



Edge Hill
University



Research Report

“Exploring the impact of music on the psycho-social well-being and life skills development of Liverpool's children, young people and their local communities”

Dr Anna Bussu (Principal Investigator), Senior Lecturer
Dr Marta Mangiarulo, Research Assistant



Research Team



Dr Anna Bussu, Principal Investigator (PI) is a Chartered psychologist who has worked in Higher Education for over twenty years with a passion for teaching and research.

Anna is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology and is currently Programme Leader in Psychosocial Analysis of Offending Behaviour at Edge Hill University.

During her postdoctoral studies (2009-2012) and assistant professorship (2012-2015) at the University of Sassari (Italy), she collaborated on several international research projects. Anna was awarded a Prometeo Scholarship, subsequently from 2015 to 2016, she spent over six months in Ecuador, where she worked at the Faculty of Psychology (University of Guayaquil) to implement her project on life skills and restorative practices. In 2016 she moved to Edge Hill University, UK, where she currently works as a Senior Lecturer building a wide-ranging track record as an academic.

Anna's current research explores the risks and protective factors related to the prevention of young people's offending behaviour and social exclusion and the promotion of personal and collective well-being. She has extensive experience in conducting qualitative research.

<https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/person/dr-anna-bussu/staff/>
<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anna-Bussu>



Dr Marta Mangiarulo is a Research Assistant at Edge Hill University and Research Assistant/Teaching Fellow at the University of Leicester.

Her current research interests involve reasoning biases, stereotypes, and the use of virtual learning environments. Additionally, she is passionate about science communication, research dissemination, and outreach and quantitative and qualitative research. She has collaborated in several research projects with young people.

Front cover image Early Music Youth Orchestra (EMYO). Photograph by Eleonora Pintus taken on 2021

Exploring the impact of Music on the psycho-social wellbeing and life skills development of Liverpool's children, young people, and their local communities

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1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the empirical research project (2022-2023) “*Exploring the impact of music on the psycho-social well-being and life skills development of Liverpool's children, young people and their local communities*”. The aim of this research is to understand the value of music participation and its impact on children, young people, their families and school teachers, with a specific focus on EMAE (EARLY MUSIC AS EDUCATION) learning programmes and activities.

EMAE is a registered charity based in Liverpool that promotes the cultural, social, and economic value of early music through regular educational, recreational, and scholarly activities implemented mostly in the wider Liverpool City Region.

EMAE believes that early music has the potential to transform individual lives through the acquisition of specialised knowledge and skills and the development of cultural, social, and economic relations.

EMAE has developed a unique pedagogical model and activities that aim to enhance the psycho-social well-being and life skills of children and young people from a wide variety of social and educational backgrounds. Furthermore, the charity’s vision and projects are focused on “community involvement”.

EMAE’s learning programmes consist of innovative courses and activities for responding to participants’ different ages and learning needs:

Academy offers young string players complimentary specialist education in Musicianship, String Playing and Ensemble Music at Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced levels. Academy offers “Beginning Programmes at Liscard Primary School” and Intermediate and Advanced programmes in Liverpool.

Furthermore, the charity has developed a beginner and intermediate programme in London too.

Early Music Youth Orchestra was established in July 2017 with an emphasis on high-level performance comparable to that of the best youth orchestras in the world; the Early Music Youth Orchestra (EMYO) is EMAE’s flagship ensemble. Led by the EMAE Director and String Tutors, EMYO draws its members from those string players (violins, violas, cellos, and double basses) who have graduated from or are enrolled in the Academy’s Advanced and Intermediate programmes. EMYO has already performed several concerts.

International Residencies. Every summer select members of the Academy travel nationally and internationally to work intensively with EMAE’s tutors as well as some guest tutors and give concert recitals in prestigious venues under the banner of the Early Music Youth Orchestra. Venues have included Italy in 2018; Spain in 2019 and Scotland in 2021.

In particular, the research team of Edge Hill University – Dr Anna Bussu (Principal Investigator) and Dr Marta Mangiarulo (Research Assistant) – explored the motivations, values and experiences of the research participants and the meanings they ascribe to their active music participation. Furthermore, they investigated how children and young people’s music participation may impact them and their families, in both the short and long term.

2. Background and research aims

The general aim of this study was to explore the impact of EMAE's pedagogical model and learning activities on the psycho-social well-being and skills development of Liverpool's children, young people, and their local communities.

This research project focuses on three important dimensions explored in the literature: 1) the benefits of music for young people within the lifespan perspective, 2) the effectiveness of a pedagogical model in learning music and 3) the impact of music learning programmes and activities on the local community.

1) The benefits of music for young people within the lifespan perspective

Firstly, we aimed to explore the benefits of music for young people involved with EMAE within the lifespan perspective and specifically:

- Participants' *music learning [and] musical development* (Shields, 2001; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011).
- Participants' *life skill development*: a) *cognitive area*: decision making, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, and learning to learn (Schlaug et al., 2005); b) *emotional area*: empathy (Rabinowitch et al., 2012; Wallmark et al., 2018), managing emotion and managing stress; c) *social-relation dimension*: good communication, cooperation; conflict resolution; accepting differences; concern for others; interpersonal skills and self-awareness (World Health Organization, 1999; Bussu et al., 2020; 2022); self-efficacy (Bandura, 2004; Bussu et al., 2018) and community building.
- Participants' *perception of and satisfaction with musical activities*, and the resultant impact on their psycho-physical and social wellbeing (Ros-Morente et al., 2019).

According to Welch et al. (2020), several studies have been published on music benefits across the lifespan, including early childhood (Hallam, 2010; Gerry et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2015; Linnavalli et al., 2018; Wu & Lu, 2021), adolescence (McFerran et al., 2018; Hallam, 2010) and older adulthood (Lindblad & de Boise, 2020). Music represents an important *protective factor* for young people's health and wellbeing; research provides evidence of effectiveness on physical and psychological dimensions (MacDonald et al., 2013; Fancourt & Finn, 2019; van den Elzen et al., 2019; Welch et al., 2020) and social and mental wellbeing (Ros-Morente et al., 2019). Music supports *cognitive* and *emotional intelligence development* and *positive mental health* of children and young people, and enhances creativity, memory, and greater development of academic skills (e.g., literacy and language skills) (Rimmer, 2013; Rickard et al., 2013). Furthermore, young people involved in music groups can contribute to social inclusion and group identity through their shared sense of unity and togetherness (Rimmer, 2013; Krueger Bridge, 2022). Long-term musical group interaction has a positive influence on empathy in children and young people (Rabinowitch et al., 2012). Being actively involved in cultural and musical activities increases self-confidence, self-esteem, relationship-building (Hallam, 2015; Ros-Morente et al., 2019), communication, and social skills (Ros-

Morente et al., 2019). Furthermore, an interesting literature review conducted by Hodges and O'Connell (2005) showed that young people who participate in formal music education usually have higher academic achievement scores than students who do not participate in formal music education.

However, high-standard formal music education is not always available in state schools and among all social classes in the UK. The first National Plan for Music Education, 'The Importance of Music', was published in 2011 to ensure that children have access to the greatest of art forms. In June 2022, a new National Plan for Music Education 'The Power of Music to Change Lives' was published, with the clear ambition to level up musical opportunities (HM Government, 2022). However, there is no clear evidence available of the effectiveness of music policy on young people. The National Plan for Music Education was criticised for the "potential to alienate many young people from formal music education and to be used as the means of sustaining social and educational inequalities" (Spruce, 2013).

Finally, in 2019 the Social Mobility Commission published a relevant report that highlighted disparities in participation rates in extra-curricular activities based on social background. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds "never get the chance to play music or learn dance" and "may miss out on some of the most valuable experiences in life". They have fewer extra-curricular opportunities that could potentially help them gain confidence and build social skills in comparison to others from more advantaged backgrounds. Soft skills are relevant in their interpersonal life but also make them more desirable to employers. Furthermore, according to the same report, young people who develop their confidence are more likely to aspire to go to university or into other higher education. In this regard, we believe that we need more national and local programmes involving young people as active learners and co-constructors of knowledge.

2) The effectiveness of a pedagogical model in learning music

Secondly, we aimed to explore the impact of EMAE's unique pedagogical approach on participants' experience in the development of musical skills and the prevention of cultural barriers in the context of innovative programmes designed for children and young people. In doing so we hoped to identify the challenges and best practices associated with the design and delivery of EMAE's new learning activities.

One of the most innovative aspects of EMAE's approach is the pedagogical model designed by its Director Dr Alberto Sanna (2022): The Musical Case Education Method and the music-education programmes based on it such as the "Musicianship" curriculum implemented by the Liverpool String Academy in partnership with several local schools and organisations.

Music-education programmes are of two types, professional and recreational, and both aim to develop "transferable skills" and "social progress" through instrumental lessons and orchestral playing. According to Dr Alberto Sanna (2022) "The Musical Case is an original, ground-breaking method of music education that simultaneously addresses the needs of the body, the mind, and the community by promoting the physical, mental, and social health of aspiring musicians through their technical, aesthetic and ethical development which are considered essential complementary aspects of one and the same educational process. The method comprises a series of sequential learning objectives along a three-tier system leading to the acquisition of specific *Skills* (the Techniques of Perception, Movement and Literacy), *Knowledge* (the Concepts of Space, Time, and Structure) and *Values* (The Ethics of

Commitment, Engagement and Cooperation) and, ultimately to a comprehensive objective: to become a good musician and a good human being”.

All learning activities are planned in *group*. Previous literature (see for example Shields, 2001; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011) has highlighted the effectiveness of group performance on children’s self-perception while receiving mentoring. Furthermore, according to Kokotsaki & Hallam (2011), playing music in a group has a positive impact on young people’s musical skills and development.

A recent participatory music project involving young people in Scotland (Millar et al., 2020) was found to have increased participants’ confidence, self-esteem, and social skills. This type of programme has an impact on engaging young people from different social classes, particularly young people at the margins of society, reaching them on their own terms through music that resonates with their own lived experiences (Millar et al., 2020). Music also affords an inclusive opportunity to actively involve young people who have additional support needs and their families (Levy et al., 2014).

Music-based interventions have been utilised as a tool for improving public health, reducing inequalities, and promoting young people’s wellbeing. For example, positive impacts on disadvantaged young people’s self-confidence, engagement, and ability to express themselves positively have been demonstrated (Caló et al., 2020; Welch & McPherson, 2018; Welch et al., 2014). A recent qualitative systematic review published by Sheppard & Broughton (2020) has shown that active participation in music and dance can promote wellbeing and health.

