Connections Through Culture

Discovering Disabled Dance Talent in Indonesia

We Are Epic 2023

In January and February 2023, We Are Epic conducted a mapping project to find disabled talent across ‘the big four’ islands of Indonesia

-Sumatra
-Kalimantan (Borneo)
-Sulawesi
-Java

We Are Epic are experienced at delivering Talent Development programmes with Disabled artists in the UK and Cambodia but to deliver this project effectively we needed to collaborate with respected and skilled local partners in Indonesia.

To deliver this we worked with Balled ID (Jakarta) and Nalitari (Yogyakarta), who we felt were best placed within the sector to undertake this research.

NALITARI

we are EPIC

in association with epicarts

ballet.id

Ballet Indonesia Foundation

Outcomes

1.To create an informal network of Indonesian disabled dancer artists in order to inspire further connection and collaboration in the dance sector domestically (in Indonesia) and internationally (in the other areas We Are Epic work)

2.To bring together leading Indonesian companies in dance and inclusion to strengthen their relationship and ability to create change together

Outputs

1.The creation of 1 database containing contact details for future development

2.The creation of 1 report summarising the project and making recommendations for future development

Methodology

The team used a variety of methods to contact potential participants

1. Word of Mouth - phone calls, emails and networking with colleagues, existing partners and friends within the sector to obtain leads

2. Online Research was conducted to find new partner organisations who could identify disabled dancers in the key areas

3. An ‘Open Call’ was made on social media for new participants and wider networks. We signposted these to Nalitari and Ballet ID

Participants were then asked to complete a questionnaire that requested:

1.Contact details

2. How they identify as disabled

3. What type of dance they practiced (e.g Traditional, Contemporary)

4.Whether they were professional (were paid for their services) or danced as a hobby (as part of cultural, educational or dance organisations)

5. To know what support would assist their practice

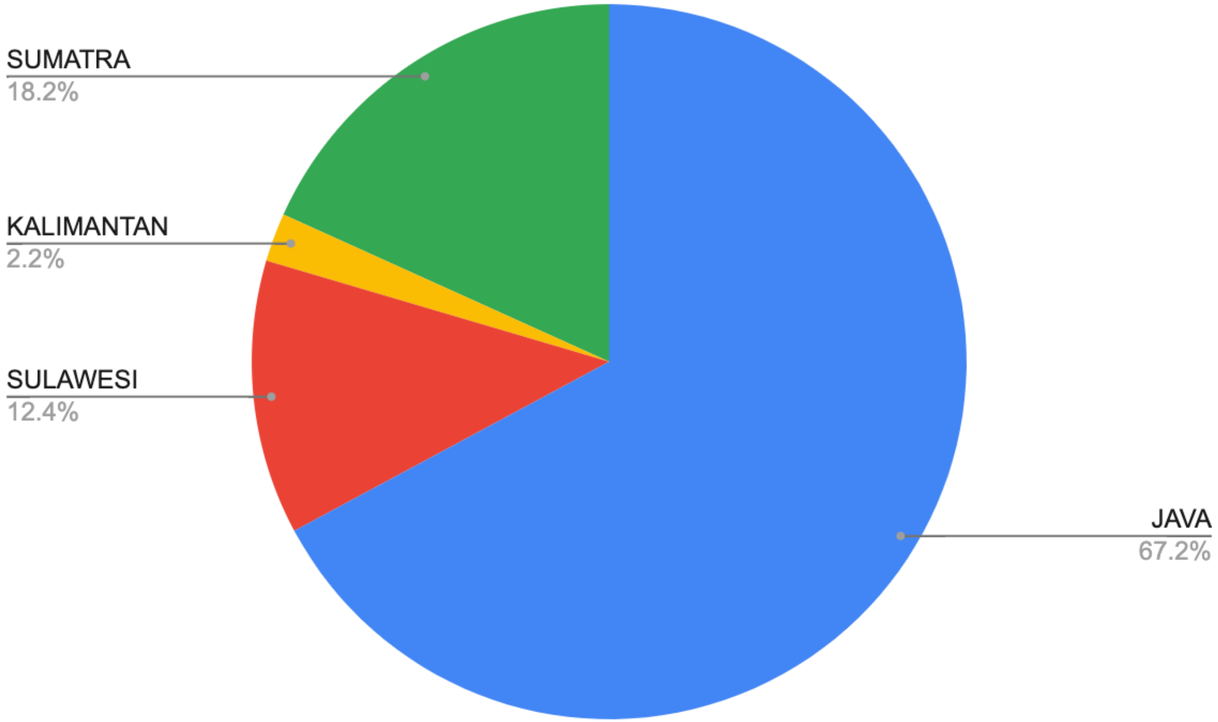
Our research uncovered a total of 137 Disabled Dancers in Indonesia

