

Introduction: Community Participation through Arts and Cultural Disruptive Citizen Practices

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“States Parties shall take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society,” states paragraph 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (CRPD) (UN General Assembly, 2006).

In this book, disabled persons’ opportunities and challenges for developing creative, artistic, and intellectual potential are highlighted. Furthermore, both individual and societal enrichment, and barriers to this enrichment, are made visible.

How might inclusive arts practices strengthen active citizenship and community participation? This is the main question that inspired us to engage with glocal collegial networks which led to this book project.

In this introduction we will share the history of the book project. First, we lay out some of the premises and theoretical background for the project. We then present (our always limited) perspectives on: the concepts of community work; disability citizenship; critical disability studies; disability in the fields of arts and culture in the Global South and North; and arts, culture, and disability. We also give short introductions to the 18 peer reviewed

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articles and practical encounters that comprise the chapters in this book. Finally, we offer a few words on what we hope to achieve.

The history of this book project

We invited practitioners and scholars, who want to contribute to developing knowledge of how inclusive arts and cultural practices, combined with critical disability theories, might strengthen active citizenship and community participation for people with limited access to the arts and social communication. Discrimination leading to exclusion from the arts and from active participation in society tend to walk hand in hand (Benjamin, 2002, 2022; Chivandikwa, 2020; Falola & Hamel, 2021; Watermeyer et al., 2019). We, the editors, envision a community of participation and well-being for everyone, in which barriers to inclusion and participation are non-existent. We understand arts and cultural practices as rich and empowering ways of activating partnership, participation, and deconstructing oppressive discourses through the possibilities offered through the arts.

Societal inequality is a persistent and growing challenge, in societies both in the Global South (or the Global Majority) and North (or the Global Minority) (UN News, 2020). Democracy and civil society are under constant pressure, and must be nourished and developed (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2017, 2023). Democracy needs unruly citizens to avoid the shrinking of civic space (Haerpfer et al., 2009). Arts and cultural practices are a peaceful and powerful way of being unruly and practicing resistance. Cultural forms of expression, such as theater and other performance practices, bring the struggles of those who are marginalized into a public sphere – out into the public space – thus creating places for visibility and dialogue through a diversity perspective (Balme, 2018; Visser-Rotgans & Marques, 2014). The editors foresee theater performances and other arts practices as having the potential to provide disabled participants with opportunities for embodied disruptive citizenship, thus challenging and subverting misrecognition (Fraser, 1992) and political-economic injustices, within and beyond performance and arts communities. This is because citizenship and community belonging are actualized in active participation. A sustained critique of existing ableist practices and discourses is thus achievable to engender alternative modes of theater performance and other artistic participation for communities of

disabled people. Those of us who experience a disability and see disability as a valuable general characteristic of humanity, often feel that agency is complex, contextualized, and challenged.

The authors included in this edited book subscribe to an affirmative and human rights understanding of the experience of being disabled. An affirmative model promotes the experience of differences as positive identities, celebrating people's diversity and multitude, and challenging the value-laden presumption that living with a disability always entails a loss (Swain & French, 2000). The human rights model (Degener, 2016) assumes that experiencing disabilities is rooted in a lack of realization of human rights, as expressed in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN General Assembly, 2006). Hence the editors are focused on apparently persisting ableist language, theatrical and artistic forms celebrated in broad theater and arts practice, and the clearly limited visibility of disabled communities in theater and performing arts productions. This limited visibility is really striking, because mainstream theater and other progressive performances emphasize social justice, liberation, and the eradication of dehumanizing elements, such as poverty, apathy, ignorance, and oppression.

