

Jolt Dance Company

Move training programme

Impact Evaluation
May 2023



Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Jolt is a unique dance company based in Ōtautahi Christchurch that provides access for people with intellectual disabilities to creative expression, leadership pathways, paid employment and community engagement through dance.

Within the company, there is a dance tutor training programme, '*Move*'. This programme is designed to provide:

- Accessible training for people with intellectual disabilities to become inclusive dance teachers.
- Community dance classes for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Professional development for groups running inclusive dance programmes.
- Inclusive dance workshops in schools, rest homes and other places.

Ihi Research conducted an evaluation¹ to better understand the impact of the *Move* programme, from the perceptions of various stakeholders involved. The overall evaluation question was 'How well and in what ways is the *Move* programme working to achieve its aims?'

Subset questions include:

- What are the aims of *Move* and why are these important?
- What is the impact of the *Move* programme for trainees, their whānau, the education sector and the Jolt community? (this includes service providers, support workers, dancers)
- What are the intended and unintended outcomes for those engaged in the programme?
- What contribution does *Move* make to what is known nationally and internationally about inclusive dance and dance teacher training?

Evaluation evidence was gathered through interviews and an independent analysis of Jolt's programme data. Twenty-two participants agreed to take part in the evaluation and to be interviewed. Stakeholders included *Move* dance leaders and tutors who are people with intellectual disabilities along with members of their whānau/families. Mainstream educators were interviewed, along with teachers who had responsibilities teaching children with special learning needs. Service providers and rest home managers were also interviewed, along with the architects of the *Move* dance programme. Members of the Pasifika community were also involved. Comparing and contrasting different types of evidence (for example different interview participants, analysis of programme documentation and literature sources) enabled triangulation of data that emphasised interconnected dimensions of effect (Merriam, 1998).

Evaluation findings emphasise the significant, rippling impacts of the *Move* programme. Important positive effects of *Move* can be seen individually through dramatic changes in the lives of the dance teacher tutors/trainees and their whānau/families.

The *Move* programme provides access for people with intellectual disabilities to demonstrate their leadership skills and talents, and in the process challenge existing assumptions about 'creativity' and 'ability'. This in turn has built more inclusive communities across Ōtautahi. *Move* tutor trainees have learned new skills (planning, facilitating, and reflecting on their lessons) as dance teachers, and have access to paid employment (not less than the living wage). By teaching dance classes to diverse communities (able-bodied and disabled) they are seen as valuable and important members within the communities they teach in. Analysis highlights the unique contribution the *Move* programme makes to dance teaching and inclusive communities across Ōtautahi.

Findings also emphasise the many positive local effects for various stakeholders, including mainstream educators/teachers, students, older people in rest homes as well as community service providers who work in the area of disability. An

unexpected outcome is how the *Move* programme contributes to development of inclusive teaching and learning within the educator and community service sector. In particular the *Move* programme provides access for teachers (pre-service and in-service) to engage with people with intellectual disabilities in creative and inclusive ways. In the process, teachers critically reflect on pre-existing assumptions about 'ability' and 'disability' and are provided with a model of leadership teaching they can take back to their schools. Findings demonstrate improved teacher confidence to engage with students with intellectual disabilities, that align with the aspirations of inclusive education.

Results demonstrate that *Move* makes an important contribution to national and international knowledge challenging social assumptions and deficit views, while also supporting dancers' self-determination and aspirations as dance teachers. It is also clear from analysis of participant interviews, the *Move* programme provides a unique model of inclusive leadership and teaching, that extends beyond creative dance. It brings together diverse communities in ways that build social connections and a sense of belonging; the programme develops confidence, whilst reducing fear and isolation. It enables diverse groups of children, young people and adults to identify their uniqueness and creative expression whilst valuing their own and other's differences.

Importantly, the *Move* programme enables self-determination through leadership in dance. It is a form of emancipatory and ethical leadership concerned with social justice and the rights of people with intellectual disability. The programme achieves all the outcomes of the New Zealand Disability Strategy² (2016-2026), is consistent with the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the aims of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The programme is also culturally responsive and inclusive, as evidenced by the members of the Pasifika community. This research demonstrates that the *Move* programme is modelling change in the disability sector by challenging assumptions about leadership, dis/ability and capability development.

² The outcomes are education, employment and economic security, health and wellbeing, rights protection and justice, accessibility, attitudes, choice and control, and leadership.

Recommendations

For the Jolt Dance Company,

- Create ongoing and trusting relationships with iwi and Māori providers and communities, Pasifika providers and communities and culturally and linguistically diverse providers and communities, to raise awareness of both Jolt Dance Company and the *Move* programme, to enhance access.
- Continue to demonstrate leadership for people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities to learn about governance and organisational leadership through planned participation in the Jolt Dance Company.
- Share and promote the *Move* innovation and impact widely in the sector. This work has the potential to challenge what services, schools and teachers believe is possible for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Investment in longitudinal research to track and follow the impact of the *Move* programme, to better understand life outcomes for those with intellectual disability. This research is a snapshot in time and can only capture outcomes in this instance. The likely long-term impact of this programme on the lives of the dance leaders, their whānau and stakeholders, remains unknown.
- Invest in sharing and spreading innovation in the sector. While gains have been made since signing The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, there is still a long way to go to achieve the vision of the Disability Strategy - '*New Zealand is a non-disabling society – a place where disabled people have an equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and all of New Zealand works together to make this happen*' (p. 6). This research demonstrates how innovation in the sector has the potential to shift the deficit attitudes and barriers created by mainstream society, whilst enabling people with intellectual disability to not only participate, but lead.

For funders and the Government,

- Increase sustainable long-term investment in the Jolt Dance Company and the *Move* programme. The programme demonstrates innovation and impact in the disability sector and warrants long-term investment across Government departments, which is consistent with the aims of the Disability Strategy, *Investing in our whole lives – a long-term approach*.

Introduction and background

Jolt was founded in 2001 by artistic director Lyn Cotton. Based in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Jolt currently offers 21 different weekly classes, engaging with over 200 dancers with intellectual disabilities. Classes aim to build on dancers' unique movements, extending and challenging them in ways that are creative and authentic.

Jolt has also developed a performance programme that has included collaborations with organisations such as the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Music New Zealand (with whom they are National Disability Arts Partner), designed performances specifically for audiences with disabilities, and have delivered creative music and dance outreach programmes throughout the motu, including workshops for both mainstream and disability education sectors. Within the programme of classes is the *Move* programme, the only dance teacher training programme for people with intellectual disabilities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

To understand the significance and impact of the *Move* programme, it's important to understand the significant social barriers that people with intellectual disabilities face every day. Discrimination, ignorance and fear of people with intellectual disabilities, present considerable barriers to social inclusion. These barriers exist within Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2023) and across the world

(Petri et al., 2021; Panagiotara, 2019). Historically within Aotearoa, people with intellectual disabilities were discriminated against, being shunned by society, hidden away and institutionalised (Stace & Sullivan, 2020).

Views of disability (both intellectual and physical) have typically aligned with the medical model of disability; that underscore what an individual lacks, their personal impairments, their perceived deficits or handicaps that cannot be fixed (Stace & Sullivan, 2020). Such definitions and terms emphasise a person's restricted abilities and lowered social status (Stace & Sullivan, 2020). People with physical disabilities have been discriminated against but have been able to advocate for change directly. For people with intellectual disabilities self-advocacy is more challenging and continues to be much slower. Within Aotearoa, discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities has often led to "institutionalisation or exclusion from participation in education, employment and other

aspects of citizenship” (Stace & Sullivan, 2020, p. 1). The charity model of disability views people with intellectual disabilities as needing help and that they are incapable of doing things for themselves. The charity model is also a deficit model, emphasising the helplessness of people with intellectual disabilities and undermining their autonomy, independence and rights (Disability Advocacy, 2023). For example, “care” for a person with intellectual disabilities tends to be “risk-averse”, meaning there is a lack of challenge and high expectations that are essential for personal growth (Heart & Soul, 2023, p. 2).