Other recent projects (Krueger Bridge, 2022; Williams et al., 2021) have also shown how online music participation during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns helped strengthen young people’s sense of purpose, learning, wellbeing, and community building. According to Hennessey et al. (2021), listening to and playing music helps with mood balance and bolsters a positive outlook.

3) The impact of music learning programmes and activities on the local community

Finally, we aimed to explore the participants’ perceptions of the impact of musical programmes on their local communities.

In our global multimedia era *social isolation* is an increasingly common experience for people of all ages and especially for young people (Krivo et al., 2013; Steele, 2016). This was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which determined fewer opportunities for cultural engagement among children and young people (Krueger Bridge, 2022). According to Krueger Bridge (2022, p. 9) “lack of musical opportunities for children and young people could not only hinder their abilities to cope with and recover from this pandemic, but could also cause long-term consequences for education, social and cultural opportunities, and mental wellbeing”.

As a result, activities, and practices for *promoting community building and fostering participation* have become increasingly necessary.

Practising music in groups (Millar et al., 2020) and planning music events (see, for example, the EMAE activities discussed in the results and discussion sessions) for the local community can determine many benefits that community membership promotes (Andsell, 2014). According to Steele (2016) music is an active social phenomenon that can be used to help create flourishing communities in which the diversity of individual differences is

celebrated, and support is shared (Stige, 2004). This potential of music has long been evident in everyday uses of music.

In this regard, it is still relevant to explore more research and implement new practices to explain how we can use music intentionally to enhance connectedness as a powerful resource in support of healthy communities (Steele, 2016).

Furthermore, successful musical activity can enhance an individual's *sense of social inclusion* (Welch et al., 2014) and *social cohesion* (Elvers et al., 2017).

Moreover, learning music can contribute to preventing *social discrimination and promoting social inclusion* "... a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and wellbeing that is considered normal in the society in which they live" (EU, 2010, p. 3).

In effect, according to Welch et al. (2020), we have relevant evidence of the positive effect of music education and performance on young people (Guhn et al., 2019). Music develops young people's cognitive and *academic skills*, determines *higher academic achievement* in comparison to students who do not participate in formal music education (Hodges & O'Connell, 2005), and can be considered a protective factor for *preventing school dropout and antisocial behaviour* (Gooding, 2011).

Several studies have also explored music interventions for children with learning needs, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (Simpson & Keen, 2011; LaGasse 2014, Koller, & Stoddart, 2021). Music interventions have also led to a reduction in self-reported anxiety and increased self-esteem (Hillier et al., 2012). Obiozor (2010) also discussed the use of music in the classroom to teach life skills to students with *emotional disabilities*.

More research is required into the efficacy of specific applications of music stimuli, and there is a need for comparative studies to identify the effectiveness of the music components of musical interventions.

3. Methodology¹

Research design and procedures

The research team conducted qualitative research by collecting personal perceptions and opinions on the formative activities delivered by EMAE (tutorials, classes, seminars, away-days, week-long residencies, and a whole range of varied learning experiences).

Qualitative data collection included semi-structured online interviews, an in-person focus group and three ludic ‘circle time’ activities for children. Participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous. A convenience *sampling technique* was adopted to recruit participants. According to Robinson (2014), this sampling technique is appropriate when conducting qualitative research using demographically and geographically local samples, as it restricts generalisation to a specific local level.

With the help of EMAE staff, a sample of 74 participants was invited to be interviewed via email (24 young people, aged 12 and over; 29 children and young people’s parents; 8 primary school teachers of Liscard Primary School, involved in EMAE’s music activities; 8 tutors and 5 trustees).

Furthermore, out of 60 children involved with EMAE at Liscard Primary School, 36 of them took part in the research activities, their parents having signed a consent form.

The final sample of participants consisted of 36 participants who were either interviewed or who participated in a focus group plus 36 children who were involved in *interactive groups activities*.

- 15 Young people, aged 12 and over;
- 10 Community members (9 parents; 1 schoolteacher);
- 36 Year-5 children, aged 9-10;
- 6 Tutors/trainers;
- 5 Trustees.

Research tools

We developed a *semi-structured interview guide for each group of participants* (see Appendices). Each interview took approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

The *focus group* (see Appendix 3) provided an opportunity for the board of trustees to elaborate on their personal ideas/opinions and to share in group the charity’s aims and challenges, improvements, best practices/pedagogical strategies and needs. The focus group method supports group discussion and facilitates group reflections on an experience (Darbyshire et al., 2005).

Finally, we implemented and facilitated three *interactive group activities* (e.g., drawing pictures/sketches) with 36 children (Shaw et al., 2011) to explore children’s emotions, activity satisfaction and learning needs. The interviews and focus group guides for each category are included in the Appendices.

¹ Dr Anna Bussu (Principal Investigator) designed and coordinated the research project and facilitated the focus group. She also analysed the data and wrote the report alongside Dr Marta Mangiarulo (Research Assistant), who also planned and conducted all interviews with the participants.

Ethical clearance

British Psychological Society ethical guidelines were adhered to, and ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee at Edge Hill University. Participant anonymity was maintained at all stages of the project. The researcher provided potential participants with information sheets explaining the project aims. Participants were reminded of anonymity when signing the consent form and again before the interviews and focus groups took place.

Data analysis and report

A thematic analysis was carried out to explore the participants' opinions regarding their perceptions and to elicit suggestions for supporting participants more effectively (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Thematic analysis is based on an approach to describe, understand, or interpret participants' experiences and to facilitate reflection on the various conceptual issues emerging.

An interpretative approach was chosen to reconstruct the 'implicit theories' of the respondents (Ross, 1989). According to Ross (1989, p. 1) "*people possess implicit theories regarding the inherent consistency of their attributes, as well as a set of principles concerning the conditions that are likely to promote personal change or stability (...) people use their implicit theories of self to construct their personal histories*".

A rigorous methodological process was adopted for coding and analysis to avoid the loss of valuable information. All the interviews were transcribed *verbatim* with written permission from the participants. Data gathered from the respondents' narratives were analysed using NVivo (Welsh, 2002). Two researchers carried out the coding and analysis, but there was also continuous feedback from the whole research team (internal coding) throughout the coding process.

The NVivo coding process is not hierarchical but rather inductive. The software provides the "ability to express relationships between codes, concepts, and themes in a range of different ways, and often these cannot be represented in a hierarchical list" (Silver & Lewins, 2014, 210). A qualitative text analysis elicits themes that resemble and summarise the meaning of participants' responses (*thematic coding*, also defined as *thematic analysis*). The frequency of codes and themes was also detected. NVivo maps summarise the interpretation process which was iterative and progressive. We have provided one summary map for each section of results.

In this respect, the researchers 'went back' to reflect on various conceptual issues and unveil new central aspects (Bussu & Pulina, 2020).

The data were analysed according to the criteria set by Patton (2002). The quality criteria (i.e., credibility; transferability; dependability; authenticity; confirmability) proposed by Seale (1999) were applied. Validation was set against these five criteria, with theme "*saturation*" point (Saunders et al., 2018) reached after 36 participants interviews (interviews/focus group).

A *triangulation technique* was implemented to validate the data through cross-verification from different sources (interviews, focus group and children's group activities). Indeed, methodological triangulation can more accurately identify multifaceted aspects by approaching the same phenomenon from different perspectives and using different methods and techniques (Greene, 2006; Bussu & Pulina 2020; Ashton & Bussu, 2020).

4. Results summary

EMAE

The research highlighted extraordinary results in terms of the effectiveness of the pedagogical model and activities and its impact on children, young people, and their local communities.

Three main themes emerged from our qualitative analysis:

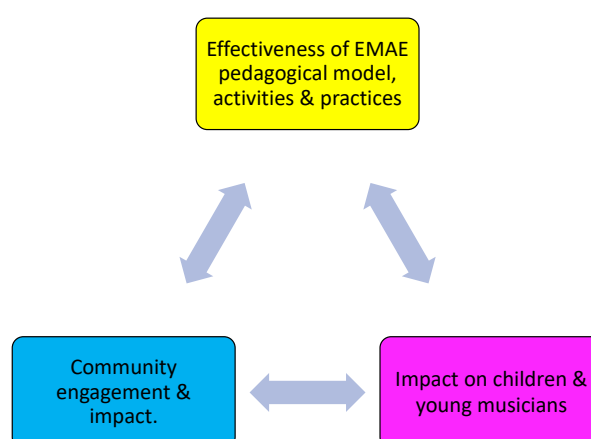
(A) The effectiveness of the EMAE pedagogical model, its activities, and practices

(B) The impact on children & young musicians

(C) Community engagement and impact.

The three main dimensions influence reciprocally each other. The pedagogical model implemented by tutors and EMAE activities has an excellent impact on young people learning development and makes feel them welcome to the Charity “Community”. A positive effect on children and young people has an effective result in their local communities (families, friends, neighbours etc.). Community engagement influence effectively EMAE’s activities (figure 1).

Figure 1 Emergent themes



(A) The effectiveness of the EMAE pedagogical model, its activities, and practices

One of the most innovative aspects of EMAE's learning activities is the *pedagogical model* designed by its Director Dr Alberto Sanna (2022). In particular, *The Musical Case Education Method* and the music-education programmes based on it such as the "Musicianship" curriculum implemented by the Liverpool String Academy in partnership with several local schools and organisations. Music-education programmes are of two types, professional and recreational, and both aim to develop "transferable skills" and "social progress" through instrumental lessons and orchestral playing.

EMAE Tutors have the pedagogical role of facilitating learning, motivating learners and co-contributing to create an effective learning experience for all participants. They are instrumental in fostering an atmosphere of trust, exploring values, needs and identities, employing active teaching methods, and finally, in co-constructing a space for healthy dialogue. As such, they play an active role in guiding, building community and facilitating transformative learning.

Playing in a group is considered by the participants to be a relevant opportunity for bonding relationships and helping learners to manage anxiety and nervousness (extracts 1 and 2).

Extract 1 *"Playing with others and well, it's better than playing alone in some senses. And I mean I'm not a person that feels like I must socialise all the time. I do like, I value independence."* (Young person, male).