Community work

A community refers to a group of people who, although diverse, live in and share a specific geographical space within a common level of infrastructure development (Larsen et al., 2014, p. 3, with reference to Sewpaul, 2008). Community is also defined as a group of people who share a common interest, but may be spatially separate, and indeed may never physically meet (Ife, 2016; Larsen et al., 2014, p. 3, with reference to Sewpaul, 2008, p. 98). Community *work*, then, refers to a method of working with groups of people, including a range of community organizations, for the purpose of enhancing human well-being and fundamental freedoms, and optimizing opportunities and human capabilities (Kenny et al. 2018, Kleibl et al., 2020; Larsen et al., 2014, p. 4). Community work can be either an aim or a process for change. As an aim it is used by marginalized groups to achieve something. In community work as a process, and a bottom-up approach, sustainable changes are achieved when people participate in an active way, bringing to the development process their knowledge, skills, and experience. Several factors may make participation difficult. One could be self-exclusion through lack of self-confidence or that their opinions will

be met with laughter. Self-exclusion may also be an outcome of previous participation without results, so participation is perceived to be worthless (Chataika, 2019; Cornwall, 2008; Larsen et al., 2014; McCaffrey, 2023).

In this book, we advocate community work through the principles of participation and citizen involvement. In each chapter, the authors explore how they, community workers, or artists they have studied with, adopt radical and emancipatory approaches to community work, pursuing “acts of citizenship” (Isin & Nielsen, 2008).

«Acts of citizenship»

As a social science discipline and theoretical analytical framework, citizenship studies have as a starting point, among others, the English sociologist T. H. Marshall who, in the 1950s, tried to describe how the individual’s rights have developed over the centuries. The development is thus summarized: civil rights in the 19th century, political rights in the 20th century, and social rights in the 21st century (Sepulchre, 2021, pp. 2–3). Marshall has been criticized for not looking at marginalized groups in terms of the rights of the population. Not everyone has easy access to the opportunities that might secure rights. Since then, more inclusive citizenship theories have been developed (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2017; Isin, 2009; Turner, 2016). The emphasis on legal rights has been expanded, focusing on practices that develop citizenship.

One example of developing analytical tools is Engin Isin’s later works, where he sees citizenship as performative, with a basis in language philosophy and performance studies. A performative perspective means understanding people as acting beings, in their objective and subjective situations, focusing on how they enact their subjectivity (Isin, 2017, p. 500). Performativity involves the moment in which a subject – a person or a collective – asserts the right to a livable life, when no such prior authorization (claim) exists. Performing acts of citizenship often invokes a break with convention. To Isin, analyzing citizenship from a performative perspective means recognizing that the extent of our claims both refers to and reiterates social conventions, yet has force and effects that exceed them (2017, p. 501).

Isin further argues that we must focus on *acts of citizenship* to understand how citizenship is developed as a critical and performative methodology. The aim of acts of citizenship, as a conceptual tool, can be understood as shifting from a focus on habits/conduct (behavior) to situations where

claims are made – the act itself (the notion of becoming). The word “act” as a verb means putting something into motion, and being directed towards something. Isin (2009, p. 379) emphasizes that to act is to actualize a rupture (Ames et al., 2019; Glørstad, 2022, 2023). In their book *Performing Citizenship*, Paula Hildebrandt and Sibylle Peters (2019) discuss how cultural co-creation takes place, and what role art may have in developing new citizenship positions in struggles for participation and inclusion: “We see artistic experiments which critically highlight long-hidden aspects of citizenship, promote new emerging agencies, create new choreographies and scores of movements in public space or invent and test nascent institutions” (Hildebrandt & Peters, 2019, p. 2). This book project can be understood as creating space for acts of citizenship through radical and disruptive arts and cultural practices, where critical and performative methodology is put to work. The authors claim, or support claiming, visibility and citizenship, as they explore and articulate the glocal practices in focus. Used as a critical methodology, attention is paid to how subjects constitute themselves as citizens (Andrijasevic, 2013, p. 49) in this book through innovative arts and cultural practices.

Disability citizenship and critical disability studies

Disability is unique as an identity category, because “anyone can enter [it] at any time, and we will all join it if we live long enough” (Garland-Thomson, 2002, p. 20). The aim of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (UN General Assembly, 2006) is to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity,” as described in Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport, paragraphs 1–4.