92 Disabled Dancers in Java

25 Disabled Dancers in Sumatra

17 Disabled Dancers in Sulawesi

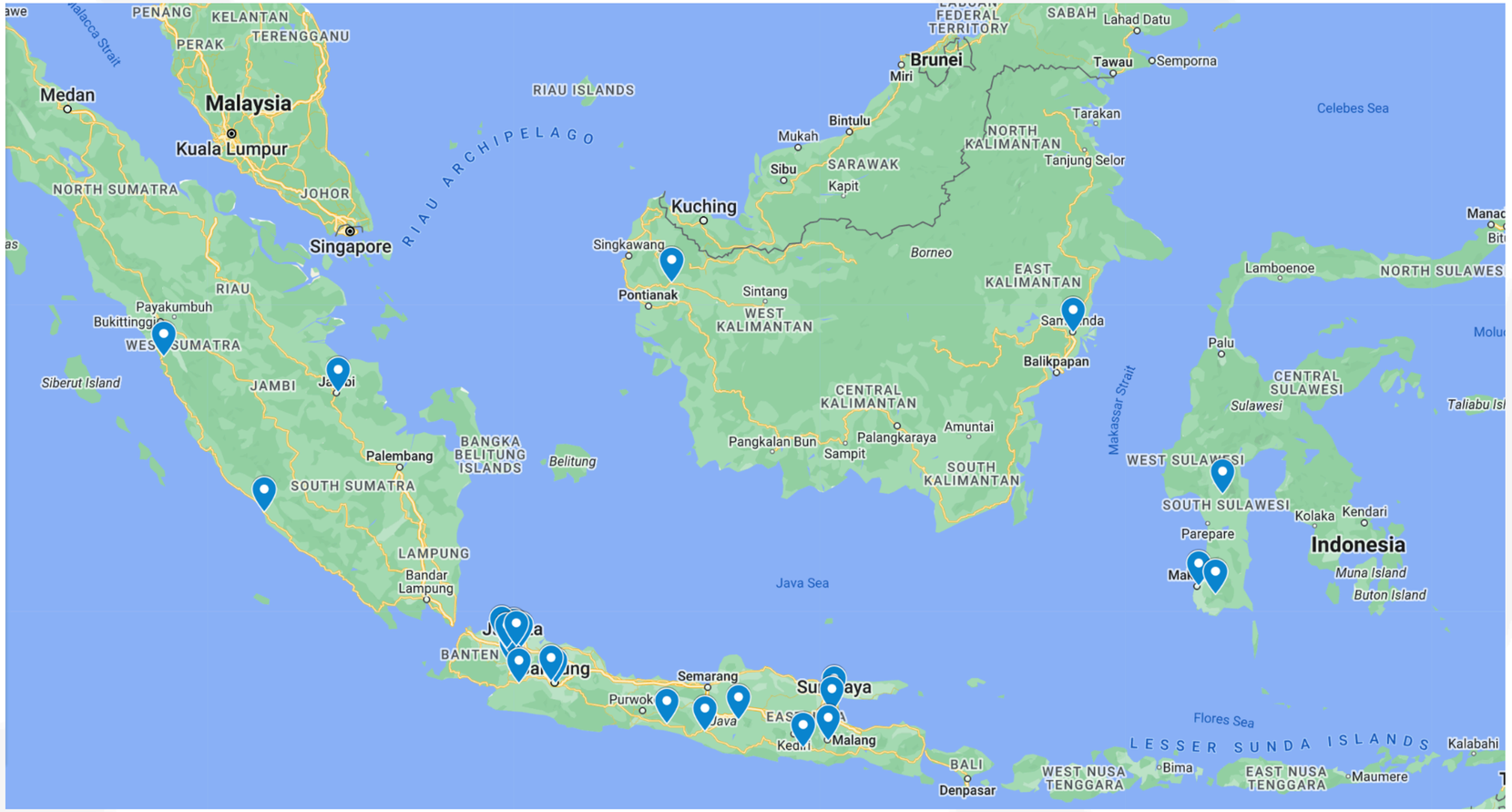
3 Disabled Dancers in Kalimantan



Although not included in the official dance numbers we also engaged with a further 32 disabled professionals and other organisations with arts backgrounds. Java (14) Sumatra (5) Sulawesi (5) Kalimantan(2) and Bali (6)