Such low expectations of people with intellectual disabilities means they are not given enough opportunities to explore their unique abilities, strengths, and talents. For example, there is plenty of evidence that people with intellectual disabilities are not expected to be teachers or leaders, even within organisations that purport to support them (Petri et al., 2021). Inclusion can be tokenistic through a participation model that embodies low expectations and status. People with intellectual disabilities are often in unpaid or very low paid positions, even within advocacy/disability organisations designed to uphold their rights (Petri et al., 2021). In this sense disability remains “a form of oppression on a par with other forms of oppression in our society associated with gender, race, class and sexuality” (Thomas, 2004, p. 581 cited by Panagiotara, 2019, p. 12). However, disability must be viewed as a socially constructed problem, and not an unavoidable result of physical or cognitive difference (Panagiotara, 2019).

Social inclusion is an important determinant of health (Louw et al., 2020). It is underpinned by a quest for “a meaningful life gained from a sense of belonging” (Clifford et al., 2015, p. 717). The aim of social inclusion and equity of opportunity is reflected in New Zealand’s Disability Strategy (2016-2026) and vision whereby ‘New Zealand is a non-disabling society – a place where disabled people have an equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and all of New Zealand works together to make this happen’ (Office for Disability Issues, 2023, p 6). The Disability Strategy is underpinned by the Disability Action Plan that has set outcomes and work programmes across education, leadership, employment, choice and control, health and wellbeing, rights, accessibility and attitudes (New Zealand Government, 2023).

The aim of social inclusion is also reflected with New Zealand’s Ministry of Education (2023) definition of inclusive education, “where all children and young people are engaged and achieve through being present, participating, learning and belonging” (p. 1). Inclusive education is “underpinned by the belief that every learner has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the wellbeing of their family, whānau, community and to Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole. It asserts that our diversity is a strength” (ibid).

However, a recent Education Review Office (ERO) report highlighted results from a study that investigated how well New Zealand schools were supporting learners with disabilities (2022). The report found there were serious problems with the development of inclusive teaching across Aotearoa and that “more than half of teachers lack confidence in teaching disabled learners” (2022, p. 4). Other disturbing findings were that many students with disabilities felt excluded from classroom and school activities, and their sense of belonging at school declined as they progressed through the schooling system. Clearly a different approach is needed to achieve the aspirations of a non-disabling society and inclusive education within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Inclusive dance and creative expression has been recognised as a way to break down barriers to participation and foster social inclusion (Panagiotara, 2019; Briggs et al., 2012; Ostern, 2010). Inclusive dance can challenge stereotypes and negative assumptions associated with disability labels (Panagiotara, 2019). Typically inclusive dance and creative expression involves performers with varying bodily, sensory and cognitive conditions performing together and collaborating equally (Ostern, 2010). Effective inclusive dance teachers are attuned to each dancer’s strengths and needs and are able to create open spaces for imagination, innovation and creativity.

“There are many myths and opinions about who can and who can’t be a leader” (Pollock, 2019). People with intellectual disabilities are rarely given the chance to develop their leadership skills (ibid). Yet when given the chance, people with intellectual disabilities demonstrate “extraordinary leadership capability and potential” (Pollock, 2019, para 7). Inclusive leadership is considered vital to the wellbeing of diverse individuals, but also to the

wider community and society within Aotearoa, and for countries across the world. Inclusive leaders are most identified within business literature. Definitions of inclusive leaders include that they bring out the best in people, they ensure all feel they are treated fairly and with respect, that they are valued for their contributions and that they belong; they are confident and inspired to do their very best (Bourke & Titus, 2020).

However, others argue that emancipatory dance leaders with political goals are now needed; particularly to liberate others from social oppression (Ostern, 2010). Whilst there are programmes teaching people with disabilities to be dancers and dance teachers, these typically involve participants with physical impairments (Marshall, 2016). There is a dearth of research on the leadership capabilities of dance teachers who have intellectual disabilities (Briggs et al., 2012).

Jolt aims to provide a new type of dance leadership. It is a unique dance company based in Ōtautahi that provides access for people with

intellectual disabilities to leadership pathways, paid employment, creative expression and community engagement through dance. The demand for Jolt's programmes is growing. In 2023 there were over 200 participants enrolled in Jolt's weekly classes, including 82 participants in the *Move* programme. The *Move* programme is anticipated to reach 1300 people through community engagement programmes in 2023.

Jolt's strategic vision is to look beyond the 'feel good' factor of inclusion, based on the old charity model of inclusion. Instead Jolt showcases the leadership skills, strengths and unique contributions of people with intellectual disabilities and their contributions to community wellbeing. Jolt acknowledges the mainstream community has much to learn from people with disabilities: about the importance of difference and being authentic, about new models of leadership and new forms of communicating, interacting, and thinking about the world. Jolt's key dance leadership programme is '*Move*'. The following section provides more information related to this unique leadership programme.

The *Move* programme

Move is a key programme within Jolt Dance Company and is essential to its strategic vision (refer to figure 1).

The *Move* programme provides a pathway for leadership for people with intellectual disabilities. Importantly it provides ways to gain paid employment for Disability Leaders, assistants and tutors in Jolt classes, workshops and residencies through creative dance projects.

The *Move* programme has four main aims:

- Provide accessible training for people with intellectual disabilities to become inclusive dance teachers and leaders.
- Provide community dance classes for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Provide inclusive dance workshops within mainstream communities (schools, rest homes and other places).

- Provide professional development for groups running inclusive dance programmes.

All trainees learn to plan and teach classes, and to create bespoke dance activities. They gain practical experience teaching weekly community classes for people with a wide range of disabilities; from mild learning and sensory issues to profound and complex differences. Trainees also have opportunities to teach in mainstream communities.

According to Jolt's website the *Move* programme is structured across three different classes: *Move* Beginner Tutor Training, *Move* Connect, and *Move* Outreach.

***Move* Beginner Tutor Training** is a full-day, two-year programme that gives trainees the opportunity to grow their teaching practice. Key skills include: giving instructions, observation and response, one-on-one engagement, adapting activities, and lesson planning.