The authors of this book subscribe, directly or indirectly, to the interdisciplinary and diverse theoretical tradition of critical disability studies as introduced by Melinda Hall (2019) in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Theorists and practitioners within this theoretical tradition see experiences of disability as a material and “real,” yet historical, relative, cultural, social, and political phenomenon. Critical disability theory is described as an emancipatory discourse that examines the socio-political constructions of disability, and follows the impact of these constructions

on those who experience disability (Goodley et al., 2018, p. 206; Hall, 2019; Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009, p. 48). The starting point is the lived experience of disability. The goal is to change the conditions that oppress individuals' experiences. A fundamental theme in critical disability theory is to visualize and analyze ableism, discrimination based on ability (Campbell, 2009, p. 5; Hall, 2019). Authors of critical disability studies have challenged ableism through deconstructing and criticizing the binary logic of disability versus ability. Dan Goodley (2018) makes a distinction between disablism (the direct discrimination of people with disabilities) and ableism (societal structures and practices that favor non-disabled people). Postcolonial scholars seek to decolonize disability by centering the Global South, challenging neo-colonialism in capitalism, culture, and discourse, and revisiting questions of disability through a diversity of cultural perspectives (Hall, 2019, referring to Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009, p. 54). Hall refers to how critical disability theory engages in dialogue among cultures, emphasized by Helen Meekosha and Russell Shuttleworth (2009, p. 54), who "call for an explicit dialogue with human rights and emancipatory thinking from the diversity of cultures," and hope to avoid "projecting an international ideal" from Western to non-Western cultures (2009, p. 54).

Disability in the arts and cultural fields of the Global South and North

The authors of this edited book are based in different parts of the Global South and North. Historically, community work has suffered when it has been shaped – as a colonial and postcolonial construct – and associated with a secondary political agenda of the funding government (Conradie, 2011, p. 312; Sewpaul & Larsen, 2014, p. 233; Watermeyer et al., 2019). In view of dominant discourses and North-South power dynamics, knowledge that emerges within Western contexts becomes valorized and universalized (Hovde et al., 2021). The voices of the "other" have often been silenced, and indigenous knowledge remains marginalized. Assumptions about what constitutes valid knowledge and good practice have contributed to professional imperialism (Sewpaul & Larsen, 2014, referring to Midgley, 1981).

Researchers from the Global South note that the impact of colonialism on disability practices and discourses is still being felt long after independence. Values, beliefs, and practices engendered by the advent of colonialism are still present (Grech, 2015; Ndi, 2012; Shava, 2008; Soldatic, 2015).

Kudzai Shava (2008), for example, posits that disability has long been considered a welfare and charity issue rather than a human rights issue, because of the pervasive influence of Western-based individual charity and medical models of disability, imposed by missionaries and colonial administrators. Even after independence, non-governmental organizations perpetuated colonial practices. For this reason, the policy of institutionalizing disabled people remained unchallenged, even after such practices had been abandoned in their countries of origin (Chataika, 2007). In this sense, Global South scholarship notes that globalization has promoted development discourses, which undermine efforts to politicize disability. An equally crucial argument from the Global South is the apparent ambivalence of Western disability discourse on the increasing incidence of impairments, occasioned by globalizing neo-liberal capitalism (Grech, 2015; Ndi, 2012; Soldatic, 2015). It is noted that this social model generally ignores impairments that are especially prevalent in the Global South. The reality of socially constructed impairments as legitimate human experiences deserves to be recognized, contextualized, and problematized in theatrical performances, which seek disruptive national and global citizenship, and inclusive community participation (Chivandikwa, 2020; Connell, 2011; Ndi, 2012; Soldatic, 2014). The editors envision theatrical performances and arts practices that are sensitive to these geopolitical dynamics.

The disability art movement started in the 1960s, and is now a broad global movement, partly institutionalized in national cultural policies and by global networks (Crossing the Line, 2020; Czymoch et al., 2021; Disability Arts International, 2024). Disability art, culture, and media studies engage with the socially constructed stories that drama, theater, dance, film, television, literature, art, media, and entertainment talk about, as well as what it means to be disabled (Hadley & McDonald, 2018, p. 2). Disability studies and disability arts, culture, and media studies have worked in parallel, and in productive conversation, as mutually committed contributors to the disability rights movement. Bree Hadley and Donna McDonald (2018) elaborate on these issues in their introduction to the *Routledge handbook of disability arts, culture and media*. A range of scholarly literature attempts to identify, document, and describe art, culture, and media practice about, with, or by disabled and deaf people (Hadley & McDonald, 2018, p. 3). Their handbook accounts of professional, experimental, and political arts and media practices by disabled people run parallel with accounts of arts, health, well-being, and therapy projects and practices for disabled people.