Geographic Spread

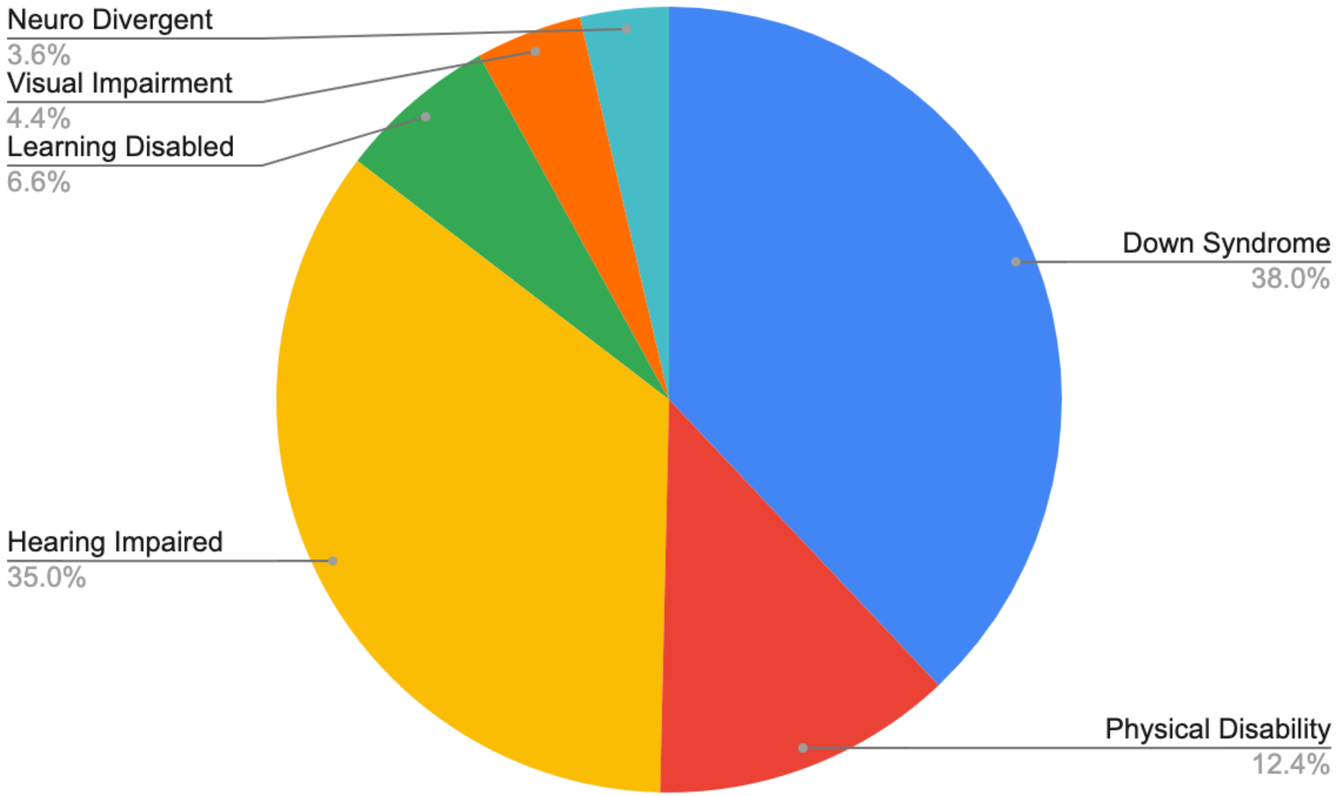
137 dancers spanned 25 different main locations across the islands.