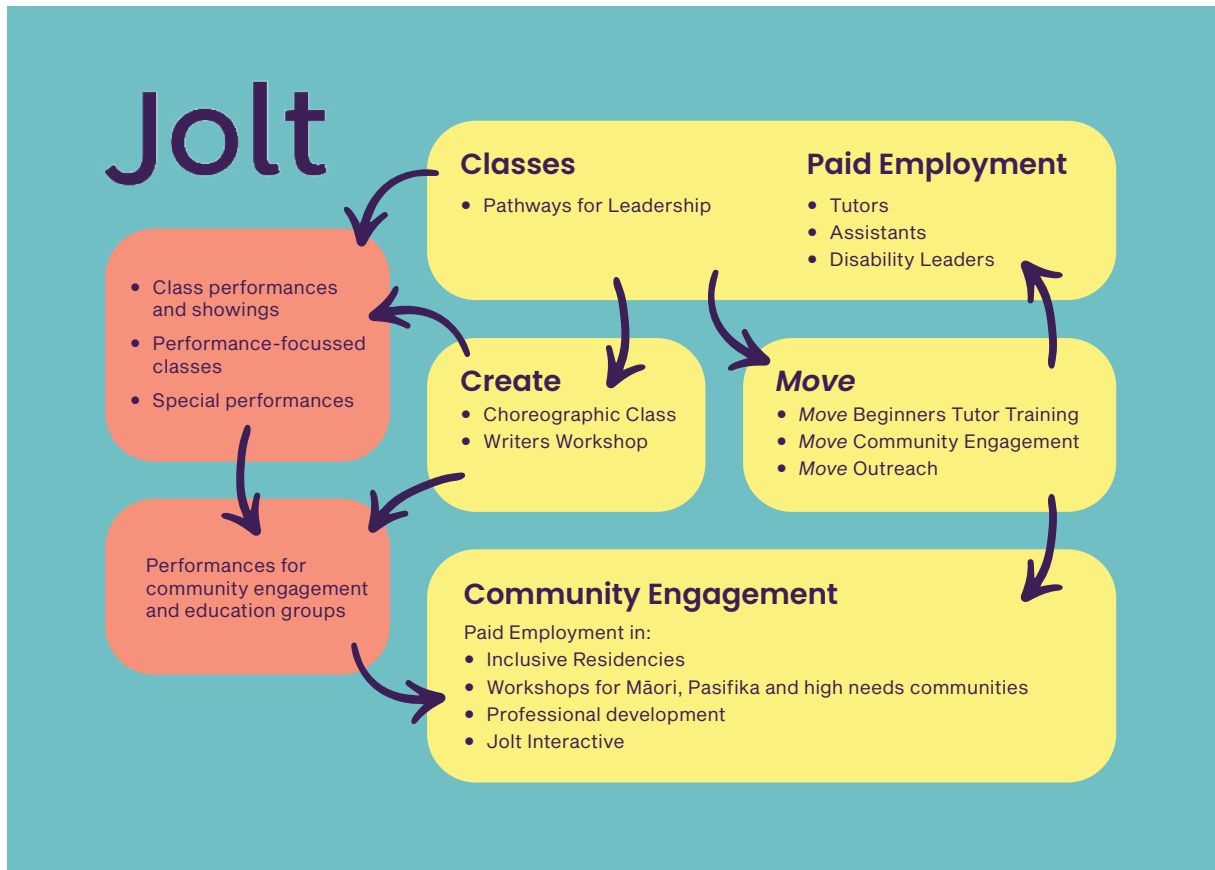


Figure 1: Jolt's Strategic Vision 2022-2023

Move Connect is a half-day class focussed on developing trainees' skills to both engage one-on-one, and to lead whole group activities - predominantly through practicums.

Move Outreach combines a half-day training with a half-day of leading workshops for the education sector, encouraging rangatahi to think differently about disability and to develop a more nuanced view of difference.

Move began in 2013 with four dance trainees. Since then, the programme has expanded, and in 2022 there were 21 dance trainees involved. Currently (2023) there are 28 *Move* trainees. Ten of these are working in paid employment in Jolt classes. Six are co-tutors (teaching four classes) and four are in Disability Leader roles supporting tutors in classes (teaching four classes). The majority of classes are face to face and one class is taught on-line.

Tutors within the *Move* programme teach specific skills to participants within their own classes, including: body awareness, connection, musicality, focus and creativity. *Move* dance trainees build a portfolio of activities, developing bespoke

lesson plans for diverse groups and gain practical experience teaching weekly community classes. Trainees are employed to teach in 10 different weekly classes, including as leaders in four classes. They lead and facilitate dance workshops in schools, tertiary institutions, community hubs and rest homes and are an integral part of all other Jolt workshops and residencies.

The *Move* programme includes approximately 30 workshops for Māori and Pasifika communities, within Ōtautahi. A tuakana-teina (structured peer-to-peer work) approach to teaching leadership is promoted, whereby the *Move* dance teachers provide professional development and learning for groups which then go on to teach inclusive dance programmes themselves. Importantly, *Move* trainees provide role models for other students with intellectual disabilities.

The *Move* programme is part of a course included in the Bachelor of Teaching and Learning, at the University of Canterbury, whereby pre-service teacher trainees attend interactive dance sessions taught by *Move* dance teachers. *Move* is also offered to mainstream primary and secondary

schools, involving students with diverse abilities through inclusive dance classes. Mainstream school teachers have also been mentored by *Move* dance trainees, whereby they have attended classes, learned key techniques and skills from dance tutors and then teach inclusive dance classes back at their own school. The *Move* programme has been able to offer professional development to support workers working for service providers who care for people with intellectual disabilities. The Chris Ruth Centre (the largest day centre service provider in Canterbury) is involved in *Move* dance classes. Support staff accompany people with intellectual disabilities to the *Move* programme and then support them to engage in dance classes taught by *Move* dance tutors. The *Move* programme is also an important part of IHC Media, enabling people with intellectual disabilities in remote rural locations to participate in Zoom dance classes.

Lyn Cotton is the Artistic Director of Jolt and the driving force behind the *Move* dance leadership programme. She explains the impetus for the *Move* programme.

“As an inclusive artistic company, we had no pathways for leadership for our dancers and we felt that to truly empower our dancers they needed to be able to have the opportunity to train and lead others. That was the first aim ... but as a company we need to move to bi-ableism and true power-sharing. With the Move programme, it keeps showing us what our dancers are capable of, so it keeps pushing us. And actually, it works on three levels. It pushes the trainees, it pushes us as an organisation, and it pushes the community as well.” (Lyn Cotton)

Lyn wants to expand the dance leadership aspect of *Move* so more Disability Leaders are involved in all aspects of Jolt, including governance and programme development. This requires ongoing leadership development and mentorship within Jolt and the *Move* programme and ongoing funding. Jolt

is a Charitable Trust and is governed by a Board of Trustees. Jolt has one trustee position that is reserved for a Jolt dancer (currently *Move* trainee and cotutor, Daniel Forman). *Move* is supported by key funders including the IHC Foundation, Hugo Charitable Trust, Blogg Charitable Trust and the Maurice Carter Charitable Trust. Funding has covered the cost of wages and venue hire. It has allowed Jolt to offer the *Move* training programme and community dance classes at an affordable rate, as well as the Diversity Dance Project workshops for koha.

Jolt’s Board has formally adopted a policy of paying a living wage for their dance tutors. Depending on their level of responsibility dance teachers trained through *Move* are paid between \$24.00 - \$27.50 an hour.

Ihi Research conducted an evaluation³ to better understand the impact of the *Move* programme, from the perceptions of various stakeholders involved. The overall evaluation question was ‘How well and in what ways is the *Move* programme working to achieve its aims?’

Subset questions include:

- What are the aims of *Move* and why are these important?
- What is the impact of the *Move* programme for trainees, their whānau, the education sector and the Jolt community? (this includes service providers, support workers, dancers)
- What are the intended and unintended outcomes for those engaged in the programme?
- What contribution does *Move* make to what is known nationally and internationally about inclusive dance and dance teacher training?

³ For further information on the evaluation methodology please refer to Appendix 1.



Results

Evidence of Impact

The following section presents the findings of the evaluation that speak to the considerable impact of the *Move* programme, not just on the lives of dance tutor trainees involved, but also on their whānau/family and the wider community.

To better understand 'how well the *Move* programme works to achieve its aims' three case studies of impact are presented. These case studies are centred on the effects of the programme on the lives of three tutor trainees who are directly involved in the *Move* programme. Rochelle Waters, Jokani Coe, Lachlan Oakes and members of their whānau/families speak to their own experiences and the immense worth of the *Move* programme within their lives.



Rochelle Waters

'Anyone with disabilities can be a dance teacher'

Rochelle Waters is 28-years-old and describes herself as Pākehā. She identifies herself as having Down syndrome, and this makes her feel special and unique. She has been involved with Jolt since 2006 as a founding member of Jolt Youth. She is a valued and recognised leader in the *Move* programme. She teaches interactive and inclusive dance classes and workshops in a range of settings throughout Aotearoa. Rochelle has been involved in Tukuruku – a collaborative teaching project with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra.

Rochelle's considerable knowledge and skills as a dance teacher and tutor are demonstrated in her ability to plan, teach and adapt classes independently; crafting lessons to suit diverse

participant needs. She is confident walking into a room of 80 – 100 pre-service teacher trainees at Canterbury University and engaging them in artistic expression. In her Creative Movement class, she teaches 12 dancers (all older than her and who have high needs). She also directs up to six support workers who attend classes with them. Some of these participants are in wheelchairs, which means Rochelle has to devise activities that can be adapted, whilst involving their support workers.

Her lessons are designed to build connections with other people, although she is conscious that extra time is needed for some people who find this challenging. Julie is a participant who finds it difficult to be close to people, so Rochelle plans for activities that Julie can be included in, but still provides her enough space and room to feel safe. Rochelle's lessons involve participants in warm-ups, getting them organised through paired activities and through small group to whole group creative works. She specialises in teaching body awareness, how to focus and be creative through improvisation as well as through specific, directed movement.

Rochelle recognises the leadership responsibility she carries through her position as a *Move* dance teacher. Although she acknowledges she was initially nervous coming into Jolt, she believes her confidence and teaching capabilities have developed over time. She is pleased she can teach other people with disabilities how to become dance teachers, and is quick to point out the progress made by others within the *Move* programme.