Extract 2 *"Working in a group is brilliant because again, that's not so much what they do in school. It's very much individual. But actually, when it gets into a workplace, everything is in teams. So that's an important skill. And attention to detail, which is not a quality that lots of people have, it's extremely important and it's transferable into the workplace. And also, that you can have fun"* (Community member: parent, female).

Another feature of EMAE's training programme is *peer mentoring practice*: older students are invited to mentor younger colleagues and help them develop their music practice and skills. Peer mentoring is embedded in the weekly rehearsals, where older students are sometimes paired with younger players and help them practise. In the activities taking place at Liscard Primary School, older students help look after younger children and assist tutors with their activities. Students involved in peer mentoring described how it is mutually beneficial for both mentor and mentee, allowing the former to reflect on their music practice and the latter to learn from someone they perceive closer to them in age than the more experienced tutors.

Peer mentoring is a consolidated pedagogical practice that focuses on developing a sense of belonging in a community, enhancing the learning development of mentees and peer mentors (extracts 3 and 4).

Extract 3 *"I was involved in one and me and my friend we have had some peer mentoring sessions so [I] was really interesting to learn what it was like to be a mentor and they really helped us children understand. So, it's from some of the things that we learned from the tutors to send the message across to them."* (Young person, male).

Extract 4 *“I really like working with young people and I found it very rewarding because it makes [...] you concentrate a lot more because you're like, I don't want to tell them the wrong thing.” (Young person, female).*

Equal opportunities for children and community members from different socio-cultural background and learning needs

EMAE has recruited and trained excellent tutors able to develop the skills of children and young people with different *learning needs and from different socio-economic backgrounds*. Furthermore, they are able to recognise and enhance talented children and young people (Extracts 5,6 and 7).

Extract 5 *“I like to see how the kids develop and how they get involved and to see how they react to the various things that we do with them. The most satisfying thing is to see how a child that maybe never thought, especially in primary school... Never considered the possibility of playing an instrument. Maybe, surely not the violin. And then how actually they got talent, and they are enjoying it and they're very committed. So that's the most important thing. Yeah, give them the chance to do it.” (Tutor, male).*

Extract 6 *“We tend to not get easily satisfied, but we push them quite a lot. I think one of the main things that is in the spirit of charity is exactly that. We really want a lot from them. And they have to work very hard. But we're trying to make that happen in a nice way. So, because of that, also the social skills aspects improve. And it's a very healthy environment.” (Tutor, male).*

Extract 7 *“It's such an amazing experience because you really feel like you're working for talented young kids. And it is a privilege to sort of get to meet people that are so talented, so respectful, so sociable.” (Tutor, female).*

(B) The impact on children & young musicians

Young people have improved music and interpersonal skills.

Participants feel more confident about their personal abilities and interpersonal skills. They have significantly developed music and life skills (cognitive, emotional, and socio-relational skills). Children, young people, and their parents have recognised and reflected on their improved *self-confidence and self-efficacy* (extracts 8, 9 and 10).

Extract 8 *“I'm learning all the time and I think it's really helped with my communication, and my style of playing has improved a lot with all the technique sessions and... I think it's also broadened me as a person, so I've gained all that like I was saying [for] the communication skills and hard working with others, the team work. (Young person, female)”*

Extract 9 *“Oh, very significant. Deeply significant, really in every way. I think as developing as people and as musicians they've... Both of my twins [they] have developed into great musicians and into lovely people. So what more could you ask? And I think a large part of that is the family feeling, the community feeling [...] (Community member: parent, male)”*

Extract 10 “When they go away with EMAE, they're taught life skills. They're taught how to wash their own dishes, make sure the rooms are tidy, their own personal hygiene, for example, and pack their own lunches. You know they're given independence, taught independence.” (Community member: parent, female)

Participants gave enthusiastic accounts about the impact on children and young people (extract 11).

Extract 11 “You know the music level that they do is just fantastic. [...] the benefit of the community is the way they go into schools and they're teaching kids who've never had any music... And I mean like when [redacted] was leaving [unclear] primary school, they stopped music lessons totally, they said that there was no more music lessons going to be done and they didn't have the cash for them. And you know that they're going in and giving these kids that and that is beneficial to the Community as well, isn't it?” (Community member: parent female).

Being part of the EMAE community has contributed to psycho-social well-being and positively impacted on young musicians and community members.

Children and young people *feel proud and self-satisfied* about their performance and for having improved their musical skills rapidly. Playing together is a fantastic opportunity for learning with each other and developing friendships, both for children and young people. Furthermore, children and young people feel that playing together helps them to express positive emotions and to manage negative emotions. Playing music together provides an excellent channel for expressing oneself through creativity (extract 12).

Extract 12 “This is something really cute also to witness because the fact that also younger students really trust and look up to older students really, it's something so nice, so lovely to witness, right?” (Tutor, female).

(C) Community engagement and impact

Community involvement and impact are two key examples of EMAE best practice which emerged from the qualitative data. All the individuals who took part in the research talked extensively about the opportunities for community building and the development of friendships and social skills provided by the Charity through music practice and residencies.

Participants feel part of a “community” –a “*musical family*”. “Community building” is a relevant topic of discussion and a recurring theme in participants' narrations. Effective interactions among teachers, students and parents significantly impact learning experiences.

Young people and families are actively involved with events, concert organisation and advertising. Community members consider EMAE and all active members a friendly and inspiring community.

The positive vibes and energetic atmosphere, and communication among community members spreads among people, families, friends, and people of the community who attend the events (extract 13).

Extract 13 *“I mean, if that feeling is extended to members of local community and of course it's uplifting, you know, it spreads, doesn't it? And. People have got. A general feeling of. Uh, upliftment or what? It's not a word, is it? But you know what I mean. They're going to chat about it to the friends or family members and so it spreads.” (Community member: parent, female).*

EMAE young musicians have inspired “other children” and members of the community.

EMAE young musicians have inspired “other children” to play music and develop a passion for a music (extracts 14,15 and 16).

Extract 14 *“So when the children said “wow!”, I mean, I've seen one little boy. And he was stunned to see these children making noises there, like ‘oh this is very nice’ but he was like “wow this was amazing!” and it was in the in park, I think one of the boys was just sat there without their parents were just like with the jaw dropped and then. [...] Then it's sort of something that I would encourage if they could do more, you know, to give back to the community” (Community member: parent, female).*

Extract 15 *“I think people really engage when they hear that it's a youth charity and it's children playing and they feel really inspired and...people were always coming up after the concert and especially, you know, families with young children as well, which kind of is inspiring for them to see that it might be something that their children can join.” (Tutor, female).*

Extract 16 *“I remember precisely like this mom that texted us on Facebook just like a couple days after we had this, this beautiful performance. It was an opera. So, we put together, which is such an amazing experience. I mean, to be in an orchestra, being part of an opera and then see something like that. And anyways, so the garden had a gate, and we were just rehearsing and just mom was just passing by with a kid that was just hanging, hanging on the fence, just staring at the concert. She was just flabbergasted. Like she couldn't speak. She was amazed just standing there. And the mom just told us that really pushed the kid to ask her mom to receive some sort of music education and to start playing an instrument and like, this is just amazing. I mean, what more can you hope for?” (Tutor, female).*

Trainers’ and tutors’ well-being and satisfaction.

EMAE takes into careful consideration trainers’ and tutors’ well-being and satisfaction consequently they perceive themselves to be active members of EMAE’s community, who relish both the support and development opportunities that EMAE offers (extracts 17 and 18).

Extract 17 *“I think for the tutors it's definitely been a good employment opportunity. I think that the charity tries to give us opportunities to progress performance wise, that they give us lots of performance opportunities which is good not only for our income but for our development and playing together and sometimes we do concerts with just the tutors. So it's a higher level but it's good for us because it keeps*

it interesting on a high performance level. It's not just about the teaching. And I think that that's an important aspect for tutors" (Tutor, female).

Extract 18 *"And I think also socially it's been very important. And we're all very good friends, which is nice, but we're able to have our personal and our professional relationship. And I think that for having the support network there, especially what's been quite a difficult time, what with the pandemic and everything, especially for freelancers? We've got that kind of network there and especially now I've got to know the tutors from London as well and it's kind of a bit of a wider community. And for us, it's kind of people that we can talk to that understand how we're feeling, what's happening, what we're going through and that we've been really grateful about that. And I think also we've really learned from each other and from each other skills." (Tutor, female).*

Finally, the results highlighted *participants' satisfaction* (children, young people, tutors, trustees, and community). Children and young people feel they have developed musical and socio-relational skills through EMAE's activities and projects. Young people, children, and community members have highlighted the importance of group activities to promote community building and interpersonal skills (extract 19).

Extract 19 *"On a human level, they are brilliant, they're brilliant musicians and they can communicate that passion for music to the kids and that is amazing. But you know also on a person, I think the group is so varied, they have people from so different backgrounds, and they all come together and that is something that is very valuable to learn as a young adult. You know, the fact that having so many different people getting along and producing something good." (Community member: parent female).*

5. Results and discussion

Once the qualitative analysis was completed, five key themes emerged: 1) EMAE's activities and the impact of the project; 2) Formative activities and their impact on participants; 3) Challenges and improvements; 4) EMAE and best practice; 5) Future ideas, projects, and expectations.

5.1 EMAE's activities and projects

This section will discuss EMAE's activities, fleshing out the charity's mission and goals, the pedagogical model adopted to reach these goals and the training activities implemented as a consequence. The EMAE team works with young people from a wide variety of social and educational backgrounds. By challenging perceived cultural barriers, it fosters participation and confidence. It also provides the opportunity for recognition for those young people who do not thrive in the traditional routes in the North-West/Merseyside. i.e., through sporting or mainstream cultural success.

This unique pedagogical model, in turn, informs the training activities delivered by the charity. The EMAE provision encompasses group practice, musicianship classes aimed at developing the students' overall musicality, concerts, outreach and fundraising activities, and residential activities both at home and abroad. The group activities implemented are considered by the participants to be innovative, engaging and very effective.

When discussing training activities, a sub-section will focus on children and young people's perspectives, whilst the other section will focus on the perspectives of parents, trainers, and trustees.

