

Coordinators:

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1. Introduction & Explanation

Karin und Elisabeth started the meeting elaborating on its main topic: the financial support needs for dance in Berlin. After their brief introduction, they opened up the debate which focused mostly on the long term funding availability and accessibility. Also central were the efficiency and fairness of existing structures for distributing funds.

Status quo

Initial comments on these topics described the status quo, artists' struggle for secure long term or even any financial support. Since existing systems already offer several possibilities for funding¹, the discussion turned to how the current situation could be further improved and what is still missing.

2. Collecting questions and needs:

The following questions and ideas came up as individual statements. They were met with greater or lesser agreement by the group as a whole and offer a first overview over the different needs to be considered.

Accessibility and Long term investment

- Do international and Berlin educated artists enjoy equal access to information and funding?
- Should there be financial rewards or support for artists who have already invested in Berlin (for example in education programmes, in their own company, or who want to stay in Berlin, or have already been working in Berlin for several years)? Many dance artists have to earn additional income internationally because they struggle to make ends meet with their artistic income in Berlin alone.
- How are access and success related to artists' socio-economic backgrounds?

Evaluation system for funds distribution

- Do we have to change our evaluation system or its selection criteria to include more artists and keep them in the city?
- How can selection criteria be both strict and flexible?
- We need to consider the differences among certain groups of artists. Emerging artists, for example, have different needs than more established ones; some just need a kick start, others longer support.
- From the jury's perspective: how can we translate applications and concepts for jury members without a dance background? How does such translation influence artists' work?

¹ <https://www.berlin.de/sen/kultur/foerderung/foerderprogramme/darstellende-kunst/>

- How do existing funding and evaluation structures influence the form and content of artistic work?

City and community

- What are Berlin's special qualities and what can dance offer beyond individual productions? How can we use money in a different, more flexible way to bring artists together and not necessarily get caught in a project circle of "applying -producing-performing"?
- Do we need more solidarity? Some of the competitive tendencies in dance may need rethinking to build a more supportive, sustainable, and sharing community, independent of artists' age and nationality.

3. Situation analysis

After this initial sharing of ideas, the coordinators Karin and Elisabeth informed the group about an upcoming survey on the situation of artists currently practicing in Berlin, which aims to better understand artists' needs. To complement this study, the group suggested the following information as interesting and helpful:

- Age
- Monthly income
- Income from secondary employment
- Experience (years)
- Experience in Berlin (years)
- Family income / support / inheritance / monetary gifts
- How artists work in groups and on their own

4. Concrete ideas for the use and investment of money:

In the latter half, the discussion turned toward more concrete formulations of how funding could and should be used. The following proposals were put forward:

- Dance institutions that already have equipment could get funding so they can provide artists cheaper or free access.
- Other art institutions might exhibit a greater willingness to integrate dance artists if they got additional support.
- Artists could be offered seasonal support.
- Reactions to the idea of long term support in the form of a basic income were mixed so Karin suggested moving this discussion to the end (cf. 5.).
- Housing, education, practice rooms, and health-insurance for artists were proposed as an alternative to a basic income.
- One proposal emphasised the audience: periodical free tickets for Berliners to attract attention and new audiences.

5. Exploring the idea of a basic income

Large parts of the group agreed on viewing the basic income as conditional. The precondition would be to be an artist. But concerns were brought up about how exactly this condition could be met and measured. Suggestions were, artists would have to provide regular evidence of previous work, concepts for the future, and the will to continue working.

Several group members addressed problems regarding such conditionality, for example: advantages of some academic students, disadvantages of artists with fewer years of practice and artists who want to concentrate on exploring and research etc.

A group member mentioned possible conflicts between a basic income and other forms of funding. The group agreed that basic income and project funding should complement one another.

These considerations concluded today's meeting on "money & more". In upcoming sessions, the group will continue working on the threads opened up here.