited or no access to dance provision**, challenging traditional views of the relevance and value of this art form.

The **unique service** that we provide through the art form of dance **contributes to the arts sector, the social environment and the economy** and specifically addresses **current government policies** on social inclusion.

We work with an **experienced team of artists**, collaborate across art forms and engage with a wide range of **partner organisations** from the public and private sectors.

We are based in the creative hub of The Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast.

Our vision
and mission

Our VISION



To advance dance as an art form, build community connections and foster tolerance and respect.

Our AIM



To introduce young people to dance and related creative activities, and to advocate dance as a tool for facilitating personal and social development.

Our MISSION



To provide access to innovative contemporary dance workshops and projects across communities, which may have limited or no dance provision, and with people experiencing social exclusion, challenging traditional views of the relevance and value of dance.



We value

Accessibility

– a quality dance experience for individuals and groups, including those where access has traditionally been limited.

Respect

– we value and respect everyone, regardless of experience, cultural, social or economic background, encouraging all staff and project participants to value and respect each other.

Quality Experience

– we are committed to providing a high-quality artistic experience that is holistic and encourages physical, emotional and cognitive development.

A Safe Environment

– we provide a safe, caring and empathetic working environment, both in the company's office and in places of delivery.

Knowledge

– we share knowledge and expertise with stakeholders and project partners to build capacity and sustainability for the company's work.

Openness

– we operate with open and transparent management practices in the interest of funders, stakeholders and participants.

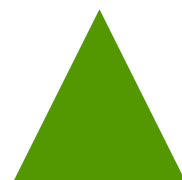


Our work is delivered through short and long term development programmes with and within communities in Northern Ireland, so that we can build relationships.



We work with some of the most **marginalised young people in**

Northern Ireland, engaging them in non-competitive, creative activity delivered to a high professional standard – regardless of whether that work takes place in a high profile venue such as St Anne’s Cathedral, the Royal Albert Hall, London or in a local youth centre.



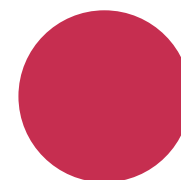
We work in **conventional and unconventional spaces** giving

young people and their community access to iconic buildings and animating and capitalising on open, outdoor spaces.



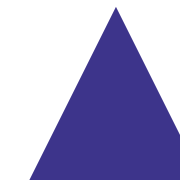
We **push the boundaries** of where and with who dance has value.

Our philosophy and approach



We engage with **relevant and significant partner**

organisations, recognising the unique specialisms that partners bring as well as the added benefits of sharing skills and resources and building capacity and sustainability.



We are committed to **training, sharing skills and**

building new audiences as well as advocating to funders, stakeholders, policy and decision makers that investing in dance as an art form can have huge, transformative and beneficial impacts.



We are **flexible and adapt to changing circumstances**

which allows us to respond to participants’ needs and wishes and provide ongoing delivery and performance work bespoke to them.



Partnership

Partnerships and building relationships are a big part of our work.

We have organisational partnerships with **One Dance England, National Youth Arts Wales and Y-Dance in Scotland**, supporting and networking for youth dance in Northern Ireland.

We are part of a select **European community dance network**, with active and supportive partner organisations in **Germany and Austria**.

Through the network the company is better placed to keep abreast of dance developments in Europe and to keep up-to-date with good standards and practices.

We also act as consultants for international programmes in **Ethiopia and Palestine**.

Closer to home we work with organisations like **Barnardo's NI, Beyond Skin and Queen's University Belfast** to deliver quality programmes with young people that are often disenfranchised and overlooked.



Strategic Goals

Provide a high-quality experience that challenges, inspires and connects young people.

Advance dance as an art form advocating it as a powerful tool for positive personal development and community cohesion.



Corporate Objectives



1

We will provide access to a wide range of contemporary dance workshops and projects that vary in focus, length and scale and include intergenerational, cross-community and intercultural work.

We will do this by:

- Delivering an intensive programme of work that targets and engages diverse groups and individuals.
- Ensuring that projects are financially accessible and that costs are not a barrier to participation for both participants and audiences.
- Developing partnerships with organisations that share a target market and/or similar ethos, and who have a remit to support young people.

- Setting the bar high for all young people to ensure work is engaging and challenging yet age and culturally appropriate.
- Encouraging and helping participants to network and access wider support programmes.
- Providing physical access to venues and places outside of participants' normal experiences and expectations.

2

We will raise awareness of the short and long term impact of the company's work in areas such as health, community relations, and education.

We will do this by:

- ▼ Engaging in meaningful research with significant partner organisations.

- ▼ Fostering new partnerships.
- ▼ Monitoring, evaluating and disseminating the short and long-term impact of the company's work.
- ▼ Encouraging young people who have participated in projects to become advocates for the work.
- ▼ Maintaining a vibrant and active youth steering group for the company and keeping abreast and engaging with new and current technologies.
- ▼ Marketing and publicising the work of the company in collaboration with partner organisations and stakeholders.
- ▼ Where possible working with external evaluators to secure a level of objectivity, and to use a variety of appropriate evaluation tools, including and in particular video and film.

3

We will make training opportunities available for all company staff and volunteers and, where possible and appropriate, for partner organisations.

We will do this by:

- Seeking and availing of training for our staff and board, growing the organisation, developing capacity and ensuring skills are effective and up to date.
- Offering mentorship and work experience opportunities on all programmes, in the company office, and on projects and a range of follow-up, training, professional development and capacity building services to project partners and beneficiaries.
- Where relevant, equipping groups and partners with the skills to function independently.