5.1.1 Charity mission and goals

The three pillars of EMAE's vision are *Opportunity*, *Excellence* and *Cohesion*. They are described on the EMAE website as follows:

- *Opportunity*: EMAE works with young people from a wide variety of social and educational backgrounds. By challenging perceived cultural barriers, it fosters participation and confidence. It also provides the opportunity for recognition for those young people who do not thrive in the traditional routes in our region, i.e., through sporting or mainstream cultural success.

- *Excellence*: EMAE focuses on smaller groups of young people and unashamedly drives them to a very high standard of musical performance comparable to that of the best schools and youth ensembles in the world. Unlike other similar organisations, however, EMAE provides its students with tutorials, classes, seminars, music scores, copies of historical instruments and a whole range of learning experiences at no cost.

- *Cohesion*: EMAE delivers wider personal development and growth alongside increased musical skills. As social opportunity often comes from work and recreation together, EMAE gathers young people from different backgrounds in weekly tutorials and classes, regular seminars, and international residencies" (<https://www.emae.co.uk/about>)"

During the focus group, the board of trustees discussed the charity's main aspirations and mission: 1) to provide equal opportunities for all students to perform (extract 1); 2) to create equal music opportunities to a high standard (extract 2); 3) to prevent discrimination among young people (extract 3) and 4) to have a positive impact on the community in both the short and long term. Furthermore, they also discussed new strategies for improving the promotion of events and activities and expanding community networks. The following extracts clearly explain EMAE's vision.

Extract 1 (...) *"I think that one of the things is to provide the opportunity for children to benefit in all of the ways that they will do from performance together as a team, and all of those aspects of that. Yeah, that's hugely important."* (Trustee, female).

Extract 2 *"Our aim is essentially through the medium of early music to promote, educate and enhance the lives of young people who might not have that experience."* (Trustee, male).

Extract 3 *"Actually, just because you're at a school, a deprived area, you should not have low expectations from your education, from your parents, and your teachers. And I think very often we all think that there are different expectations and that they are lower."* (Trustee, male).

The educational aims discussed by the board of trustees resonate with extensive literature highlighting the positive impact of music training on child and adolescent development, achievement (Southgate & Roscigno, 2009; Sala & Gobet, 2020) and functioning (Hogenes et al., 2014).

A key characteristic of the EMAE activities is a major focus on individual development in pursuit of interpersonal, group and local community-level goals. Each learning activity is carefully designed to develop not only young people's musical skills but, primarily the person and his/her human potential. Young people have recognised the extraordinary impact of this experience in their lives and personal development (extract 4). This pedagogical goal is also realised through the individual consideration and active involvement of each young musician by their tutors. By involving the musician in group training, tutors also intend to prevent discrimination and favouritism (extract 5). The focus of the EMAE activities is the individual and, crucially, that in respect of all students, their personal and technical development is equally important.

Extract 4 *"[what] EMAE excels in is actually developing the person, developing the individual. And that includes, both technically and socially as well."* (Young person, male).

Extract 5 *"They're all on the same level for us, and we help everyone. And that's very important... They are all the same important part of a whole."* (Tutor, male).

EMAE goals go above and beyond music training to address wider social issues, aligning with empirical findings showing how music training can facilitate the development of empathy and prosocial skills (Schellenberg et al., 2015; Wu & Lu, 2021).

On a wider scale, music training programmes have also been linked to socio-economic benefits in a cost-benefit analysis conducted in a Venezuelan setting (Cuesta, 2011).

Theoretical work has also suggested that music as a whole (i.e., not music training in particular) may affect social change and foster human interactions (Rabinowitch, 2020). This closely resonates with the charity's goals as expressed by one of the board of trustees/tutors (extract 6).

Extract 6 *“We thought we could use early music as a tool for a social and cultural development, and also to an extent for economic development [...]” (Tutor/trustee, male).*

Extract 6 demonstrates effectively, how music is a tool, a means to reach much wider and ambitious goals. EMAE's vision and goals are evidence-based. In effect, according to the Social Mobility Commission (2019), “Learning Music” and being actively involved in other extracurricular activities are useful tools for developing self-confidence and interpersonal skills transferable to employment and/or higher education.

One of the ways in which EMAE provides equal music opportunities for students to perform to a high standard is through the formation and training of an internationally recognised orchestra (extract 7). A more thorough description of the Early Music Youth Orchestra ensemble will be provided in the respective section.

Extract 7 *“So our first goal really as a Charity it was to form an orchestra, youth orchestra. And turn into one of the best youth orchestras not only in the country but also Europe, and I think we got it now.” (Trainer/Trustee, male).*

The Trustees saw EMAE's objectives and goals as one of the key selling points for outreach, advertisement, and fundraising purposes. In the last 6 years the charity has worked hard to explore how they might successfully disseminate their innovative work. A documentary about EMAE's work, its ethos and results is one project they identify as being within their reach (extract 8).

Extract 8 *“(...) Channel 4 will do a documentary on us because we're doing something different and because it's values-led, that's what makes it different from saying 'we want to improve music in deprived areas', you know, boring, but let's do something better. And that's what we're doing. And wouldn't it be better if we could somehow [unclear] market our product, which other people could then replicate? We don't have to own it, but we did start it.” (Trustee, male).*

Reflecting on ways in which EMAE can be advertised and communicated to the general public denotes strategic, forward-thinking, and planning alongside a clear idea for future plans and developments.

5.1.2 Pedagogical model

The primary way in which EMAE goals and objectives are put into practice is through its innovative pedagogical model (Sanna, 2022) (see also the ‘background’ section). The 6 trainers interviewed showed more hands-on knowledge and experience of learning activities and content than trustees and parents, as they are directly involved in planning and delivering

most of them. On the other hand, the trustees' observations reflected a higher-level view about the general charity aims, goals and programmes implemented, and the specific contexts actively involved (e.g., schools in Liverpool, fundraising activities, and contacts).

EMAE's pedagogical model has been used and tested for years. It is characterised by an eclectic mix of influences, including Dalcroze and Montessorian principles (Sanchez & Miller, 1991) (Extract 9).

Extract 9 *"My pedagogy is very eclectic. It ranges from specialist music educators like Emile Jacques Dalcroze, for example. I studied very much. More general Montessorian principles if you wish, and a bit of revolutionary kind of leftist thinking about schools without walls, education taking place in not so obvious places."* (Trainer, male).

The Dalcroze approach to music education and its applications have been explored in the literature (see e.g., Anderson, 2012; Altenmüller & Scholz, 2016). One of the main principles of this approach is the intimate relationship between music and movement and the learning and experiencing of music through movement. This is reflected in the EMAE practices and emerged in the interviews (extract 10) and during concerts.

Extract 10 *"(...) I like the fact that my kids now. Are baroque and roll. They're really moving. They loosen up in a way which years ago they wouldn't."* (Trainer, male)

One of the most unique features of EMAE's pedagogical model is that it diverges from the traditional graded system, widely used in music training in UK settings (extract 11).

Extract 11 *"OK, let's forget about the graded system. Whichever syllabus. We will recruit without asking what grade you are. Because our special [unclear] slightly different and we use copies of historical bows."* (Trainer, male).

This is, noticeably, an important pedagogical as well as philosophical discrepancy with the British philosophical tradition (extract 12).

Extract 12 *"(...) Again, there's this part of the British philosophical tradition that was very empirical and pragmatic. The Brits will go for trial and error all the time. And they're meticulous, they analyse and [...] I have a system, a much more continental German idealistic. My philosophy is much more structured. I have a system in place. This is also a working hypothesis, and we when we do it, we change things if we have to, but we expect our ideas to work."* (Trainer, male).

Its profound differences with traditional British philosophical and musical training traditions make EMAE's pedagogical model a radically innovative one. From the point of view of musical practice, a key feature of the model is its heavy focus on ensemble playing rather than individual practice (extract 13).

Extract 13 “(...) rather than asking them to learn solo repertoire, we ask them to learn ensemble repertoire in four to five to six parts. So, everybody has to contribute something to the ensemble” (Trainer, male).

Crucially, this training contributes to both the learners’ socio-cognitive and musical development; indeed, group music training has been shown to facilitate the development of prosocial skills (Schellenberg et al., 2015). The following section will present an articulate discussion of the impact of EMAE activities and music training on musical, social and cognitive skills.

A key idea expressed in extract 9 is that education can take place in “not so obvious places”. Indeed, EMAE activities take place in primary schools, churches, and other various locations around Europe during summer residencies. The model is, in fact, characterised by its extreme flexibility and adaptability in terms of settings (extract 14).

Extract 14 “I’ve come to realise that we don’t need infrastructures, in fact. The nice thing about education is that you can change your setting all the time.” (Trainer/ trustee, male).

Trustees shared enthusiastic opinions about the relevance of the model for the charity as a whole and its strength and soundness. The participants recognised the uniqueness of the learning model adopted and also the evidence-based theoretical framework (extracts 15 and 16). They also appreciated the work that the musicologist who has designed EMAE’s learning programmes and trained the tutors is doing for the charity.

Extract 15 “I think it is great, but I think that the fact that yes, the method is there and is quite valuable is probably one of the most valuable things that we also have in the Charity.” (Trustee, female).

Extract 16 “The pedagogic method is really strong, and that is being tested and tested for so many years, and it’s been improved and that what I know is that the tutors are trained weekly and the way that [redacted] you know, you’re right, he is a perfectionist. The way he brings his knowledge down to the tutor or to the kids is very simple and easy to understand.” (Trustee, female).

Insights from this particular trustee are especially interesting in light of their previous direct involvement in the training activities, allowing them to reflect on such activities from different perspectives: for example, a more hands-on perspective and a higher-level perspective focused on coordination and organisational goals. It should be acknowledged that the reflections shared by trustees represent opinions from people and professionals with different backgrounds. This heterogeneity offers the charity an important, indeed invaluable human resource.

Extract 14 for example, is a contribution by a trustee who was also involved in the formative activities as a tutor in the past, whereas other trustees mostly experience training activities through their children’s participation or through their role as trustees. Indeed, when

asked to reflect on the pedagogical model and its applications, trustees shared excellent opinions regarding the learning strategies and activities implemented (extract 17).

Extract 17 “*Well, it’s clearly the work that [redacted] and the tutors do with the children; I mean, that’s what it’s all about, we have our own activity as the governing body, and we put a lot of time and effort collectively and individually to make these things work. But that’s actually just to facilitate the work that [redacted] is doing with tutors and children on a daily, weekly basis. And, you know, that’s what it’s all about. And I think it’s magnificent.*” (Trustee, male).

