

ICMTA Diversity Policy

*“Orchids are the largest family of plants in the entire world. There are 25,000 - 30,000 different species of orchid. Orchid species can differ greatly from one another, with extreme variations in size, weight and colour. While some orchids may only be the size of a nickel when in bloom, others may weigh up to one ton with petals as long as 30 inches, and sprays of small flowers 12 - 14 feet long. Orchid blossoms appear in almost every imaginable colour except for true black.”*¹

The ICMTA’s reason-for-being is to support conscious movement teachers and organisations to enable the *unique dancer* in every body to adventure onto the dance-floor, and into the wider world, expressing their individual, embodied self and making their personal contribution.

The conscious movement practices supported by the ICMTA are *founded on a celebration of the diversity of life*. The ICMTA recognises and celebrates the vastly diverse ways life forms itself on planet Earth.

Prejudice & Discrimination. The ICMTA recognises that many cultures, sub-cultures, organisations and individuals world-wide do not always treat the wide diversity of human life equally, fairly or respectfully. We recognise that some individuals and sub-groups are disadvantaged, while others are privileged.

We recognise discrimination in many forms, including in employment, housing, the distribution of wealth, goods and services, the accessibility of health care, the production and provision of cultural opportunities. We recognise that these forms of discrimination are sometimes intentional and sometimes unintentional.

The range of human variables where discrimination takes place includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on race and ethnicity, gender, gender identity (gender non-conforming and trans people), sexuality, disability, health status (HIV and other conditions), social class, socio-economics, age, and education. The ICMTA recognises that discrimination can happen in other ways and that, like everything in life, patterns of discrimination change over time.

Awareness. We encourage our members to become aware of unfair, discriminatory attitudes, practices, behaviour or cultures in themselves and their classes, colleagues, communities, organisations, social institutions, sub-cultures and the wider world.

Some examples of discrimination:

- Cultivating a culture of welcome for some kinds of people and a culture of disinterest, unwelcome or rejection for others.
- Male dancers consistently taking up more space or air-time proportionately to female dancers.

¹ Extract from <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/species/orchid>

- Appropriating practices from other cultures without adequate training, permission or acknowledgement of their heritage.
- Advertising workshops that address sexuality or intimacy issues with images of heterosexual relationships only.
- Dancing only with people from one ethnic group and avoiding people from others.
- Holding classes in a venue that cannot be accessed by someone who uses a wheel-chair for mobility.
- Dismissing concerns from members of disadvantaged groups about mistreatment or discrimination, without fully listening, considering, probing for more information and taking seriously their concerns or complaints.
- Making little or no provision for students to access classes, workshops or trainings who live in significantly different economic circumstances than the middle-class Western world.
- Using exercises that emphasise a gender-binary perspective (men and women) and deny the existence of people who are intersex or gender non-binary (who don't identify as either a man or a woman).
- Failing to respond to the needs of students with a wide range of health or disability needs (e.g. blindness, fatigue, acoustic sensitivity) – because they are in a minority.

Change. We encourage our members to challenge and change unfair and discriminatory attitudes, practices, behaviours and cultures wherever they can.

Some examples of how we can challenge or change discriminatory attitudes, practices, behaviours and cultures:

- Using venues that are accessible to disabled people.
- Making an effort to appropriately welcome people from minority or disadvantaged social groups in your classes.
- Proactively working to bring awareness to difference and diversity issues within your class.
- Having guidelines or practices in your class to discourage unwelcome touch.
- Welcoming feedback from disadvantaged groups.
- Actively challenging/engaging with discriminatory dynamics in classes.
- Supporting students to read the signs and signals of consensual behaviour.
- Operating a sliding scale or scholarship programme to support people in different or challenging economic circumstances.

ICMTA Intent. We recognise that promoting diversity and tackling the mechanics of disadvantage and discrimination is a life-long process, to which we commit as an

organisation. We also recognise the relative privilege most of our members have in being able to train in and teach conscious movement. As an association made up of those members, there is an on-going need to consider, review and make changes to the way we operate, and what we deliver in the world.

Implementation, Monitoring & Future Developments.

All working circles have a responsibility to consider the diversity and equality issues that are related to their work.

The Board hold the ultimate responsibility for promoting Diversity work within the ICMTA.

The Board will include Diversity issues in the Strategic Planning cycle that happens every two years, and will ask working circles to report on Diversity issues at least annually in their updates.

In particular, the Board asks:

- The Members Circle to include periodic articles, resources and examples of good practice related to diversity in conscious dance in the ICMTA newsletter.
- The Events Circle to ensure that workshops on Diversity issues in conscious movement settings take place periodically at Teachers' Gatherings and other ICMTA events.
- The Financial Guardian to consider and bring forward recommendations for an annual scheme to support teachers in training from the ICMTA recognised schools, from significantly under-represented groups in the conscious movement field globally, to receive up to 1000€ financial support from the ICMTA towards their training and related costs, where funds allow.

*May the spirit who dances in creation
who embraces us with human love
who shakes our lives like thunder
bless us and drive us out with power
to fill the world with justice ²*

² Adapted from a blessing from the Christian tradition