"If there was one person in particular at Move, I would say Daniel. The reason I say Daniel is because I can see the way he keeps his posture upright, and I love the way he teaches. It makes me proud that he's getting better, improving every time." (Rochelle)

Whilst Rochelle has taught many different types of workshops and classes involving diverse groups of people, she is especially proud of her classes that involve other people with intellectual disabilities. When asked about this Rochelle explains: *"As a teacher, I'm special! I am different from Lyn and Renée. And they (the class) are very proud of what I'm doing."* Rochelle is valued for her leadership skills by others involved in the *Move* programme. She is always the one who other *Move* tutors turn to when they need help.

Shelley, Rochelle's Mum, describes the dramatic changes she has witnessed since Rochelle became involved with Jolt and particularly the *Move* programme.

"I've watched her confidence grow and she just takes such great pride in the responsibility the Jolt team give her. She doesn't like to let anyone down ... so, she's been learning how to plan her lessons. Her sense of worth has grown too. She feels like a valued member of the Jolt whānau and the camaraderie, the friendships she has made, the connections to the community and that sense of belonging has grown for her." (Shelley)

Witnessing the growth in confidence through Rochelle's leadership has had a profound effect on her family. The whole family is proud of her achievements. *"She's got two younger sisters and they're really amazed at what Rochelle's achieved and the opportunities she's had through Jolt and*

Move. And obviously her dad, my husband Jeff, he's incredibly proud of her and what she's achieved."

Rochelle is often recognised by members of the public while out shopping with Shelley. *"Someone will come up and say, 'Oh, I know you from Jolt' or 'I've seen you in one of the shows'. It's great because people do recognise her for her abilities."* (Shelley)

Shelley believes Rochelle's life would have been very limited and sheltered if she had not become involved in Jolt and the *Move* programme. Shelley admits feeling a bit nervous when Lyn first suggested Rochelle should catch the bus to the dance studio, rather than being transported to and from classes by a family member. Rochelle now catches two buses by herself to get to the dance studio, and she is enjoying her independence.

Both Rochelle and Shelley are adamant *Move* needs to be continued and expanded because of the many positive impacts the programme is having. Rochelle has a particular aspiration.

"My dream is to go away and teach some more people how to dance." (Rochelle)

Shelley wants government agencies to support Jolt and its *Move* programme. In particular she wants them to understand the significant, life-changing effects the programme is having.

"The whole vision of Move is absolutely amazing. I just want to see it continue. What is really powerful is other people seeing what these young people can achieve. I know schools and community members are just blown away with what these Move tutor trainees can do. And the programme has really challenged people's expectations about people with disabilities. It's great for local communities to see what these young people can actually do."

Rochelle is proud of her abilities as a leader, a dance teacher and as a role model for people with intellectual disabilities. She explains it like this.

"I am special. And I can bring that into my classes. That's what makes me different." (Rochelle)



Jokani Coe

'I do it for my people'

Jokani Coe is a 20-year-old young man of Cook Island and Samoan heritage. He is currently employed as a Disability Leader in *Move's* Youth 2 class. Jokani initially joined Jolt in term 2, 2022, with support from Jolt's Pasifika Liaison, Renée Ryan. He became a member of Jolt's 'Contemporary' dance class and was invited into the performance company because of his considerable creative abilities. As part of the performance company, Jokani toured Aotearoa, performing in 'The Seasons' with musicians from the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. This was significant for Jokani and his family, as it was the first time he had ever been away from home.

Late last year, Jokani was invited to join the *Move* programme; to train to become a dance tutor. He has thrived in this environment and his creative skills

and abilities have developed to the point where he was able to work alongside Renée to deliver workshops to a variety of organisations. Workshops have included participants within local secondary schools, Vaka Tautua, Pacific Vibes, inclusive dance workshops and Tangata Atumotu Trust. Jokani's mother, Wiki, and sister Sholita, have witnessed the dramatic changes in Jokani's life and are now excited about his future.

Prior to joining Jolt and being involved in the *Move* programme, things were very different. His family was most concerned about his loneliness and increasing depression. They were overly protective of him, because of his many struggles, particularly because of his experience through high school.

Wiki was young when she had Jokani, only 21-years-old. He was kept in hospital because of concerns about his health. Once at home, he was a very quiet baby and much loved by his family. It wasn't until he was a toddler (three years) that people became concerned about his lack of progress. He wasn't talking as expected. His learning issues appeared more prominent once he got to primary school, and his lack of progress became more noticeable.

Despite the best efforts of his doctors and teachers, Jokani was unable to gain support through the Ministry of Education's Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS).

Things got much worse for Jokani once he got to secondary school. He became even more isolated. He struggled to communicate his needs, and simple physical tasks such as tying his shoelaces became major hurdles. In his attempts to make friendships and feel included, he was taken advantage of by peers. They teased him and urged him to break school rules, warning he wouldn't be 'accepted' unless he did so. But Jokani was not a behavioural problem at school. However, his loneliness and increasing isolation was difficult to witness. Sholita recalls the anguish of seeing her brother 'lost' at school, struggling to feel accepted and not recognised for his talents and abilities.

Jokani couldn't wait to leave secondary school and did so once he turned 16. It was a tough time for Jokani and his family. Wiki was most worried that he would become even more isolated. There were a lot of tears.

"He used to say, 'Why don't people understand me – why don't people listen to me?' As parents you can sell them the dream that everything is going to be alright, but in reality, you can't take that pain away. So, we sheltered him a lot – a lot! It's been a good thing but a bad thing at the same time, but it was the only way we could protect him. It's hard for me to let him out – to trust people." (Wiki)

Sholita also recalls how anxious the family were initially.

"I remember Mum talking to me before Joe was about to finish school. Mum was just worried thinking maybe that that was it for him." (Sholita)

But then Jokani met Aleasha (Jolt tutor) and attended one of Jolt's session. Renée from Jolt also followed up making initial contact with the family, about the possibility of Jokani's attendance at classes. Wiki recalls being very reticent when she first talked to Renée on the phone, as Jokani had struggled to explain what Jolt was all about.

However, Wiki's concerns melted away once she attended one of Jolt's performances and she got to meet Lyn and Renée in person. Seeing Jokani's transformation as a performer on stage was dramatic and life changing for Jokani and his family. He was finally able to direct his energy and creative talents, 'exploding' onto the stage. The family were blown away seeing his transformation.

"Now he's a part of Jolt and finding Jolt has opened up so many doors for not only my brother but for us as a family and so many opportunities. It's shaped his future. He's thrived. He's grown. We just never thought in our lives that he would be working, let alone getting paid doing something like Jolt, and travelling – we just never pictured that with Joe. We just never ever thought in a million years that he would be a part of something like Jolt. Just being so independent and it's just shaped him into gaining a lot of independence." (Sholita).

Jokani has finally found his purpose and is now recognised for his leadership and teaching abilities. He recently returned to his old high school as a tutor for Jolt's three day Tukutuku residency, where he was greeted with praise and affection by the staff that had known him. He was proud to return to his old school and to be recognised now as a leader. He was overheard explaining to one staff member "I'm a teacher now."

As Jokani explains, *"I'm just glad I'm here, man. It's good to see disability people and mainstream people as well ... together."* This year Jokani has been devising and creating his own work entitled 'There is a mountain inside my head'. This work will showcase his connection to his Cook Island identity and culture.



Lachlan Oakes

'My dream is to be a Jolt expert and to have my own classes'

Lachlan Oakes is 17 years old. He identifies as a Pākehā male who is on the autistic spectrum. He was 13 when he first started dancing with Jolt. At that time, he was a student enrolled in the Kimi Ora Unit at Papanui High School. Lachlan explains that at first he was hesitant about becoming involved in the dance classes. *"I wasn't actually too sure about it at first. I was quite unsure about what to expect."* (Lachlan)

Lachlan has a unique imagination: a vivid internal landscape that is both very literal and very creative. Before becoming involved in Jolt, Lachlan's behaviour was very different. He had always been very quiet at school and kept himself in the background. Most of his imagining was done alone. His private world brings him comfort and safety.

Lachlan is described by others as kind and thoughtful. He recognises when others feel sad or unsure and offers support to feel better. He remembers things and this is both good and bad. This means he has a wealth of knowledge but also a long memory of when things don't go right.

Through Jolt and the *Move* programme, Lachlan has learned to take steps outside his inner world. He must trust the people around him to keep him safe. As a dancer he is open, joyful and exuberant.