Some members shared their opinions from the point of view of parents of learners and community members involved in the training activities (extract 18).

Extract 18 “[...] *I’m in the privileged position that my two children have lessons from the tutors so early on obviously, they’re lovely people, and we chatted, they’re enthusiastic about what they do. So I hear about what’s happening in the school, so I know that [unclear] The two occasions I think when I’ve seen them in action and one was at the museum, the Maritime Museum, when they were performing, and they did a lesson, demonstrated as a lesson (unclear) and that was incredible, and actually, all the kids in the orchestra all sat and joined the primary school children who’ve come along with us. That’s when I could see what they were learning, trying to describe that. You know, I sort of I feel like I know what is going on. But in terms of the pedagogy and precisely the educational benefits, I would find that hard to use technical language to explain that.*” (Trustee, female).

Trustees’ knowledge of the pedagogical model and its benefits is somehow implicit and inferred by the ongoing training and outreach activities. In other terms, Trustees experience the outcomes of the pedagogical model (for example, concerts and events) and community members’ positive feedback rather than the finer details and learning processes it involves. This different approach does not represent a criticality but rather a broad confidence in the tutors/trainers’ skills and knowledge. Tutors and trainers are more involved in pedagogical activities due to their role, but they would primarily discuss them based on their impact and outcomes. For this reason, tutors’ reflections on the pedagogical activities will be presented in the following section.

5.1.3 Learning activities designed and delivered by EMAE

In this section on learning activities designed and delivered by EMAE, we have considered it beneficial to discuss the main findings under subheadings, one for each category involved (*primary-school children and young adults, parents, EMAE tutors and schoolteachers and board of trustees*) so that each group’s specific opinions may be clearly differentiated and explored.

Throughout the various research activities (interviews, focus groups, group activities), students, tutors and parents described a large number of educational activities delivered by EMAE.

Children (Year 5) and young people (aged 12 and over) were involved in different learning activities and reported different experiences.

5.1.3.1 Primary school children

Children in years 3, 4 and 5 at Liscard Primary School take part in the Beginner Programme delivered by two/three EMAE tutors. On a weekly basis, children are involved in ludic-musical activities in groups of around 20 students. These activities are aimed at familiarising them with musicianship, rhythm and pace, musicality, and some knowledge of notations and music vocabulary. The variety of activities and techniques adopted is positively surprising (extract 19).

Extract 19 *“And we normally do that through playing lots of different musical games, so learning through play, learning through movement and in the instrumental session, it's more of a taster for them with the hope that some of them will then decide to do lessons outside with the Charity.” (Tutor, female).*

The programme is in its third year, consequently, children in Year 5 have been involved in EMAE activities for the past two years.

At Liscard Primary School, 36 Year 5 children took part in ludic activities. They were asked to describe the activities they were involved in and the emotions they associated with them. They described how they would walk around to the beat of the music (extract 20) or listen to different music (extract 21).

Extract 20 *“And so we did it where they played music, and then we walked around to the beat of the music, and we also did the same thing, but with [unclear].” (primary-school child, male).*

Extract 21 *“And also it's quite focused (unclear) we get to listen to different music.” (primary-school child, male).*

They were enthusiastic about the activities planned for them and considered them a “positive distraction” from regular school activity (extracts 22 and 23). The children described feeling happy during the activities and looking forward to them (extract 24). Children enjoyed learning music together, with time passing quickly.

Extract 22 *“Don't be mindful of school time. We don't really care about school time.” (primary-school child, male).*

Extract 23 *“It's good because I get a break from doing schoolwork.” (primary-school child, male).*

Extract 24 *“I feel happy when I do it because it feels like it's one of the things I look forward to on a Friday.” (primary-school child, female).*

It appears that, in the children's experience, musical activities are something very engaging and different from their regular school activities for various reasons. First, they take place in a separate space from their classroom. Second, they are heavily based on physical movement and activity, unlike most school activities; and finally, they are led by someone who is not their regular teacher, adding another element of novelty. Interestingly, the children would talk about the activities they were involved with in terms of games (extract 25). Furthermore, children enjoyed the presence of a researcher asking their opinions and feelings about the music and learning activities planned for them.

Extract 25 *“There was this game where someone was hit, and they had to turn around and if they (unclear) moving they had to be eliminated.” (primary-school child, male).*

5.1.3.2 Young adults

The learning programmes consist of innovative courses and activities for responding to different ages and participants' learning needs. The variety of training offered is positively surprising.

EMAE provision for students aged 12 and over comprises the String Academy and the Early Music Youth Orchestra (EMYO). The Academy programme offers young string players complimentary, specialist education in Musicianship, String Playing and Ensemble Music at Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced levels (see the introduction). In the Musicianship sessions, students practice their musical skills and learn to listen to music and understand it (extract 26). According to the literature (see e.g., Schellenberg, 2012), listening to classical music is an excellent pedagogical practice as it has been shown to improve, not only the skills of musicians but their cognitive performance also.

Extract 26 *“It's usually designed to help us be better listeners rather than better players. And sometimes you'll do count exercises, and sometimes we'll just listen to a piece of music and describe it.” (Young person, male).*

During the Early Music String Technique sessions, students familiarise themselves with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century instruments and techniques in order to be able to perform in concert repertoires from that time.

The flagship ensemble of EMAE is the Early Music Youth Orchestra.

An ensemble is a group of musicians who regularly play and perform a specific musical composition together (e.g., classical music). The Literature suggests that ensemble practice has psycho-social benefits on musicians and helps to develop interpersonal skills (Adderley et al., 2003; Campbell et al., 2007; Hewitt & Allan, 2012; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011).

This ensemble is composed of string players who have graduated from or are enrolled in the Intermediate and Advanced levels of the Academy programmes (extract 27).

Extract 27 *“The early music, what we call the Early Music Youth Orchestra, recruits basically the more advanced students, so students that are at the advanced level of the Academy or have graduated from the programme because they study music in the university or conservatoire. Or they study other disciplines. They normally stay a few years more in the Orchestra whenever they can, especially in the summer when the university is over, they take part in the orchestral productions.” (Trustee/trainer, male).*

At the end of the academic year, the students are invited to take part in international residencies: “Every summer, select members of the Academy travel nationally and internationally to work intensively with EMAE and guest tutors to give concert recitals in prestigious venues under the banner of the Early Music Youth Orchestra.” (EMAE website).

Group music education residencies can improve young people’s “adaptability” and “flexibility” in that such skills are required for travelling abroad, especially on the first occasion of living far apart from the family with other peers and tutors. Furthermore, they developed adaptability to the residency environment (see e.g., Kelly & Neidorf, 2022). Finally, spending all their time together assisted in the development of community building.

All 15 students who took part in the research were involved in both Academy and orchestral activities.

Both the younger (12-16 years old) and older (16 and over) students described in detail all the activities they took part in, sometimes focusing on specific technical aspects of the music training. It’s interesting to note that the students displayed an acute awareness of the importance of each training activity, including those they sometimes deemed boring (extract 28).

Extract 28 (...) *There's also the focus you have to put into it. So it's like a bit of discipline in that sense. You have to stay committed to playing your instrument because if you don't, you'll kind of like...forget.” (Young person, male).*

Students were passionate about and felt a sense of pride in the concerts, ensemble music and the weeks away. Both younger and older students were aware of the social relevance of the activities they take part in as part of the charity. They all provided enthusiastic descriptions of the residential activities and their technical and social content. We discuss this aspect in depth in Section 5.2.

5.1.3.3 Parents, EMAE tutors and schoolteachers, and board of trustees

Tutors' and parents' knowledge and experience of the EMAE activities are very much informed by their role in the Charity. In particular, the board of trustees discussed outreach and fundraising events at length in light of their direct involvement with those activities, whereas the tutors shared details about the weekly rehearsals, training activities and summer residentials. Thanks to their specific role, the tutors could reflect on the more technical activities as musicians (rehearsals, concerts, technique lessons) and on the more social side of training, primarily linked to the summer residentials, as educators.

The 9 parents who took part in the research were able to provide other interesting points of view, as their experience of EMAE’s training activities was largely a vicarious one based on

their child's experience with the charity and its activities. Some parents were more directly involved than others and would discuss activities like fundraising events or flash mobs in more detail as they played an active role in them (extract 29). They felt happy to actively support the charity because they recognised its impact on their local communities.

Extract 29 *“What we did was we had a pile of these flyers and we gave some out to the people passing by who stopped to watch them, you know, because obviously they were interested. So, we gave them. And then I went and just put them into car windows, you know, and things like that.” (Parent, female).*

This extract suggests that parents are involved to various extents in hands-on activities aimed at advertising EMAE and that they represent an essential part of its learning and social environment. More generally, the literature on musical parenting, defined as “the group of parental cognitions, values, and behaviours toward music” (Ilari, 2018, 50), suggests that the interactions among teachers, students, and parents significantly impact music learning and teaching.

In addition to getting involved directly with EMAE activities, parents are acutely aware of the quality of the music provided, and sometimes they would favourably compare EMAE to other orchestras (extracts 30, 31).

Extract 30 *“And yet their technique [...] They're obviously fantastic musicians and everything, but I didn't think they sounded like EMAE, who I presume are doing an authentic sound. They weren't, as you know, as hard on the stops or whatever” (Parent, female).*

Extract 31 *“Well, EMAE is a lot more intonation. There's a lot, you know. They don't settle. The XXX settles for the sound. EMAE doesn't, you know? And like, they're probably far better than the XXX.” (Parent, female).*

On the other hand, in some cases, they recognised that other, more established organisations received more funding for involving more tutors and implementing more activities (extract 32).

Extract 32 *“You know, the [redacted] Orchestra, you know, which has been running for years and years and it's got a whole big team of tutors” (Parent, female).*

As discussed at length by trustees, outreach activities are central to pursuing EMAE's mission and goals. Outreach concerts, flash-mobs and fundraising events have the manifold goal of spreading awareness about EMAE, its goals and its activities, raising funds and resources, and developing connections. Most empirical works addressing fundraising for music education focus on the context of American public schools (Elpus & Gris , 2019), where some music booster groups have successfully raised very large sums of money, but where fundraising represents an integral part of the budget for some music departments (Simons, 2008).

Overall, the EMAE outreach activities are well regarded by tutors (extracts 33 and 34) and parents alike (extract 35).