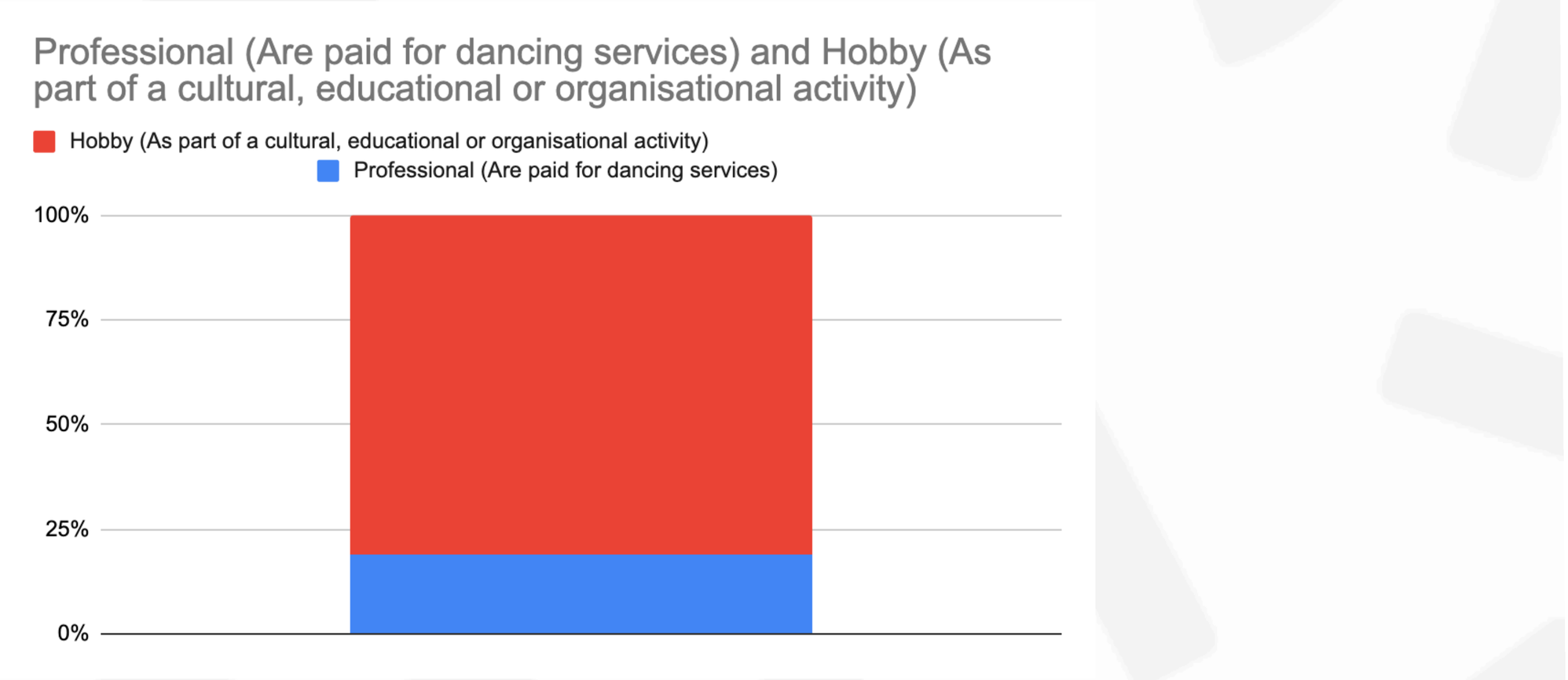
The majority of dancers and organisations are located near major cities. 96% of individual were associated with an organisation or NGO.

The 137 dancers ranged from age 6 to age 44 with an average (mean) age being 19 years.