Right from the beginning Lachlan experienced an inner joy and personal release through dance and creative movement. He found he could express himself in new and different ways. He impressed others with his musical timing. Lachlan was asked to join Jolt in 2020 and they brought him straight into the company class. Since then, he has been on national tour with the Seasons, performed to hundreds of people in the Biennale and created a short piece of his own which he recently performed as part of 'Whakapapa'.

As a teacher he is incredibly confident, he is clear in his instructions, projects his voice strongly and takes charge. He understands what it means to be a teacher – that it involves being in charge, making decisions and looking after others. Through Jolt, Lachlan now has a clear sense of purpose. His unique skills and strengths have enriched the people who dance with him and are taught by him.

Lachlan's pathway to leadership only happened because he was willing to take the first step. He has taken that step because he trusts the people who work in Jolt and because he understands they are not trying to change who he is. Instead, Jolt has been able to harness Lachlan's uniqueness.

Helen Oakes, Lachlan's mother, is incredibly grateful for what Jolt and the *Move* programme

has achieved in terms of bringing to life Lachlan's leadership skills and creative dance talents.

"I just think the whole of the Move programme has been brilliant. I'm so excited that Lachlan is involved in it. It's just been so great for him. He is much more confident, and he's developed his own teaching abilities and just the ability to stand up in front of different groups of people and talk is amazing. You know before Move he would have just sat back, and he would've hated taking the lead in anything. He was often by himself and preferred his own company. Move has given him the space to be with like-minded people who are committed to genuine leadership opportunities for young people like Lachlan, instead of piecemeal stuff." (Helen)

This is Lachlan's first year teaching in the Move training, although for the past three years he has been leading classes with students at Papanui High School alongside Lyn Cotton. As a dance tutor with responsibility for teaching others, he is very observant, noticing things that others easily miss. Others describe him as incredibly kind, sensitive and articulate. In one of the Move classes that Lachlan teaches there are a lot of wheelchair users, so space becomes limited. In addition, there are people in the class who have autism. Lachlan has specific teaching skills, and he is acutely attuned to each of his class participant's particular strengths and needs. He is very observant. He takes time to make sure each person feels safe in class, but at the same time works with each person to extend their movement skills. He works one-on-one with people who really struggle to communicate, yet he is able to connect with them and ease them into a creative movement.

Lachlan is aware that he teaches dance differently to other teachers, such as Lyn. He is aware that teaching is a delicate balance.

"The skills that I bring as a teacher are different ... With Michael, he's one of the trickier ones because sometimes he doesn't want to move ... he wants to sit in his chair. Sometimes as a teacher you do need to push people out of their comfort zones but still make sure they feel safe." (Lachlan)

Helen has noticed how sensitive Lachlan is to other's needs.

"It was funny because he and I were talking, and I asked him 'How do you work with students who are more able than others or have problems communicating?' And he said, 'Actually I enjoy working with the ones who are different ... like I

noticed that Rose didn't like somebody close to her. So, he watches to see how people react in his classes." (Helen)

Previously Lachlan had worried about close interaction with others. He kept himself safe by not pushing outside his comfort zone. The process of learning how to teach and lead others through dance has been challenging for Lachlan. He doesn't share his ideas easily because he worries they may be wrong. His mother described how he finds it hard to say 'yes' to suggestions because he is scared he won't be able to do them or may feel anxious. He has learned to hold himself back for fear of failure and rejection and because he doesn't believe he has value.

"When Lachlan was younger he was very anxious ... he used to have this thing where if someone had a melt down at school, or got upset, Lachlan would find that very upsetting. He couldn't regulate himself and he'd say 'What's wrong? What's wrong? What are they doing?' Or, if someone hurt themselves, fell over and hurt their knee. He would ask 'What knee? Why did they do that? How did they do that?' And he would obsess about it. So he often avoided people. He used to hate babies crying. I remember once we were somewhere, and this baby was crying, and Lachlan took himself away. He doesn't like distress and other people being upset. But through Move and learning how to teach and work with others he can handle that now, which is amazing. Now I say to him how was your day and he'll say 'Oh, it was good, so-and-so had a bit of a meltdown', and I say to him 'How did you feel about that? Were you okay about that?' And he goes, 'Yeah, yeah, I was'. So, he's grown so much through the Move programme that he's much more able to regulate his own responses." (Helen)

Lachlan enjoys learning the craft of dance teaching. He can still get worried at times, but the joy he gets from dancing and teaching clearly make up for it.

"The best thing about being a teacher is you get to have your own voice and your own space. My dream in terms of Jolt and Move is having a nice clear pathway, so I know where I'm going. And with Jolt, I'm going to go quite a long way. I'm actually going to be a Jolt expert one day. My dream is to be a Jolt expert and have my own classes." (Lachlan)

Helen is adamant that the Move programme must continue and be extended to give others the chance to be involved. *"Lachlan is learning to be a leader. Move has given him a vocational path ... there is nothing else like Move and what it offers."* (Helen)

Summary of Impact

Analysis of the three case studies clearly illustrates the immense, rippling impact the *Move* programme and the Jolt organisation is achieving. Importantly, and in line with Jolt's key aims, results demonstrate the *Move* programme has enabled Rochelle, Jokani and Lachlan to find their creative voice, and in the process teach and lead diverse and inclusive community dance classes.

The *Move* programme has been life changing. Without the *Move* programme and Jolt, it is clear Rochelle, Jokani and Lachlan's lives would be very different and restrictive. The Jolt organisation, through the *Move* programme, offers dance tutor trainees a safe space to extend their teaching skills and abilities, while carefully challenging them to step out of their comfort zone.

The programme demonstrates high expectations along with supportive strategies and approaches, enabling each to acquire planning and choreography skills. This includes the ability to plan for diverse dance attendees who have specific learning needs, such as being in a wheelchair or requiring scaffolded strategies for socialisation with others. Dance leaders plan their lessons for diverse groups; they motivate others, encouraging them to explore their own unique abilities. As teachers they choreograph movement whilst providing space for individual improvisation. In each of their classes they utilise a range of strategies including individual, small group and whole group creative works – both via Zoom or face-to-face. In the process they challenge and

inspire others to do their personal best and to find their own creative expression.

It is clear each dance leader understands their responsibility and takes this very seriously, particularly as a role model for others with intellectual disabilities. They are proud of their achievements; their contributions within the *Move* programme and the difference they make in the lives of others. This has been witnessed by whānau/family members, service support workers and educators/teachers, and in turn these staff members get to see the transformation in their own people and students.

Whānau/family members are extremely proud of the dance leaders' achievements. They describe the process of learning to let go and allow these young people to become more independent. Understandably they were protective of their children due to negative past experiences; people's low expectations of their children; and their experiencing harm, isolation, prejudices and discrimination within school and/or wider society. Being part of the *Move* programme has enabled independence and provided the dance tutors with the confidence to be independent.

The outcomes for the dance tutors described in these case studies are immeasurable. You cannot place a value on a sense of belonging, inclusion, independence, hope and aspiration. The impact of the *Move* programme on the lives of the dance tutors and their whānau/families must not be understated.

Alignment of the aims of *Move*

and evidence of achieved (intended) outcomes

Analysis of participant interviews and programme documentation demonstrates the *Move* programme is achieving and exceeding its intended aims. In particular, evaluation results emphasise the *Move*

programme's unique contribution to the leadership of people with intellectual disabilities. Table 1 demonstrates the evidence.

