

OF ROOTS AND SEA

Impact Report

*EMBracing the Ocean artist-in-residence project
April 2022 - April 2023*

"Messages sent straight to the heart"

- audience member at University of the Earth



Co-design process:

- During her EMBracing the Ocean residency, Emily Lartillot (choreographer with [Steps for a Change](#) Dance company) co-developed the "Of Roots and Sea" choreography with Yunne Shin (Senior Scientist at the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development, IRD). The piece focuses on mangroves as major socio-ecological systems for biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation and includes five scenes inspired by different aspects of mangrove ecosystems (1) mangroves as a sea-land-air interface exposed to waves and tides, (2) respiration, (3) mangroves as fish nurseries, (4) mangrove crabs, and (5) anthropogenic pressures, conservation and restoration.
- Christophe Proisy (IRD) presented visual material and a synthesis of current scientific knowledge of mangroves to the dancers as inspiration.
- Scientific audio recordings of ambient mangrove sounds, bird song and subaquatic recordings of crustaceans and fish were provided by IRD scientists Frédéric Bertucci and Timothée Brochier and were included in the soundtrack.

Project outputs:

- Yunne Shin secured €50,500 of co-funding for the project from UNESCO, the University of Montpellier's Sea & Coast Initiative, IRD project Planet@liment, and the Pew Charitable Trusts.
- Two 20 minute performances by 15 youth dancers from Steps for a Change dance company at the 7th edition of the University of the Earth at UNESCO, Paris on 25 and 26 November 2022.
- A [film of the performance](#) was developed and is available on the IRD YouTube Channel.
- Presentation of "Of roots and sea" project as keynote address to the 150 participants of the CommOCEAN 2022 conference.
- A [short film of the rehearsals](#) was released on the EMB YouTube Channel.
- 10 minute podcast about "Of roots and sea" based on interviews taken at the University of the Earth event (accessible only to the 300 members of MARBEC research lab).
- Endorsement as an action under the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Water charter, and poster presentation at the first Mission Ocean Forum in Brussels on 17 February 2023.

Key impact:

- Awareness raising of the essential role of mangroves and environmental issues in general of the 15 dancers and their friends and families.
- Estimated reach of 2,600 spectators of the University of the Earth performances consisting of high school students, NGOs, professionals, artists and the general public.
- An online audience survey was distributed at the end of the second performance. Although only 17 responses were received the responses reflected the emotional and inspiring impact that the show had on its audiences, with many respondents reporting that they learnt something new about the Ocean and sustainability and felt inspired to change something in their life for a more sustainable future.

Project longevity:

- Emily and Yunne are seeking out further opportunities to present the show locally in Montpellier, France and further afield.
- They are also seeking further funds to link and exchange with dance schools in French Guyana so that the dancers can visit mangrove ecosystems.
- The development of a potential voice-over version of the film is being explored with the scientists explaining the mangrove features that inspired the five scenes of the performance. This would also lead to text that can be included in the programme of future performances.
- Screenings of the "Of roots and sea" video and dance workshops may be included in scientific information sessions at French elementary, middle and high schools organised by [MARBEC](#).
- Steps for a Change company aim to create new choreographies linked to biodiversity, which would form a complete dance show that "Of roots and sea" would be a part of, and could be programmed in theatres or dance festivals.

IMPACT IN NUMBERS

2 EVENTS

With live performances or talks about the project

2,750 AUDIENCE MEMBERS

Estimated from University of the Earth performances and CommOCEAN talk

1,452 YOUTUBE VIEWS

Of performance video (within 3 months) and rehearsal video (within 6 months)

389 PAGE VISITS

To project webpage on EMB website

21 INSTAGRAM POSTS

From the EMB and other Instagram accounts

12 TWEETS

From the EMB Twitter account and other accounts

4 NEWS ARTICLES

By EMB and others highlighting the project

1 PODCAST

Available to the MARBEC research lab

"I had the impression of seeing non-human living beings expressing themselves and finally having a voice"

- audience member at University of the Earth