The authors argue for more accessible, collaborative, creative research methods that can assist in making different voices heard. Collaboration between scholars in creative fields and the education, social services, science, health, and medicine fields that also research disability issues may create the possibility for relations of interdependency, engagement, conflict, and negotiation (Hadley & McDonald, 2018, p. 17).

This book – negotiating a public sphere

The authors of this book present theater, performance, arts and/or other cultural practices, innovations and strategies that imply practical, social, economic, educational, political, and theoretical actions. These actions help break down specific and general barriers to participation – for artists themselves, but also for community members – in the larger community and society. The authors critically present and discuss methods and models for inclusive and innovative arts and cultural citizenship practices, which leverage off of disability as the special positive driving force and game changer for a more open society (Fraser, 1992, 2009; Hadley & Mc Donald, 2018; Mead & Shawn, 2021; Østern et al., 2023). In this way, cultural citizenship is made visible (van Hensbroek, 2010).

The authors of the 18 chapters in this book engage with theater, performance, arts and/or other cultural practices in different ways, from different critical perspectives, such as dance, performance, theater, and visual arts in local contexts in the Global South and North. These practices might exist in the margins of dominant arts scenes and mainstream society, but they do, we argue, have great expressive power (Anttila & Suominen, 2019). The artists and community members who are the authors themselves, or with whom the authors of this book engage, are people with physical, cognitive or sensorial disabilities, and are thus part of disabled minorities experiencing discrimination in ableist societies at large. In various ways, the chapters are statements in a common public sphere. The statements highlight various forms of criticism of oppressive structures that marginalize experiences of disabilities, at the same time as they highlight inclusive art practices. The chapters document the gap between disabled/abled, at the same time as they go beyond this binarism and highlight structures of opportunity that create equality and inclusion. The contributions in this book inscribe themselves in one way or another onto a radical form of community work, either as critique or support, which the following short presentation of each

chapter reveals. Of the 18 chapters, 12 are peer-reviewed research articles from different, in most cases marginalized, contexts in the world. Further, six practical encounters are included. These are written by practitioners that we wanted to give space to within the mission of this book – to enable opportunities for developing creative, artistic, and intellectual potential among diverse voices.

Peer-reviewed chapters

After the editorial introduction chapter, we allow the book to start with Tony McCaffrey’s chapter “‘We are on the political spectrum’: How is learning disabled theatre political?” The chapter takes us straight into the core of what this book is about: The creation and development of theater as art, and how this artistic endeavor connects with creating space for disability citizenship and community development. McCaffrey is the artistic director of Different Light Theatre located in Christchurch, New Zealand, and in this chapter, he explores the political potential and significance of learning disabled theater. The author concludes that we are all located somewhere on a spectrum.

In “Vulnerable agencies: A performative research assemblage on dis/ability” Liisa Jaakonaho describes an artistic research process stemming from her work as a dance pedagogue in disability services. Her aim is to develop a nuanced and ethically sensitive understanding of diverse and vulnerable agencies in the boundary areas between arts, research, and social care. With her performance installation at the New Performance Turku Festival in Finland in 2018 as a pivoting point, Jaakonaho considers the complexity of participation, power relations, and decoloniality in artistic research, based on methodological experiments and theoretical discussion, including the ethics of care, vulnerability, dis/ability, and ableism.

“Breaking barriers through theatre: The case of King George VI Centre in Bulawayo” by Cletus Moyo, Nkululeko Sibanda, Courage Chipatiso, and Inez Hussey explores the way that King George VI (KGVI) Centre in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe sets out to break barriers that limit people’s agency and participation in social and public spheres of life. King George VI is a purpose-built center for physically and hearing-impaired young people ages 3 to 20. The authors scrutinize the theatrical works entitled *I Am Disabled, So What?* and *Dancing Queen*, created with young disabled people at the center, and how they are agentic, transformative, and barrier-breaking.