Stated Aim	Numbers of Disability Leaders and co-tutors teaching in Jolt classes (2023)	Participant numbers for classes where Move trainees are teaching or assisting (2023)	Evidence that demonstrates achievement of intended outcome
Provide accessible training for people with intellectual disabilities to become inclusive dance teachers and leaders.	<p>Disability Leader: Move Connect (x1)</p> <p>Disability Leader: Adults 2 (x1)</p> <p>Disability Leaders: Youth 1, 2, 3, 4 (x4)</p> <p>Co-tutors: Bump (x2)</p> <p>Co-tutors: Adults 1 (x2)</p> <p>Co-tutors: Creative Movement (x2)</p> <p>Co-tutors: IHC Zoom (x2)</p>	<p>Move Connect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight tutor trainees • Involving 20 participants in community classes <p>Adult 2 classes 14 participants</p> <p>Youth 1, 2, 3, 4 classes 40 participants</p> <p>Bump class 13 participants</p> <p>Adults 1 12 participants</p> <p>Creative Movement class 12 participants</p> <p>IHC zoom (weekly sessions exceeding 30 participants)</p>	<p>Provides accessible dance teacher training</p> <p>“So, my daughter started with Jolt a few years ago and slowly over the years she's become more involved. When she left school, Jolt offered her this wonderful opportunity to become part of the Move Teacher Trainee programme, which meant that all day on a Tuesday, she's learning how to become a dance teacher. And the culmination of that is she is now a co-facilitator of her own dance class on a Monday afternoon, and getting paid for her work ... it's just fabulous.” (Whānau/Family member)</p> <p>Showcases the leadership of people with intellectual disability</p> <p>“IHC media was still in its infancy when the Move programme became involved by offering Zoom dance classes during COVID-19 lockdowns. Move has been a huge part of this. Rochelle and Joel, who take our weekly zoom dance sessions, are both professionally trained dance teachers. They're modelling leadership for other people who we support. None of our other live sessions are run by people with intellectual disability. So, it's the leadership aspect that is so important. The Move programme is led by people with intellectual disability. Rochelle, Joel, and the Move programme have been this gift from heaven for us, because this is exactly the direction, we want it to go.” (IHC Manager)</p> <p>“Seeing the leadership of the dance tutors is just amazing. They are confident and they know how to engage our guys by encouraging them ... the tutors can get quite bossy if they need to ... they know how to motivate them.” (Service support worker)</p>

Table 1. Stated aims of Move along with achievement of intended outcomes

Stated Aim	Type of community dance classes provided (stakeholders involved)	Number of participants engaged	Evidence that demonstrates achievement of intended outcome
<p>Provide community dance classes for people with intellectual disabilities</p>	<p>Community Classes (IHC)</p> <p>Residential and Day Service Providers: Chris Ruth Centre, Brackenridge</p> <p>Schools: Ferndale Te Ahu, Hillmorton High, Riccarton High, Papanui Primary, Waitaha Special school</p> <p>Halswell Hub</p> <p>Individuals from community homes</p>	<p>There are five community classes comprised of 54 participants in total and 40 support staff</p> <p>One IHC Zoom class with approx 30 people per session</p>	<p>Provides community dance classes for people with intellectual disabilities</p> <p><i>“The Move programme is accessible through the Zoom classes. Some of our carers have come back saying how great it is just to alleviate some of their stress. It’s been a lifesaver. They live rurally and they have two boys, both with intellectual disability. So, to get them to go anywhere is a huge deal. They don’t have to because of the Zoom classes, it’s right there. The boys love it - it’s made a huge difference.” (IHC Manager)</i></p> <p><i>“It’s a really humbling experience, watching the impact of Move. From my experience, the real value for a school is having their students with disabilities lead the dance sessions. That is the real value of Move, the dance tutors work with our students from the Kimi Ora unit and then our mainstream students get to be taught by them. They develop a real connection with them. That is the real benefit. If people from outside of school had come in and run the session, it would not have been such a powerful experience.” (High school teacher)</i></p>

Stated Aim	Stakeholders engaged in inclusive dance workshops	Number of participants engaged	Evidence that demonstrates achievement of intended outcome
<p>Provide Inclusive dance workshops in mainstream communities – including schools, rest homes and other places</p>	<p>At primary schools</p>	<p>Primary school students yearly 300 - 500</p>	<p>Provides inclusive dance workshops in schools, rest homes and other places</p> <p><i>“We’re a hospice, so we take in hospital-level care, end of life, and rest home and patients with dementia. The Move programme has worked to engage people from our care centre who don’t normally come to activities. There was one gentleman ... a pretty grouchy, grumpy, sort of character, who tells it how it is. When I first asked him if he would come to the dance class he said, ‘I’m not bloody going into that.’ But I explained that it was helping the dance tutors as well, in terms of their teaching and confidence. Well, he turns up. He holds their hands. He copies their movements. And he’s just beaming. And then he starts asking, ‘When are they coming again?’ He built up lovely friendships and rapport with these young people. And then a week before he died, he was bed-ridden and couldn’t walk, and one of the things they did was bring him out in his chair. They brought him out into the middle and brought a couple of others out, and they did a targeted dance with them. He danced away them, and he was just beaming, and he passed away the following week. But to see this cantankerous old man transform into this loving, caring human giving back and participating with these young people was amazing to witness.” (Care Centre Manager)</i></p> <p><i>“We support people from the Chris Ruth Centre to come to Move classes. A significant impact for them is the confidence they have developed through social interaction, the relationships they build, who they dance with. It really helps physically through the dance movements, the people we bring can be in wheelchairs, and they have different abilities, they are all included, and it just brings so much joy into their lives, and for us as well.” (Service support worker)</i></p>
	<p>Secondary schools</p>	<p>Secondary school students 70 – 90</p>	
	<p>University of Canterbury (Bachelor of Teaching)</p>	<p>University students 80 – 120</p>	
	<p>Rest homes</p>	<p>Rest home participants 40</p>	

Stated Aim	Stakeholders engaged in professional development	Number of participants engaged	Evidence that demonstrates achievement of intended outcome
<p>Provide professional development for groups running inclusive dance programmes.</p>	<p>Organisations attending Move for PD that have established dance programmes in their own venues</p> <p>Papanui Primary School</p> <p>Riccarton High School</p> <p>Halswell Hub</p> <p>Chris Ruth Centre (2 sessions)</p>	<p>8 – 10 participants</p> <p>18 participants</p> <p>10 – 12 participants</p> <p>20 participants</p>	<p>Provides professional development for groups running inclusive dance programmes</p> <p><i>“So, I run a weekly dance session at school. I have used the techniques through the Move programme so I am transferring all that knowledge. My students have so much fun and there’s a whole lot of skills involved in the dance class. I have a mixed group of children who range from Year One all the way up to Year Six. The classes involve a range of activities - dancing with a buddy or dancing with the whole group. It has been really lovely to watch Lyn training her tutors. She has very high expectations for their teaching and now they’re confident and they’ve got real teacher skills in managing the group. So, those high expectations are really important, but the programme provides support as well. I think sometimes teaching children who are quite neurodiverse can be a bit scary, especially if children have high needs or challenging behaviours. But once you have the opportunity to see what they can do ... and to see their growth and the progress ... it’s amazing.” (Primary school teacher)</i></p> <p><i>“So, we run our own Move sessions at our own centre too. So, we take the ideas back that we have learned for our people who aren’t able to come to the Jolt Studio. The impacts are just so positive for us as staff as much as for our people.” (Service support worker)</i></p>

Summary of achievement of stated aims

Evaluation evidence highlights that the *Move* programme is highly effective in achieving the stated aims. The *Move* programme provides:

- accessible training for people with intellectual disabilities to become inclusive dance teachers and leaders.
- community dance classes for people with intellectual disabilities.

- inclusive dance workshops in schools, rest homes and other places.

- professional development for groups running inclusive dance programmes.

However, it is clear the *Move* programme achieves much more than that. The following section highlights many other positive outcomes achieved, through implementation of the *Move* programme.

Unintended Positive Outcomes

Develops inclusive communities

It is clear the *Move* programme is achieving its stated aims. However, evaluation analysis emphasised the many 'unintended' positive outcomes that Jolt and its *Move* programme are having. A key theme is the programme helping to develop inclusive communities through the teaching and leadership of people with intellectual disabilities. Several interrelated sub-themes emerged from interview analysis. These were:

- Challenges deficit assumptions of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Increased pride, confidence and creative abilities.
- Increased feelings of belonging, improved relationships, and connections.
- Improved pathways for employment.

Challenges deficit assumptions of people with intellectual disabilities

Many different stakeholders who were interviewed for this evaluation described the profound impact of being involved in the *Move* programme. This

was particularly true for people who worked in mainstream education as well as in the wider support service sector (supporting people with intellectual disabilities). One of the participants interviewed for this evaluation was a Course Lecturer at the University of Canterbury. She taught a course within the Bachelor of Teaching programme, where pre-service teacher trainees were engaged in learning about diversity and inclusion. *Move* dance tutors led dance classes for these teacher trainees and challenged their low assumptions about the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities.

