International Drama/Theatre and Education Association
Associação Internacional de Teatro Educação
Association Internationale d'Art Dramatique/Théâtre et Éducation
Asociación Internacional de Drama/Teatro y Educación
國際戲劇教育協會
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IDEA DAY Message 2026.

At the beginning of my keynote speech at the IDEAC 2026 IDEA endorsed Congress, that had as the central theme „ All Things Stem from the Dao, Coexist Without Conflict — Exploring the Unique Value and Development Path of Drama Education in the AI Era“ with the clear topic of: *How to further tap into the aesthetic education function, humanistic value and core literacy cultivation value of drama in school education amid the rapid development of AI technology* I said to the audience: „ I have good news for you! AI will never be able to replace us!“ What followed was laughter, and applause.

I do believe that in this world that is growing into pixels and screens, and artificial voices telling us what to do, that our field of drama/theatre education will have its “renaissance“, and will be sought after more and more. With all the valuable things we teach, human interaction is the base of drama/theatre education. A process and journey we undertake in the drama/theatre space and workshop cannot be predicted and determined by any form of AI. Sometimes we are even surprised with ourselves and what comes out from a simple game, improvisation, drama and theatre process.

Our work is all about being together in one space, breathing together, getting to know each other in this sensitive and creative way. We get to also know ourselves better, and with this work „cleaning our inner landscapes" as I often say, when explaining my concept of theatre and drama/theatre education as „ecology of the soul“.

We also meet each other during IDEA events, and greet each other, soon becoming friends and not only colleagues. This year we had an important anniversary: we celebrated twenty years of our regional network IDEA Europe. It was such a pleasure to come to Helsinki, with many other colleagues from all over Europe, and meet dear Tintti Karppinen, one of the IDEA founding members, to be for the first time in her home, and celebrate with our colleagues from FIDEA, Ullarikka, Annemari and others, our hosts, the Finnish association member of IDEA.

I have travelled to China also this October, and in one moment of this journey, where I spoke on panels and gave speeches about IDEA and its mission, I observed the workshop of William Yip, IDEA individual member and co-founder of the newly

established ITAC Hub in China. It was a joint children-parent workshop in the Children's Palace in Shenzhen. One of the exercises was for parents to say to children "I will take care of you", and for the children to reply "I trust you". Then the children would close their eyes and the parents would lead them around the space. In the part that followed, the children would say to their parents "I will take care of you", and the parents would respond with "I trust you", and the same thing was repeated, but this time the children were leading the parents that had their eyes closed.

At the very end of the exercise the parents and children were hugging each other with true affection. I was deeply moved by this simple exercise, thinking that the whole cycle of life was acted out there. The parents do take care of the children but the children start to take care of their aging parents in one moment.

But I think of this exercise in a broader sense, concerning the relationships we develop in IDEA, the relationships we develop with our students, teachers, people we interact with.

These two sentences belong to the core of the culture of IDEA, of what we stand for.

Somehow they demonstrate the true spirit of what IDEA is. I can talk from my personal experience as well. Being a member of IDEA, a member of IDEA Europe, meant we, in CEDEUM, my Serbian association, would have visibility and support from the world community. Some of us, as you all know, live in complicated and fragile political and social systems. For us it means protection and security as well as belonging to the world community of drama/theatre and education. At this moment, I am so proud to be from Serbia, where the student movement, the youth of our country, changed the corrupt and repressive system. A new, hopeful model for a brighter future of this world.

We never know what will happen, how things will develop concerning drama/theatre education, and our own existence. It is comforting to know that a huge world community knows about you, and you have a feeling it says "I will take care of you", in the same way as you trust this world association. On the other hand IDEA is its members. And when IDEA gets the message "I will take care of you" from its members, it means that our association will strive and be vital and vibrant for many, many years.

In this strange and disruptive world it is so comforting to speak these words.

So, do it today, for IDEA Day or any other day as I will now:

Dear IDEA and world drama/theatre and education community, I will take care of you and I will trust you!

Happy IDEA Day 2026! Sanja Krsmanović Tasić

IDEA President