In “We do not need pity. We need opportunities. Consideration of a performer with differentiated body” Felipe Henrique Monteiro Oliveira and Andrea Pagnes advocate a politics of care as they analyze Oliveira’s artistic experience of having lived in a region of northeastern Brazil, which is still permeated by a culture of intolerance and indifference. Taking the readers through the historical emergence of performance art as a place where the artist’s body is the main material used to challenge social norms, the authors identify performance art as a practice that does not discriminate against *differentiated bodies*, a concept coined by Oliveria.

In “Performance of protest – people with learning disabilities marching in the streets of Trondheim, Norway, 2019” Vibeke Glørstad analyzes an event where a group of people – people with learning disabilities, their families, and social and health workers – marched in protest through the streets of Trondheim, Norway. They had had enough of budget cuts, and delivered signatures to the deputy mayor, asking for a dialogue with politicians. The author approaches this performance of protest through the lens of performativity, and the civil right of freedom of assembly, arguing that the performative power of assembly strengthens citizen status and practice for people with learning disabilities.

The next chapter is written by Aleksandra Dunaeva, a Russian project maker in socially engaged arts, currently living in Finland. “The Meeting – The Apartment – Conversations. The Right to Be Present: An inclusive project in search of its own place in Russia’s theatrical art of the 2010s and early 2020s” questions the place of inclusive theater in the sphere of Russian culture given the country’s growing autocracy. With Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine happening during the period this book was written, the editors acknowledge that the author is taking a risk in contributing this critical chapter.

Ciane Fernandes takes on the perspective of a Brazilian mother and caregiver of a severely autistic young adult in her chapter “Towards an intermodal merger: Somatics, disability, and Brazilian collaborative performance”. She discusses an educational system that perpetuates neurotypical models; an academic context that excludes disability from social justice debates, events, and actions; and a society that insists on erasing the perspective, experience, and unique contributions of people with disabilities. Exploring the affinity between somatics, performance, and neurodivergent perception, she offers somatics and intermodal performance as neurodiverse modes of integrating and creating new possibilities for a more egalitarian and participative world.

In “The potential of visual arts in the reinforcement of citizenship for individuals with intellectual disabilities in Norway” Daniela Musli explores outsider art as a person-centered form of visual art, created by self-taught artists who work outside the established visual arts systems. She scrutinizes the work of Arnstein Aano, an artist with disabilities living in a Norwegian residential care facility. As a result, Musli advocates the use of visual arts as an everyday tool to enhance citizenship for individuals with intellectual disabilities, guided by ethical principles from Norwegian social educators, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the human rights model.

With his chapter “Representation of disability identity in Sinhala Theatre” Nimal Wijesiri addresses issues related to disability identity representation in Sinhala Theatre, in a Sri Lankan context. Wijesiri conducted a case study in connection with the Samanalayaya (Butterfly Plane) Theatre Festival, organized by the Sunera Foundation in Sri Lanka. His study reveals that the Buddhist concept of *karma* is the most influential phenomenon with respect to a religious/charity model of disability in the Sri Lankan context. Dialoguing with critical disability theory, combined with identity theory and intersectionality, the author argues that this religious influence challenges the critical thinking capacity of Sinhala Theatre practitioners.

Through an analysis of the hip-hop dance production, *Broken Pavement*, Gugwelihle Ngwenya, Courage Chinokwetu, Kelvin Chikonzo, and Nehemiah Chivandikwa examine how Blessing Fire, a physically impaired dancer, resists and dismantles stereotypical constructions and representations of people living with disabilities, resulting in their chapter “Celebrating embodied agency in disability performances in Zimbabwe: The case of Blessing Fire’s *Broken Pavement*”. In tandem with critical disability theory, especially the affirmative model, the authors demonstrate how Blessing Fire transforms performance space into a site for celebrating and communicating disability corporeal politics, using dance as a vehicle of liberation and resistance against imposed forms of oppression of disabled people.

Hilde Guddingsmo has explored the working methods of Teater non-Stop, an ensemble of 15 professional actors with learning disabilities and six social educator students, owned by Namsos municipality in northern Norway. The research material analyzed in the chapter “Promoting ownership through joint improvisation on ephemeral ideas. Lessons for the field of social work from exploring the methods of Teater nonStop, a professional

ensemble of artists with intellectual disabilities” consists of a conversation between the artistic director, Line Strøm, and the author. This discussion reveals how the creative work succeeds by offering empowering levels of openness and recognition.