"Many of our pre-service teacher trainees are really challenged by the Move tutors, or rather their perceptions of people with disabilities are challenged. The young Move tutors are so incredibly competent and confident. They walk in and have the room in the palm of their hands. And we're talking about being able to do that with up to 100 students who are enrolled in the Bachelor of Teaching programme here at the University. It's filmed every year for distance pre-service teacher trainees who are unable to join us in person. The teacher trainees complete formal feedback and in their evaluations they consistently talk about how they didn't realise that young people with intellectual disabilities could offer so much. They've learned something

new about people with disabilities as human beings, and as teachers. They learn that diversity is something we should celebrate. They learn that it's really important not to make assumptions about the abilities of the kids who they'll go out and teach, and in their feedback, they often make connections back to their school placements. They'll say things like, 'When I was on my last placement, there was a child with a wheelchair who I avoided for the full five weeks because I didn't know what to do, and I also didn't really think that child had anything to offer'. And so, seeing these Move tutors teaching and leading them is quite eye-opening for them.' (Course lecturer)

Mainstream teachers who were interviewed also acknowledged that prior to Move it was easy to hold low expectations of students with intellectual disabilities. However, by witnessing the transformation of students at their own school as they led dance classes, they were challenged to rethink their assumptions.

"I teach junior and senior classes in high school, and I took two of my classes into the Move session taught by students in our special needs unit. I've worked with some of these students before, but I was really surprised with how confident they were in leading the dance session. I had underestimated them and their capabilities. This dance programme gives them an opportunity to tap into their potential and build their confidence. I can see it flows through, from the confidence they get from leading a dance class. As teachers, we don't always see these students in that light where they are reaching their potential and pushing themselves. I think there's this idea that we need to coddle these children and keep them safe and not let them take risks. To see them taking risks and being brave and all that stuff is awesome." (High school teacher)

The leadership provided by the Move dance tutors and trainees was particularly important for changing societal attitudes and developing inclusive school practices.

"All of us have grown up in a society that undervalues people with disabilities and doesn't see them as deserving. On a subconscious level that thinking about disabled people, it suggests they don't have anything worthwhile to offer society. We have a special education system that has spent years segregating people with disabilities. Even though many schools and centres now work towards more inclusive practices, unless attitudes change, then

there's a limit to what can be achieved." (Course lecturer)

It was clear the impact of Move rippled out across the wider community impacting others. Support Service workers employed at the Chris Ruth Centre talked about the profound impacts the Move programme had on them, as support workers. The Move programme challenged their thinking, about what people with intellectual disabilities could do and achieve.

"The benefits are unbelievable. In terms of seeing what these Move dance teachers can do, and do so well, and it can be challenging to see how much they're capable of. They've challenged me to look at the world in a totally different way and putting my thinking the right way up. It's educational on so many levels." (Support service worker)

Witnessing the positive transformations and abilities in the people they supported, as they engaged in Move, was both emotional and confronting for support service workers.

"When I first came to Move I just cried ... because I was just blown away by how much my people changed in the dance classes and how much they could do." (Support service worker)

Increased pride, confidence and creative abilities.

It is clear the Move programme provides a safe and inclusive space for people with intellectual disabilities to express themselves in new and different ways. It could be confronting and emotional for parents to see how much their daughter or son had gained through participation in the Move programme. This Samoan mother described the difference she witnessed in her son.

"The first time I saw him on stage ... I cried! My son, he stepped up to welcome everybody. And he introduces everybody. And that was such a surprise for me. He's learnt to share with others and to communicate with others. I'm very proud of him, of how he's doing now at Move. Because if he was not here (involved at Move), we wouldn't have known about his abilities. His family wouldn't know how he can do all of these new things. So he performs and he shows us what he can do, and who he is. Some people think that people with Down syndrome, can't do things, but he can!" (Mother)

Increased confidence was not only noted for the *Move* tutor trainees, but also for participants within their dance classes.

“It’s amazing to see how our guys just transform ... we see a different side of our people ... it’s really emotional. It brings out their creative abilities.. and they just relax. They don’t feel like outsiders ... they don’t feel judged. They are more confident in these classes.” (Support service worker)

Unexpectedly it also increased the confidence of mainstream teachers and support staff involved. Being tutored by the *Move* dance tutors enabled this teacher and her students to grow in confidence through dance. The programme enabled her to express herself in an authentic way, by providing a safe and inclusive space that valued difference. This had a flow on effect, as her students also became more confident in expressing themselves in new and different ways.

*“When we first started the programme at school, I was a little bit embarrassed to dance within the circle, but by the end of that first session my own confidence had really grown... because I realised no one was judging me, and I could just be me. I think my students felt that too, and the *Move* dance trainees were so encouraging. It’s infectious. It’s like, ‘Catch this, and pass it on’, and I just love it. Just seeing my students’ heads up, shoulders back, and being proud of who they are and, through dance, being able to express themselves in a different way.”* (Primary school teacher)

Increased feelings of belonging, improves relationships and connections.

Overwhelmingly, participants who were interviewed for this evaluation were adamant the *Move* programme needed to be expanded across Aotearoa. A key reason was the considerable impact the programme was having in terms of increasing feelings of belonging, improving understanding and connections between people within and across diverse communities.

A Pasifika community leader who was interviewed spoke about how important Jokani and Robert (another *Move* dance leader) had been as role models for the Pasifika community within Ōtautahi.

*“Within Pasifika communities, there can be stigma towards the person with intellectual disabilities, they are not considered a ‘whole’ person or not normal. Families will either embrace members with an intellectual disability or disown them. It is hugely important to break down the social barriers and stigma of Pasifika people with intellectual disabilities. Watching Jokani and Robert teach was inspirational. They are role models who teach with passion and heart. You can see in their persona how much they enjoy the responsibility of teaching. I loved their charisma and bravery! These young people teach us that everyone has a talent – it is important to expose that for the greater good! That regardless of who the individuals are, they can make a huge difference in their communities, and teach society not to put individuals in a ‘box’. Jolt and the *Move* programme has had a positive impact within the Pasifika community here. Absolutely!”* (Pasifika community leader)

Relationships and communication between family members at home had improved due to the *Move* programme.

*“Before my son came to this programme, he could get angry and frustrated, he’s throwing things and screaming. And since he joined *Move* he has learned more about how to communicate. I have learned things too from this programme ... at times I also need to calm down.”* (Parent)

Other participants described the way new relationships and friendships were developing unexpectedly. The programme was improving relationships between dance participants and in the process the *Move* dance tutors were building respectful, inclusive communities.

“The benefits are unbelievable for our people. I mean, apart from the physical aspect to the dance classes, it has created a community with everyone joining in. There’s a real sense of connection that has developed. Through the Zoom classes it has been a lifesaver for people who live rurally and can’t get to dance classes. They’re seeing what Rochelle and others can do and do so well. It has developed a sense of connection and belonging, the sense of community, and that is for the carers and support workers as well.” (IHC Media Manager)

The *Move* programme enabled students with intellectual disabilities within schools to be seen in a different light. As leaders of dance classes, they were viewed in a new and different way. The

Move programme enabled students to develop new connections and relationships with others.

“The Move programme needs to be expanded into more schools. It’s a really humbling experience, watching the impact of Move. From my experience, the real value for a school is having its own students with disabilities lead the dance sessions. That is the real value of Move. The dance tutors work with our students, and then our mainstream students get to see students with disabilities as leaders and then they develop a connection with them” (High school teacher)

The transformation of dance class participants was particularly noticeable as they engaged with the Move dance leaders and tutors over time. Through the leadership and teaching abilities of the dance trainees and leaders, the Move programme has broken down social and cultural barriers. The Move dance leaders and tutors engaged diverse groups of participants in dance sessions in new and creative ways. This enabled class participants to develop new behaviours and relationships of care and connection.