- Offering professional development opportunities to other practitioners to help build capacity and the sustainability of the work.
- Offering placement opportunities to young people interested in dance development work and seek opportunities to advocate for dance.

4

We will continue to maintain an efficient operating model.

We will do this by:

- Developing partnerships with the private sector and forging and fostering partnerships in the public and voluntary sectors to ensure effective delivery and increase the sustainability of the work.
- Exploring and maximising all potential funding opportunities.
- Being committed to the philosophy and approach of DU Dance (NI).

- Enforcing and annually reviewing and updating the company's robust policies including, though not limited to: Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Supporting and encouraging the company's Youth Steering Group to voice their opinions, develop their skills and advocate for the company and dance generally.
- Spending at least one day each year strategically planning with DU Dance (NI) Board of Directors.
- Ensuring communications are open and operations transparent, encouraging input from staff in regular team meetings.
- Engaging with government departments and statutory bodies and ensuring that staff and Board are abreast of policy and fiscal changes which affect the sector and the company.

Programme of Work 2024- 2025

The four separate but interconnected programmes of work into which DU Dance (NI) has formulated its approach and delivery, use the generic titles:

Opening the Spectrum,
Building Bridges,
Crossing the Divide
and **Closing the Gap.**

Opening the Spectrum

focuses on **developing opportunities** for young people, encouraging them to connect to the wider world.

The programme promotes networking, nurtures aspirations and looks to combat the geographic isolation that so often limits potential.

The programme may include anything from on-going, longitudinal programmes to summer schemes, performances, festivals, or one-off workshops.

Opening the Spectrum may include work outside of Northern Ireland when the social or developmental aim fits into the framework of the company's mission statement.

Building Bridges

benefits **marginalised young people** socially segregated due to cultural identity, behavioural difficulties or challenges around their mental and physical wellbeing.

These young people are often excluded from full participation in society by the organisation of both our physical and social environment.

The programme seeks to build connections between groups, to support those having adverse childhood experiences, encourage a viewpoint that celebrates difference, and engender a change in attitude by and towards the young people to facilitate a process of integration into the community.

Crossing the Divide

focuses on **cross-community work** using dance with its physical, emotional and cognitive demands as a tool to provide people with a safe environment to let go of fears and prejudices and begin to have contact with each other based on our common humanity.

In the belief that most attitudes to life are established in childhood and on the understanding that change needs to happen both at the grassroots as well as at policy level, DU Dance (NI) works with young people in a variety of educational and social settings and focuses on those where participants are experiencing inter-community conflict.

Closing the Gap

concerns itself with **inter-generational** work.

Historically, dance has been a social gatherer with people of all ages and genders. In more modern times however, there are few situations that bring people of different generations together.

Closing the Gap seeks to address this lack of connection, advocating the power of dance as a vehicle for personal, social and community growth.



Programme of Work

Priorities for Action

● Develop existing **youth dance provision and networks.**

▲ Increase access to dance for **young people**, particularly those who are living in areas of socio-economic deprivation, experiencing adverse childhood experiences, who are isolated through family, social circumstances or geographic location.

■ Animate and capitalise on the use of **traditional and non-traditional spaces and places**, including outdoor public space.

▲ Respond to ideas suggested by the company's Youth Steering Group and project participants and, where possible and appropriate, reflect this in programming.

■ Connect people from **different cultural backgrounds**, facilitating integration and community connections.

● Strengthen and broaden **effective partnerships and systems** that underpin and support the company's developing programme and increase capacity and sustainability.



In 2024/25 DU Dance (NI) will focus on delivering:



DU Dance (NI) programme 2024/25 will engage:

1000 young people as participants

in 250 workshops

and 23 performances/events

with an estimated audience of 2800

All programmes are outreach, tackling barriers to engage in the arts and encourage participation and the development and diversification of audiences.



Programme of Work

In addition to the four programme streams outlined previously

nationally and internationally DU Dance (NI) will continue to extend its profile



● Maintaining a diverse range of **national and international partner organisations**.

■ Consulting for **dance development projects in Ethiopia**, with dance professionals who are former street children and now work both locally and internationally with some of the poorest communities.

DU Dance (NI) may also respond to requests for **classes and workshops**, whether locally, nationally or internationally, that have a social or developmental aim and fit into the framework of the company's mission statement:
developing and broadening the place and people to whom dance is deemed to be relevant.

Work will be time dependant, focused and limited.

▲ Engaging **high profile, international guest artists** to inspire young people and connect Northern Ireland to the world-wide culture.



Programme of Work

2025-2026



In 2025/26 - as a development from Shoreline (2024/25), the company will deliver a **large-scale performance event in Belfast** which will see all its engagement programmes coming together in one platform.

The work will be directed and delivered by local artists who are part of DU Dance (NI) team and some who will have come through the company's artists development programme.

In addition, the company will continue to deliver on the following programmes:

- Unanimous Performance Platform
- ▲ Primary Schools Dance Festival
- Youth Engagement Projects - Belfast Boys & BB Junior
- ▲ Day of Dance
- Youth Engagement Projects - Sutemos & Suteminis
- Trauma Research Project
- ▲ Creative Schools Programme
- Youth Engagement Project - Alternative Energies





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