All participants self-identified as having a disability

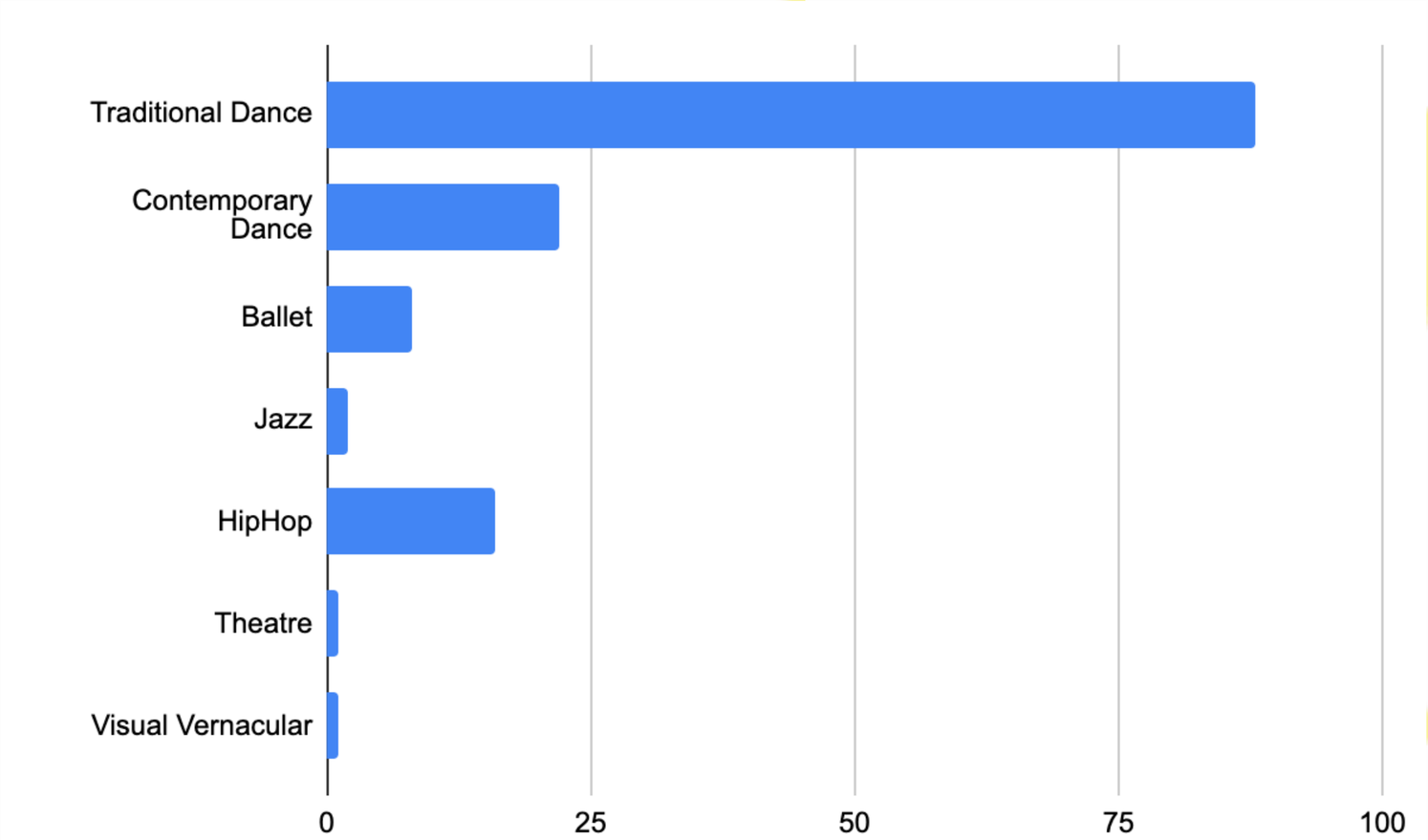


Over 75% (111) of dancers said they danced for a hobby as part of a cultural, educational or organisation



Less than 25%(26) of dancers said they were paid as professionals for their dance services

Traditional dance was the most popular dance form with significant numbers of Contemporary, Ballet and HipHop performers