“In terms of seeing the impact the Move programme is having, there’s nothing better than actually seeing it for yourself and getting a true understanding of what it’s about. For our organisation, one of our young people who we support has quite serious challenging behaviours. But one of the Move dance tutors has worked with this person. So, all of my staff stepped back, and it was an eye-opening moment, in terms of seeing the difference in his behaviour. The dance tutor is so attuned to him ... and if he’s not quite in the space, they just let him do his thing and he comes back to them when he’s ready. And that is the culture or the atmosphere that the dance tutors create in that space.” (CEO Chris Ruth Centre)

Improved pathways for employment.

Interview analysis emphasised the Move programme created pathways for employment for people with intellectual disabilities. This was one of its stated aims. However, as the programme was run in schools, some participants felt this extended a pathway for employment for a wider range of people.

“I’ve been in the sector for a long, long time and I’ve seen attitudes change. We’ve still got a long way to go. I mean, inclusive education was supposed to be the fantastic opportunity for people with disabilities, but New Zealand’s got an awful long way to go. I think it’s vitally important the programme is run in schools. Because the Move programme is educating the young adults of the future, and when I interview people here, I ask them, ‘What experience have you had with people with a disability?’ So, the Move programme is a huge opportunity for providing pathways for employment for a whole range of people, and an acceptance of the diverse community that we live in.” (CEO of the Chris Ruth Centre)

“Jolt and the Move programme have really grown a reputation. Because our students do want to go, they experience it here at school and then they ask, ‘Oh, can I join Jolt?’ or ‘Can I join Move?’ And it’s that pathway for their employment too. They want to join which is great. It has really developed the confidence in our students. Just be who you are, and shine, and be your best self.” (High school teacher)



Discussion

It is clear from analysis of participant interviews, that the *Move* programme provides a unique model of inclusive leadership and teaching that extends beyond creative dance.

It brings together diverse communities in ways that build social connections and a sense of belonging; the programme develops confidence, whilst reducing fear and isolation. It enables diverse groups of children, young people and adults to identify their uniqueness and creative expression whilst valuing their own and other's differences.

Figure 2 demonstrates the impact of the programme far beyond the *Move* tutors and those directly engaged in the workshops or professional development sessions. The ripple effect of impact flows out to whānau/families, the creative community and supports communities to be more inclusive of those with different abilities. The programme is operating as a change agent within communities and has the potential to support inclusive aspirations across Aotearoa.



Figure 2: The ripple impact of outcomes

The *Move* programme enables self-determination through leadership in dance. The programme achieves all the outcomes of the New Zealand Disability Strategy⁴ (2016-2026) and is consistent with the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the aims of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This research demonstrates the *Move* programme is modelling change in the disability sector by challenging assumptions about leadership and capability development.

Through leadership, the *Move* programme and teacher trainees and dance leaders within it, challenge low expectations and deficit assumptions

associated with people with intellectual disabilities. Importantly, *Move* is culturally responsive as well as inclusive, enabling members of the Pasifika community to participate fully. The *Move* programme is a form of emancipatory and ethical leadership concerned with social justice and the rights of people with intellectual disability.

Internationally, the *Move* programme is unique. While there is research demonstrating impacts for dancers with intellectual disabilities, this tends to focus on improvements in physical fitness (Martínez-Aldao et al., 2019; Must et al., 2022) and increased participation and social connection

⁴ As highlighted earlier the outcomes are education, employment and economic security, health and wellbeing, rights protection and justice, accessibility, attitudes, choice and control, and leadership.

(Slaney & Eastern, 2022). However results from our own research, demonstrates that through leadership, the ability of the dancers to influence inclusive communities is profound.

Ames (2021, p. 105) writes that ‘making dance is an act of resilience in the context of the social, cultural, and historical struggle that continues in the lives of people with learning disabilities’ (p. 5).

This research demonstrates that for people with an intellectual disability, teaching dance is an act of resistance in the context of a social, cultural and historical struggle. The *Move* programme provided the training and opportunity for young people with an intellectual disability to challenge social assumptions and low expectations, while also supporting their own self-determination and aspirations as dance teachers and leaders.



Recommendations

For the Jolt Dance Company,

- Create ongoing and trusting relationships with iwi and Māori providers and communities, Pasifika providers and communities and culturally and linguistically diverse providers and communities, to raise awareness of both Jolt Dance Company and the *Move* programme, to enhance access.
- Continue to demonstrate leadership for people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities to learn about governance and organisational leadership through planned participation in the Jolt Dance Company.
- Share and promote the *Move* innovation and impact widely in the sector. This work has the potential to challenge what services, schools and teachers believe is possible for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Investment in longitudinal research to track and follow the impact of the *Move* programme, to better understand life outcomes for those with intellectual disability. This research is a snapshot in time and can only capture outcomes in this instance. The likely long-term impact of this programme on the lives of the dance leaders, their whānau and stakeholders, remains unknown.
- Invest in sharing and spreading innovation in the sector. While gains have been made since signing The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, there is still a long way to go to achieve the vision of the Disability Strategy - 'New Zealand is a non-disabling society – a place where disabled people have an equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and all of New Zealand works together to make this happen' (p. 6). This research demonstrates how innovation in the sector has the potential to shift the deficit attitudes and barriers created by mainstream society, whilst enabling people with intellectual disability to not only participate, but lead.

For funders and the Government,

- Increase sustainable long-term investment in the Jolt Dance Company and the *Move* programme. The programme demonstrates innovation and impact in the disability sector and warrants long-term investment across Government departments, which is consistent with the aims of the Disability Strategy, Investing in our whole lives – a long-term approach.

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Appendix 1: Methodology

The purpose of this evaluation was to understand the impacts and benefits achieved through Jolt's *Move* programme. The overall evaluation question was: How well and in what ways is the *Move* programme working to achieve its aims?

Subset questions included:

- What are the aims of *Move* and why are these important?
- What is the impact of the *Move* programme for trainees, their whānau, the education sector and the Jolt community? (this includes service providers, support workers, dancers)
- What are the intended and unintended outcomes for those engaged in the programme?
- What contribution does *Move* make to what is known nationally and internationally about inclusive dance and dance teacher training?

This type of investigation was best met through a qualitative design that enabled triangulation of multiple sources. Data was collected via:

- Semi-structured interviews with 22 participants. These interviews included dance leaders, tutors and trainees involved in the *Move* programme and their whānau/

families. Interviews were also conducted with people from the education and disability support services sector as well as members of the Jolt community.

- Document sources. This included analysis of Jolt's organisational values, strategies and mission statements, and participation numbers.
- Analysis of national and international literature related to inclusive dance and disability issues.

Participant interviews were conducted either in person or via Zoom (depending on participant preference). Trust is a very important part of stakeholder engagement and ensuring sustainable relationships. As members of the Jolt community had trusting relationships with dance tutors and trainees, Lyn Cotton interviewed Rochelle, Jokani and Lachlan. In addition, Renée Ryan interviewed participants from the Pasifika community. Ihi researchers interviewed all other participants, including whānau and family members. All interview schedules were designed in collaboration with Jolt and the architects of *Move*.

Privacy and ethics

Strict processes of informed consent were adhered to ensuring the participants were clear about the purpose of the research and what would happen with the information they provided.

An information sheet and consent form for all participants were designed in collaboration with Jolt. These were discussed with all participants prior to interviews, to ensure that when consent was given, all participants understood their rights.

A key issue was whether participants wanted to be named and identified in this research. All participants wanted to be named and this was

particularly important for Rochelle, Jokani and Lachlan and their whānau/families.

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were sent back to participants for their review and comment. Draft case studies of impact for Rochelle, Jokani and Lachlan and their whānau/families were sent back to them for their review, comment and approval.

At the conclusion of this research project, all raw data is stored electronically for one year and then destroyed.

Data analysis and reporting

The main themes in the interview data were identified inductively (Silverman, 1998). This meant that categories were not imposed on the data but arrived out of data analysis to inform the overall evaluation. Comparing and contrasting different

types of evidence (for example different interview participants, programme documentation and literature sources) enabled triangulation of data that emphasised interconnected dimensions of effect (Merriam, 1998).

Considerations

This evaluation has taken a strengths-based approach to determine the impacts and benefits of Jolt's *Move* programme. However, the research was limited in both size and scope. Further longitudinal

tracking over time would be needed to determine both the long-term nature and scope of the *Move* programme's impact on dance leaders, tutors and trainees and other key stakeholders involved.

Photography: Petra Mingneau





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