Tone Pernille Østern, Terje Olsen, Elen Øyen, Lise Lien, Lene Christin Holum, Anne Ogundipe, and Kaja Tvedten Jorem explore structural barriers for co-designed research in their own collaborative process between disabled and non-disabled researchers, and commissioners, in the chapter “Towards a crippling of research practices – peeling off ableist structures in an arts, culture and disability researcher and commissioner collaboration in Norway”. In dialogue with critical disability theory, the authors scrutinize their own process, arguing that *cripping* research structures must be part of research projects trying to crip society, arts, and culture. Otherwise, the ableist system might repeat itself within the research.

Practical encounters

“Adaptive dance and physical theatre at Dissimilis” presents the methods developed in Dissimilis’ national competence center in Norway, a center for people with developmental disabilities. Adaptive dance and physical theater mean that the lessons are designed for people with a developmental disability, and that through adaptation participants can feel accomplishment, joy, and get to move in their own ways. The author, Caroline Marie Sprott, has, since 2017, been responsible for the adaptive dance and theater lessons at Dissimilis, as well as for their productions’ choreography. In this practical encounter, she explores and articulates her own teaching practice.

The practical encounter “Theatre of the deaf: An Amakhosi Theatre experience” is written by Cont Mdladla Mhlanga, and mildly revised by the editors after his passing. The chapter documents and tributes the work of Mhlanga, as the Zimbabwean *Amakhosi Theatre’s* executive artistic director, and the theater’s actress and theater director, the late Gogo Thembi Ngwabi, for the deaf community in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Amakhosi Theatre was founded in 1980 and staged its first play *The Book of Lies* in Bulawayo in 1982. The chapter describes how their collaboration with Rosemary Zhira pushed Amakhosi to work with deaf members in play writing, acting, production and performance.

“AMANZI: An inclusive theatre project between three institutions in Zimbabwe and Switerland” is a practical encounter written by Fortune

Ruzungunde from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. In the project focused on in the chapter, Ruzungunde worked with artists from King George VI, an institution that caters to people with disabilities, and also hosts arts programs in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and Theatre Hora in Zurich, Switzerland, a theater company of artists with mental disabilities. The collaboration started in 2003, and ended with the musical folk drama entitled *AMANZI – grosse und kleine Tiere* [AMANZI – big and small animals] that toured Switzerland in 2005.

Josadaque Albuquerque da Silva Pires, Nara Salles, Felipe Henrique Monteiro Oliveira, and Andrea Pagnes explore an artistic residency that culminated in “(Lou)Cure-se!!! An Artaudian approach to existence in scenic instaurations at the Psychiatric Hospital Dr. João Machado”. This is a series of scenic instaurations displayed in a hospital pavilion in the psychiatric hospital, Dr. John Machado, in Natal, Brazil in 2016. The project *Literacy in contemporary art and creative processes: Investigations about madness* was conducted by students from the art department of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, to benefit mental health patients, their corporeity, and daily intersubjective interactions.

“Including Irina: A personal retrospective and sideways glance from a theater critic on being an artist with a disability in the 1980s and 1990s” by Sara Granath is a reflection on the road taken by the disabled from being audience, to being represented in various media, to being the creators and artists themselves. Examples are given from the 60’s onwards, with the main focus on the accomplishments of a writer/actress from Finland with Down’s syndrome. The text also touches on the benevolent reactions from people wanting to protect these artists from exposure.

Tine Skjold has, since 2020, been the Director of NUK – Ny ung kunst (New Young Art), an annual, inclusive art festival for young people (14–20 years), established in 1992 as part of the larger festival, Festspillene i Nord-Norge (The Festival of Northern Norway). In the practical encounter “Exploring inclusive art practices in the context of CRPD” Skjold critically and self-reflectively looks at how she could use the CRPD to further develop inclusive art practices in her capacity as the director of an inclusive arts festival for youth.