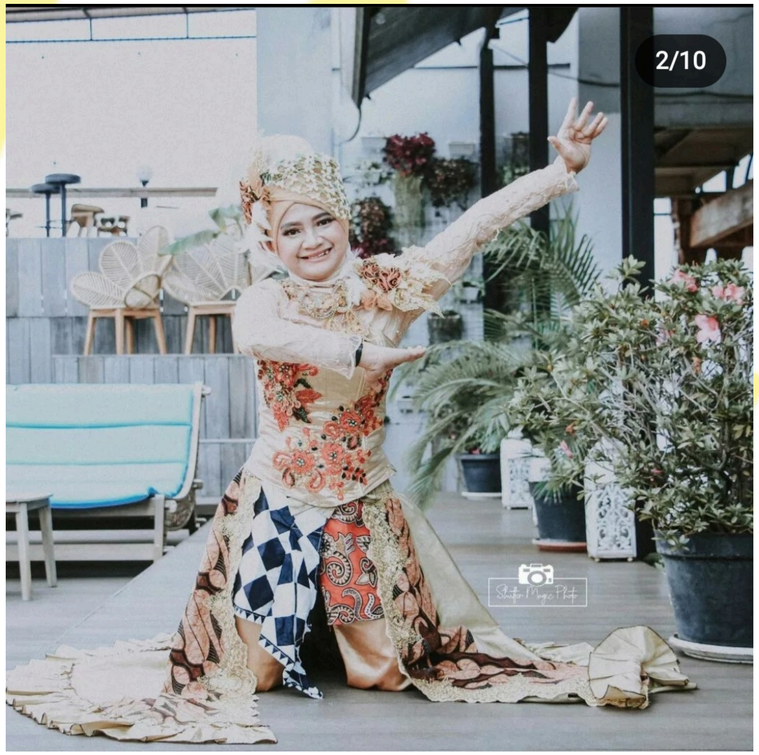
Case Studies

Name:
Arif Setyo Budi
Age:
35 Years Old
Location:
Malang, Jawa Timur
Type(s) of Disability:
Physical Disability
Link:
https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cc7MI10pGw0/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Name:
Murah Pranoto
Age:
21 Years Old
Location:
Kebumen, Jawa Tengah
Type(s) of Disability:
Dwarfism
Link:
https://instagram.com/sukrosono99?igshid=NDk5N2NlZjQ=

Case Studies

Name:
CaCa Nini
Age:
43Years Old
Location:
Blitar, Tuli, East Java
Type(s) of Disability:
Deaf



Name:
Wulan Sriwenda
Age:
31 Years Old
Location:
Bandung
Type(s) of Disability:
Cerebral Palsy

On the 20th February 2023 we held a partnership meeting in Bali between Ballet ID, Nalitari and We Are Epic, to present, reflect upon and review the findings.

What barriers did the research team face?

- We discovered certain ‘gatekeepers’ within a number organisations who did not want to give us access to ‘their talent’

- The research phase was only two months. More time would have allowed us to learn more about the participants, gain the trust of ‘gatekeepers’ and undoubtedly add more numbers.

- Lack of trust from individuals who feared we would take data and not return with any tangible outcomes

- It was very important to understand the complexity and gain deeper understanding of each case and so meeting on phone, online or in person was more effective than those who passively engaged with the online engagement form.

What barriers did beneficiaries face?

- Society in Indonesia still views disabled people as ‘incapable’ and ‘like outsiders’.

- Many of the dancers wanted to know about other artists who are ‘like them’. They felt alone in their practice with no friends or support for them.

- Dancers felt isolated and rejected by mainstream society and regular platforms. They found they were not welcome at dance schools, in dance communities and even at their own friends and family events

- There are no opportunities to share and learn about other artists/performers

- One previous network of disabled artists was widely discussed. Whilst comments about it were generally positive, we found that the network had become stale with nobody leading it, holding members to account or feeding in with regular relevant content

- There is currently no network, event, accountable body or group that brings individual dancers, organisations or their allies together.

Conclusion - What Next?

We have organised an online ‘sign off’ meeting where we will present these findings. However the partnership makes the following recommendations -

- The **creation of** a formal group/coalition to oversee the formation of **a formal network** that continues to connect, inspire and develop the skills of Indonesia’s disabled dancers

- This platform should hold **regular meetings**/events/festivals and sharing opportunities to inspire continual collaboration

- The platform could use **technology combined with in-person** events to benefit the geographic spread and maintain relationships and connectivity.

- The network should not only focus on dance but also **the development of other skills** linked to the creative sector - marketing, design, accountancy to develop the dancers wider skills in the sector.

- We Are Epic would like to **seek funding to develop this network** whilst simultaneously looking at **creative economies** that the network could be built on in order to sustain the ongoing work and costs of the network. (e.g An Epic Arts Cafe’ model)

- **Continue to build the database and network** of individuals and organisations.

Conclusion - Future Partnerships

On evaluation the partners were very happy with the collaboration. Both Nalitari and Ballet ID enjoyed working with WAE and found our approach easy to work with. In the feedback they both requested to work with WAE again on developing this project. Both, however, would have liked the project to have been longer and to have had a bit more time.

WAE noted that in future the partners might be better having assigned roles that relate directly to the area of expertise within a project.

Nalitari - Particular skills in liaising directly with disabled participants and very adaptable and skilled at delivering workshops for people with different abilities.

Ballet ID - Very knowledgeable about the Jakarta dance sector, high level partnerships and show production.

In addition to this partnership a number of links were made with other ‘like minded’ organisations who would also be great future collaborators including Ketumu Project (Bali), Think Web (South Jakarta), Yayasan Pelita Monas Indonesia (North Jakarta), Kitapoleng (Bali), B’Jess Foundation (Sumatra), GIGI Art of Dance (Jakarta).