Extract 33 *“We did a fundraising dinner, first. Went very well. We raised almost  16,000 on*

the night. All the comments from people I've never seen, corporate people, and it's amazing in this sense of family [...].” (Tutor, male).

Extract 34 *“I mean, this is another aim of all ‘Sounds in the Park’ experience. But at the end of the day, when you see like really young kids having such a nice impression of what you are doing like, this is exactly the point, right?” (Tutor, female).*

Extract 35 *“I think it was 2020. The first one after lockdown, after the first lockdown in August. So, they were so happy to be released, to be playing somewhere. So yes, that was very nice. [to be] involved with that. And we went along to watch and support. So that one.” (Parent, female).*

These extracts suggest that outreach events are effective in raising funds for the charity, spreading awareness about its activities and, crucially, giving **its** students an opportunity to play and enjoy themselves. Indeed, as will be discussed next, the impact of concerts and outreach events is overwhelmingly positive in the children’s experience. Furthermore, the efforts of the charity and its active supporters’ to involve community members and expand their activities clearly emerged from the analysis.

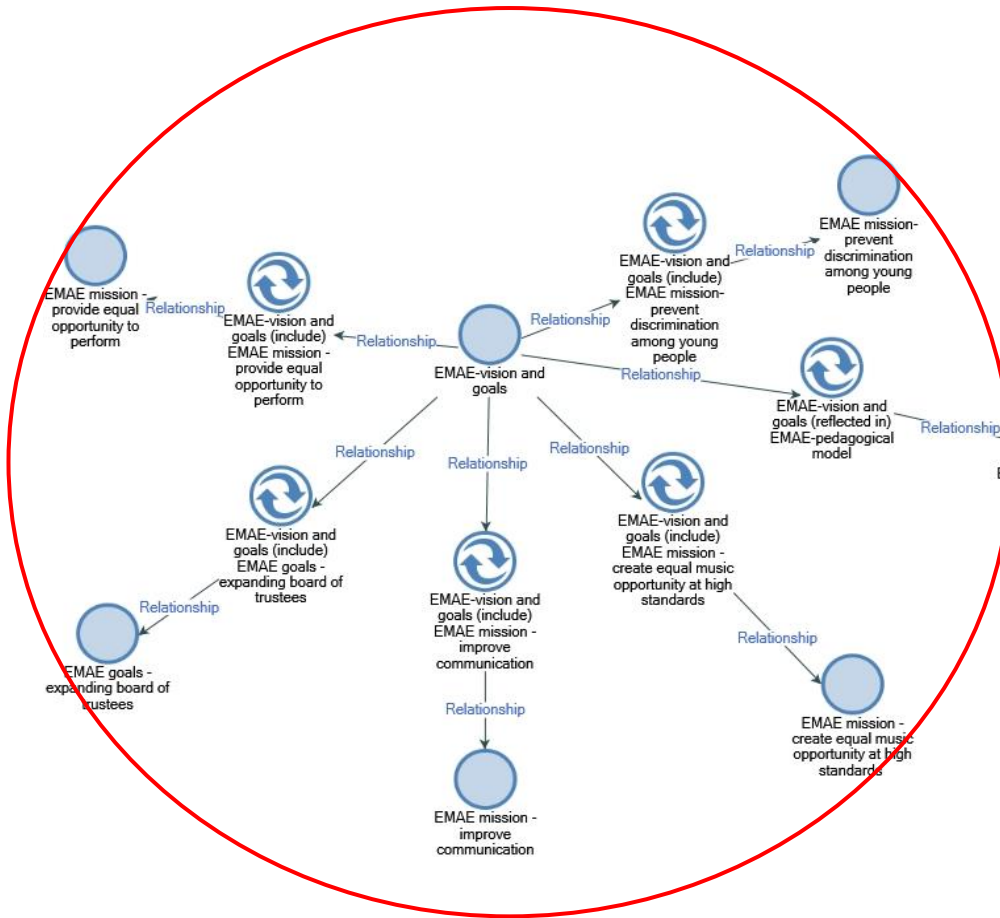
We also elaborated a synthesis of the core data of this chapter by NVivo (Map 1). The map synthesises the most important dimensions emerging from the thematic analysis of *EMAE’s vision, pedagogical model and formative activities*.

As described in par. 5.1, vision and goals inform the pedagogical model which, in turn, underpin pedagogical activities. The following goals emerged primarily from the focus group: providing equal opportunities to perform, preventing discrimination among young people, creating equal music opportunities to a high standard, improving the promotion of events, consolidating community networks, and expanding the board of trustees.

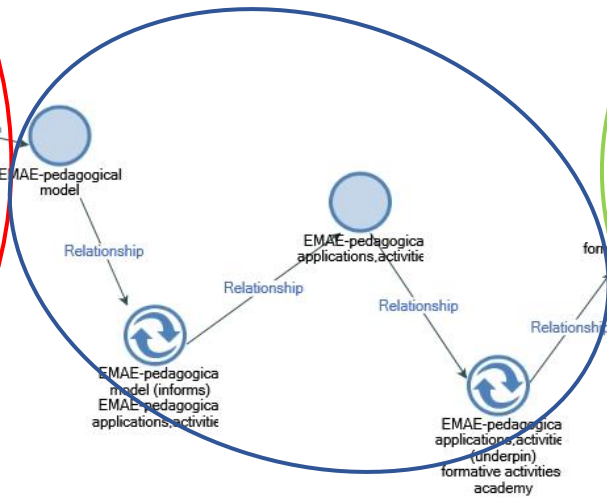
The interviews and focus group showed how the pedagogical model informs pedagogical applications and activities. Students, parents, tutors/trainers, and trustees described a wide variety of pedagogical activities, including concerts, early music string technique, weekly rehearsals, orchestra, musicianship, and residential activities.

Map 1 EMAE's vision, pedagogical model and formative activities

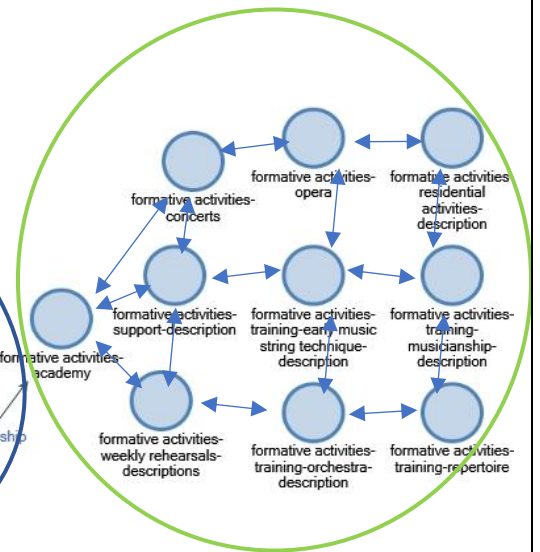
Vision and goals



Pedagogical model



Formative activities



5.2 Formative activities and their impact on participants: learning development, life skills and community building

The section will address participants' self-perception of the formative activities they are involved in to varying degrees (trainers, learners, parents) as well as their opinions on the perceived impact of such activities. Following the differentiation introduced in the previous subsection, one section will focus on children and young people, and the other will focus on teachers, tutors, trainers, trustees, and parents.

5.2.1 Participants' self-perception about EMAE's activities

5.2.1.1 Children

Liscard Primary School

As already noted, 36 Year 5 children took part in ludic activities aimed at exploring their feelings and emotions related to the music activities delivered by EMAE. During the ludic activity they were involved in, they were invited to draw "How music makes them feel". The outputs of this activity (drawings) are included at the end of the section. The children drew happy faces and reported being happy and excited during EMAE activities (extracts 1 and 2) but also proud (extract 3) (see figures 1-14).

Extract 1 "I feel excited about it." (primary school child, male).

Extract 2 "I feel happy and calm as I do music." (primary school child, male).

Extract 3 "I feel proud of myself. Never did I know what I was going to be a nine year old and play the cello." (Primary school child, male).

According to the children's reflections, musical activities with EMAE positively impact their mood and give them a feeling of pride and self-satisfaction (see figure 1 page 30). Children were also confident to share their experiences of and their active role in learning music in group. The positive impact of music on primary school children was already highlighted in the literature (see e.g., Kratus, 1993; Vicente-Nicolás & Mac Ruairc, 2014). In an interesting empirical contribution, Robazza et al. (1994) showed that the attribution of emotions to music seems to be independent of expertise or exposure, hence the suggestion that children can enjoy and attribute emotions to music even in the absence of specific expertise; additionally, children would perceive more 'happy' feelings and fewer 'angry' feelings than adults, in line with the subjective reports collected during the circle time activity. Another study, published by Kratus (1993), showed that children aged 6 to 12 are significantly more consistent in their distinction between happy and sad music compared to the distinction between excited and calm music. Consistently with this, children involved in the activity were more likely to describe their feelings referring to the happy/sad continuum rather than feelings of excitement/calmness. Overall, children appreciated the musical activities; this is consistent with a study on young people's attitudes to and involvement with music in and out of school (Lamont et al., 2003).

Using questionnaires and focus groups, the authors showed that pupils demonstrated very positive attitudes towards both music listening and music making. However, the findings also showed declining interest with age.

Findings from a 2014 study (Vicente-Nicolás & Mac Ruairc, 2014) carried out in public and private primary schools in Spain showed that playing instruments is the activity the students like the most, followed by singing and participating in movement/dancing. Indeed, some of the children would ask for more hands-on involvement with musical instruments (extract 4).

Extract 4 “[...] it’s like when are we going to actually start learning how to make music?” (Primary School child, male).

Interestingly, a couple of children also expressed different emotions and feelings associated with learning music (extract 5, 6).

Extract 5 “I feel cranky” (Primary School child, male)

Extract 6 “I feel happy but sometimes I feel, I don’t know why, angry” (Primary school child, male).

Listening to and learning music in the classroom can be challenging for children who are also spontaneous in expressing personal emotions perhaps facilitated by other events and interpersonal dynamics. Facing and managing negative emotions is an important step in children's personal development. Self-regulation (Brown et al., 2022) is an important skill that involves children developing the ability to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours to enable them to act in positive ways towards a challenge/task. In this regard, a recent publication by Brown et al. (2022) found that children, especially those at risk and facing economic hardship showed greater growth in inhibitory control and self-regulation when involved in musical activities than those who weren't.