As a final word and “push” into the reading of the chapters of *Theatre and performing arts, disability citizenship and community development – perspectives from the Global South and North*, we wish to emphasize that community participation and (the work for) active citizenship are about

values, attitudes, and an orientation towards active participation of all stakeholders in arts and performance culture: writers, directors, producers, disabled participants, and the audience. The editors realize that this entails combining the intellectual, social, aesthetic, and socio-political resources of the broader community with the corporeal, cognitive, and social skills or competencies of disabled theater and other arts participants and audiences to create communities, stories, and images, which recognize and assert the much-maligned disabled body for disruptive citizenship. Hence the need for sustained focus on the participation of disabled theater, performance, and arts participants/audiences as thinkers, organizers, creators, and performers, is premised on the recognition that their participation in theater and arts (particularly as creators and performers), and related processes, is not automatic, given the years of artistic marginalization and the apparent ableist nature of theater and arts. There is, therefore, an urgent need to foster the participation of disabled communities in theater and arts processes, in ways that might stimulate radically new emotions, physical states, and social attitudes that legitimize disabled bodies within and beyond performance spaces.

Author biographies

Vibeke Glørstad, is a senior lecturer at VID Specialized University, Faculty of Health Science, Stavanger, Norway, a BA in social education and Licentiate Degree in Sociology and Cultural studies from the University of Oslo. Her teaching expertise includes social education/social work at BA level and at the Master's degree in citizenship and co-operation within the health, social, cultural and educational field. Her research interest is related to how vulnerable groups as people with disabilities access and practice their citizenship rights, based in critical disability perspectives. She publishes on political and cultural inclusive citizenship practices by people with disabilities and marginalized groups. Glørstad is a member of the *Performance and disability working group in IFTR* (International Federation of Theatre Research), with a rich international network.

Tone Pernille Østern Tone Pernille Østern has a Dr. of Arts in Dance with a focus on dance and disability from the Theatre Academy, now part of the University of the Arts Helsinki. She is Professor in Arts Education with a focus on Dance at the Department for Teacher Education, NTNU

Norwegian University for Science and Technology, and Visiting Professor in Dance Education at Stockholm University of the Arts. She is active as artist/researcher/teacher with a special interest in participatory arts, choreographic processes, inclusive and critical pedagogies, bodily learning, and the performativity of research, learning and teaching. She co-authored *Artist – an available profession? A research project about artists with disabilities in Norway* (2023) commissioned by Arts and Culture Norway and co-leads the research group *How to do things with disabilities*. She is Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Dance Articulated*.

Tony McCaffrey, BA(Hons), PhD, Senior Lecturer, National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Art, Ara Institute, Christchurch New Zealand. Artistic Director, Different Light Theatre, an ensemble of learning-disabled performers, Co-convenor, Performance and disability working group, International Federation for Theatre Research. He has contributed articles to Theatre Research International, Global Performance Studies and Performance Philosophy. He is the author of *Incapacity and theatricality* (Routledge, 2019) *Giving and taking voice in learning disabled theatre* (Routledge, 2023) and is currently working with the Different Light artists on *The ends of theatre: Learning disabled performance and research* (Routledge, forthcoming).

Kelvin Chikonzo is an Associate professor in Theatre/ Performance and Film at the University of Zimbabwe. He is interested in identity driven models of empowering and recuperating marginalised/ subaltern voices. He deploys applied media with clear strategies of structure and form that not only unveil instances of subtle oppression but possible means of resistive agency imbedded in stories told from below. As a direct outcome of his doctoral studies, he developed a transformative media model which is being piloted in the making of documentaries, docu-dramas and verbatim performances on disability, gender based violence and substance abuse.

Nehemiah Chivandikwa is a Professor at the University of Zimbabwe and holds a PhD in applied theatre and development communication from the same university. His major research projects focus on applied media development communication with a particular emphasis on disability, gender and rural development in theatre, television, participatory video and community radio. He has a particular interest in audience studies /

reception of political theatre and radio/television programs on politics in Africa. He researches on how structural factors impact on the production and reception of media and theatre productions. In the past three years, professor Chivandikwa has convened Media against Phobias conferences and Media and Crisis Communication Workshops.

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