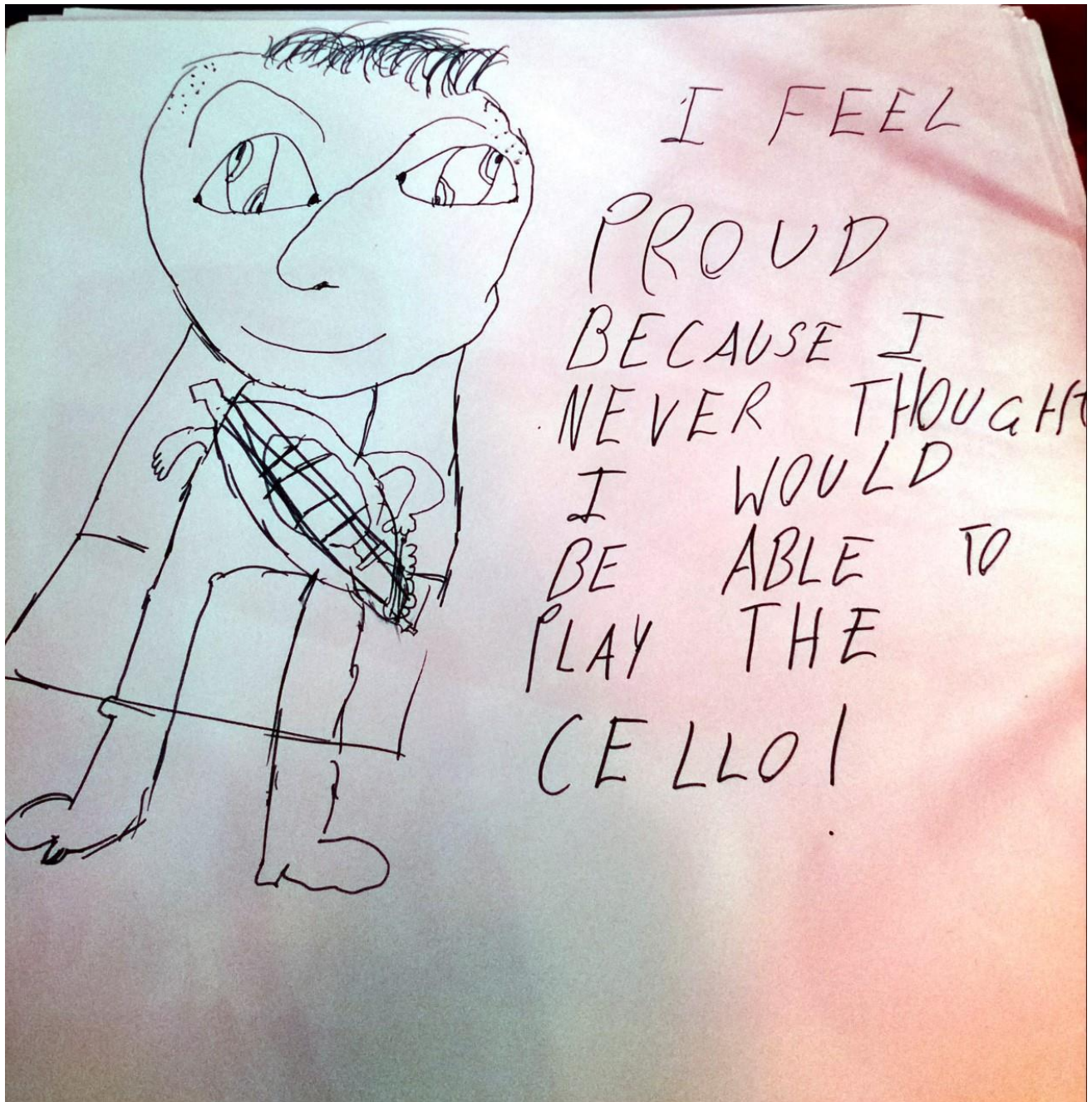


Figure 1. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School.

The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

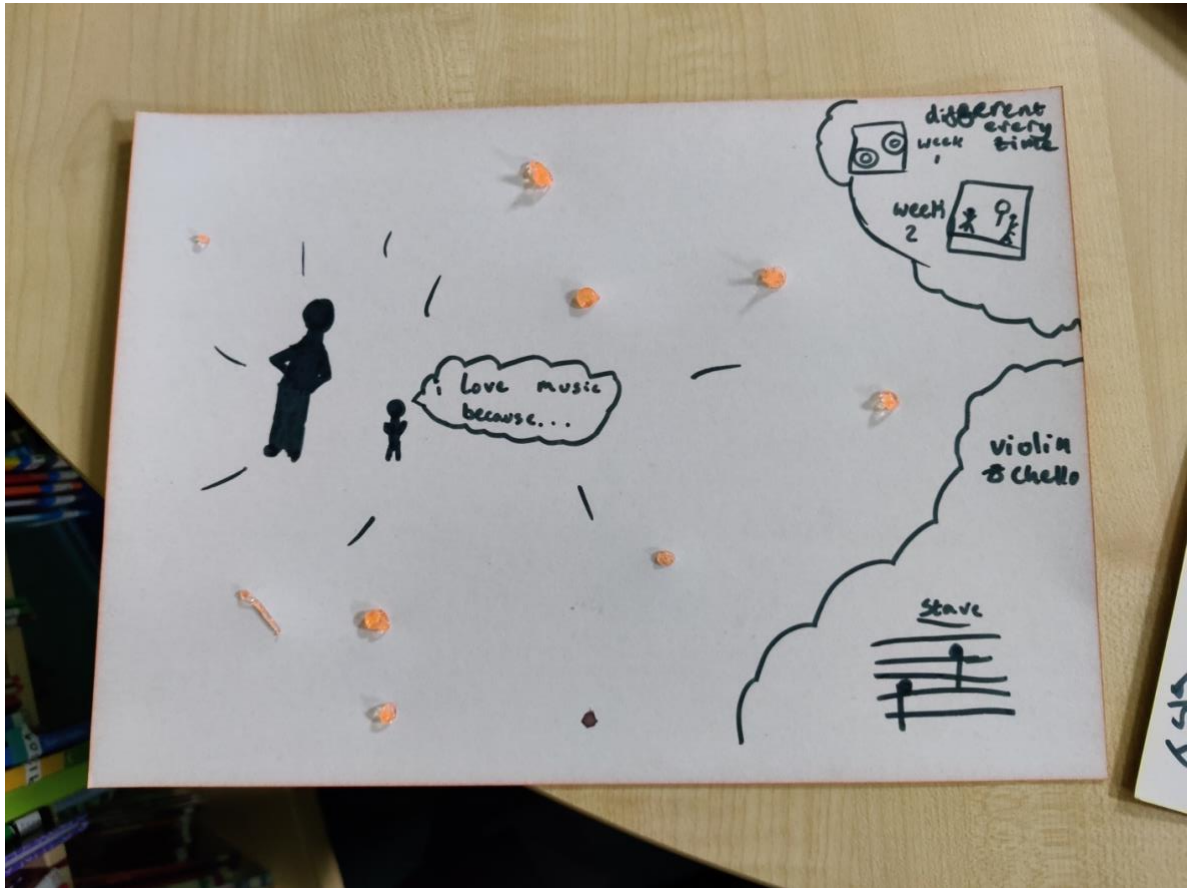


Figure 2 Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School.
The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".



Figure 3 Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School.

The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

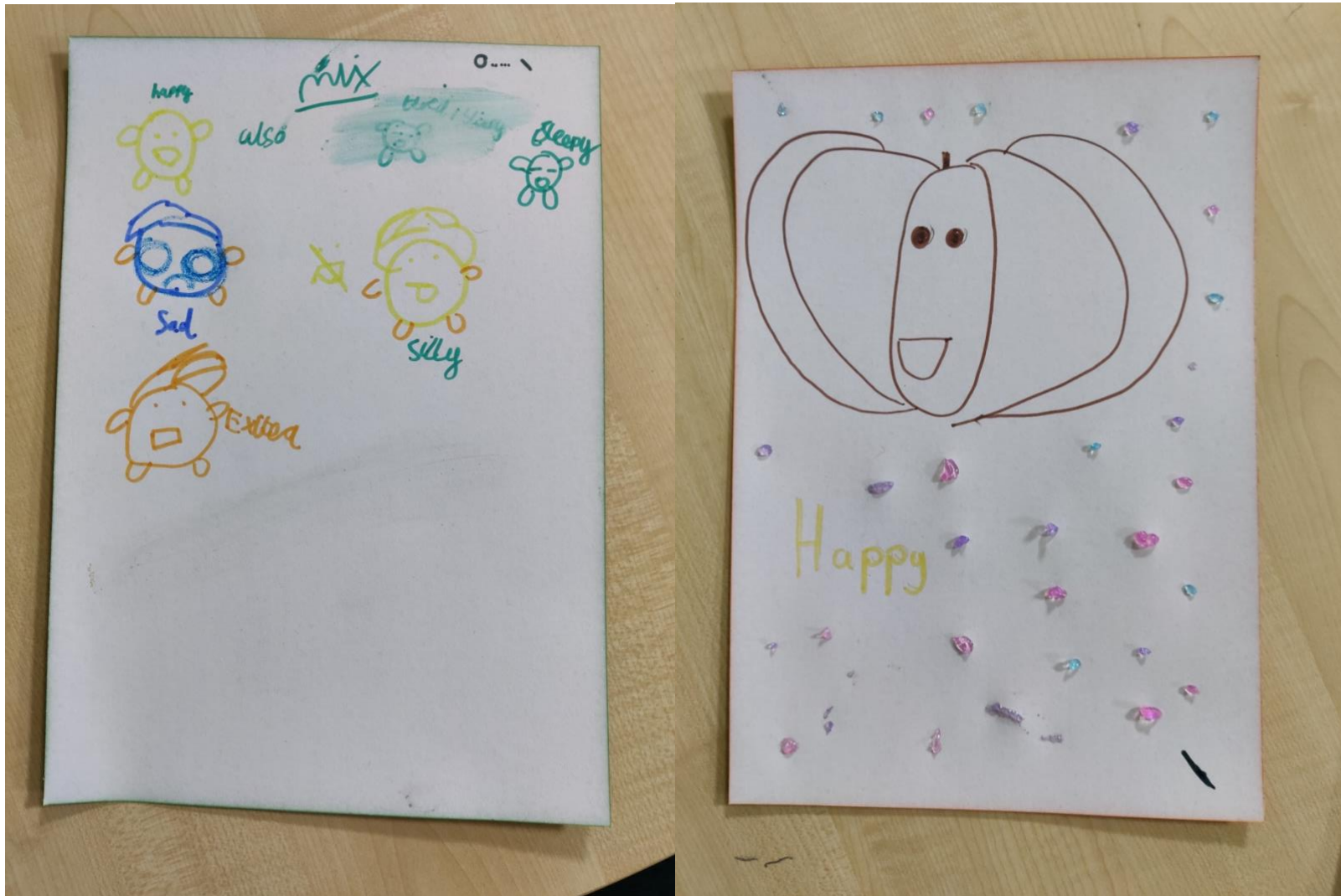


Figure 4. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

Figure 5. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".



Figure 6. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel"



Figure 7 Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

Figure 8 Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

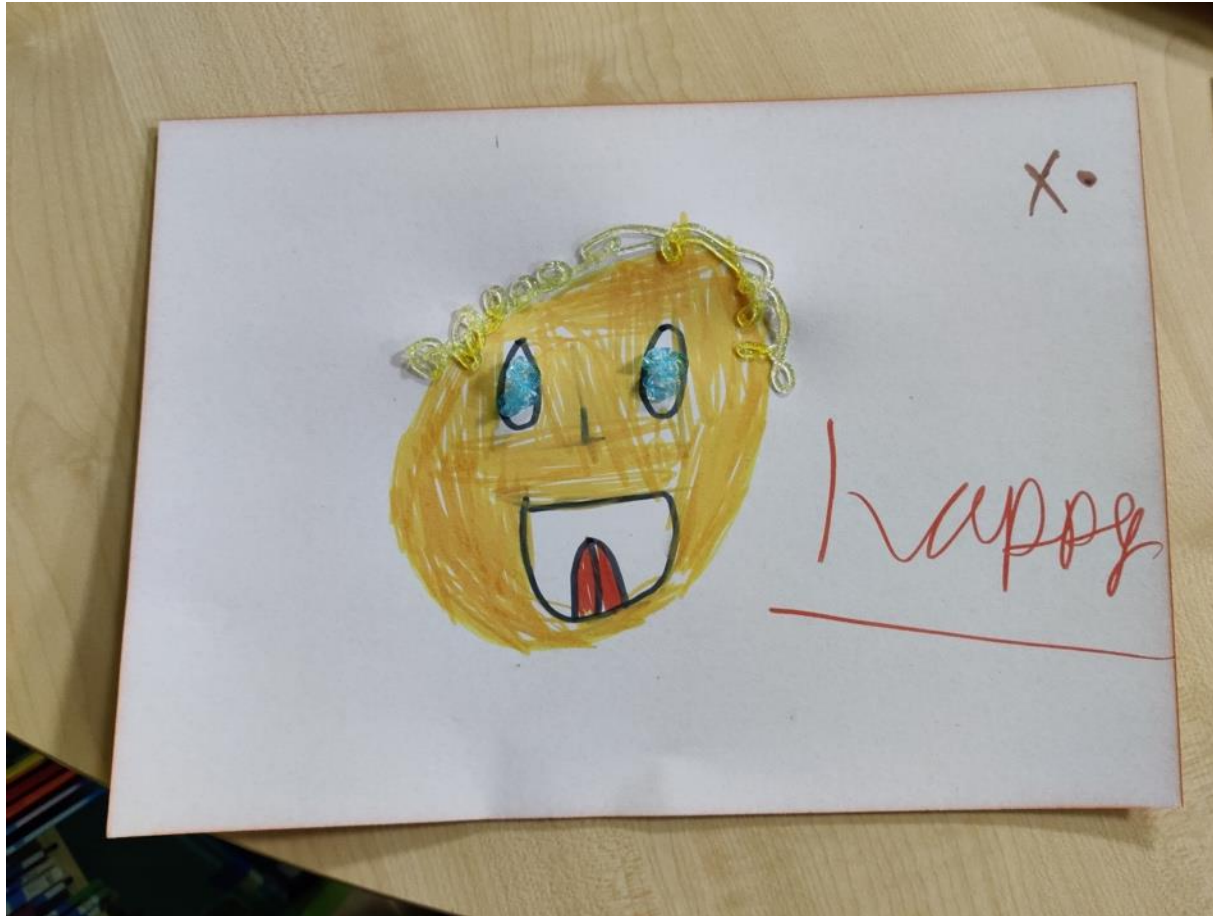


Figure 9. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

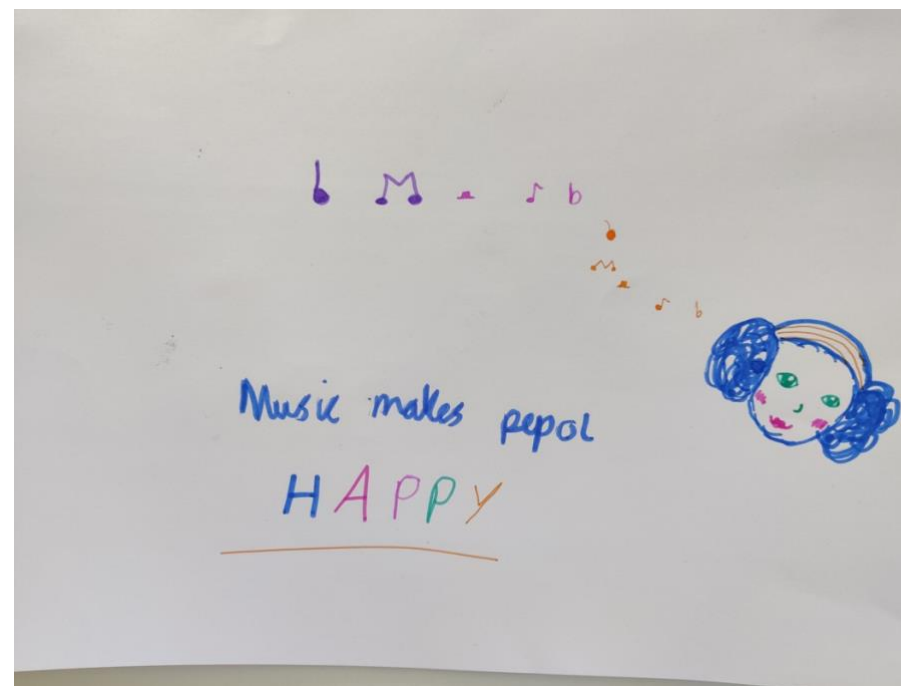
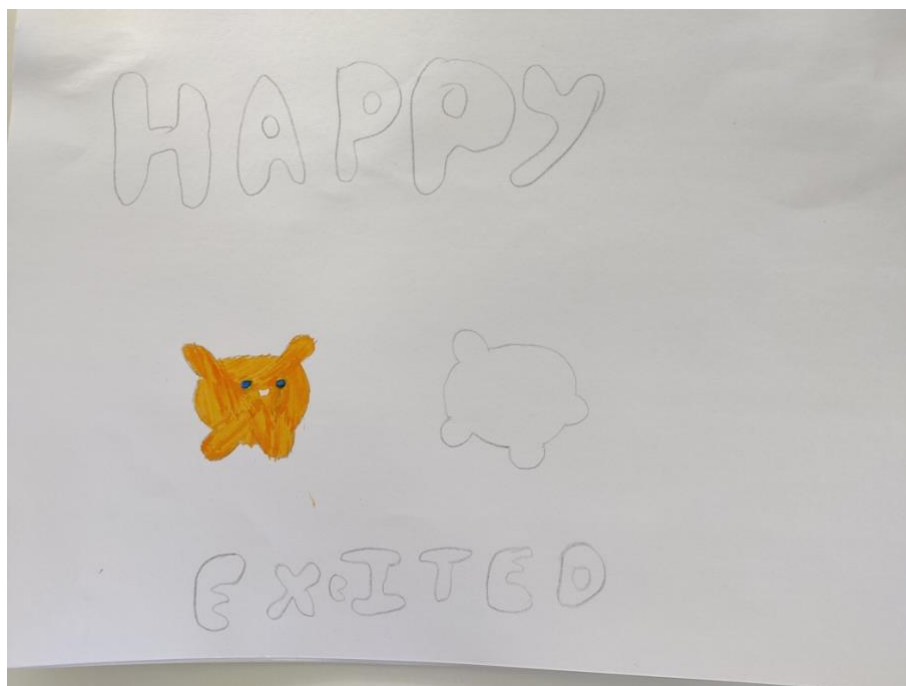


Figure 10. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

Figure 11. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

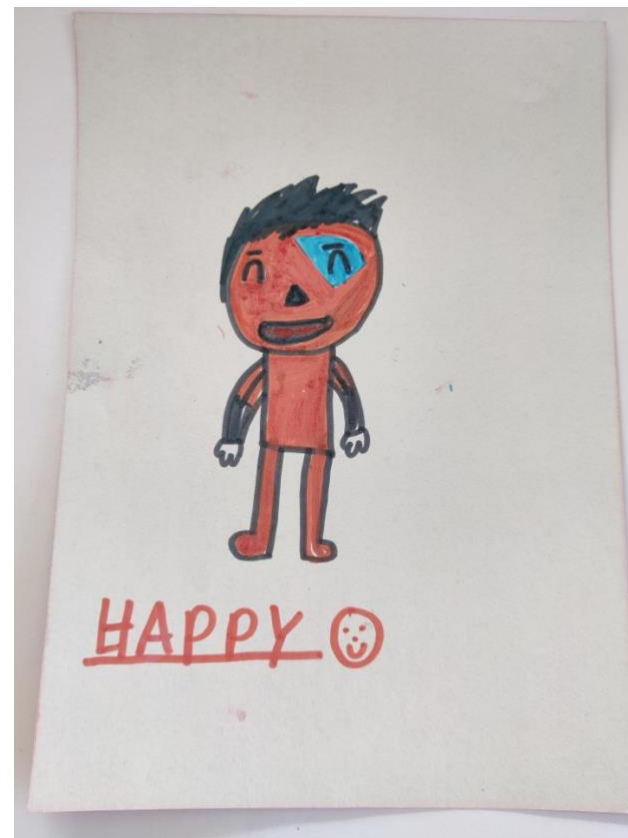
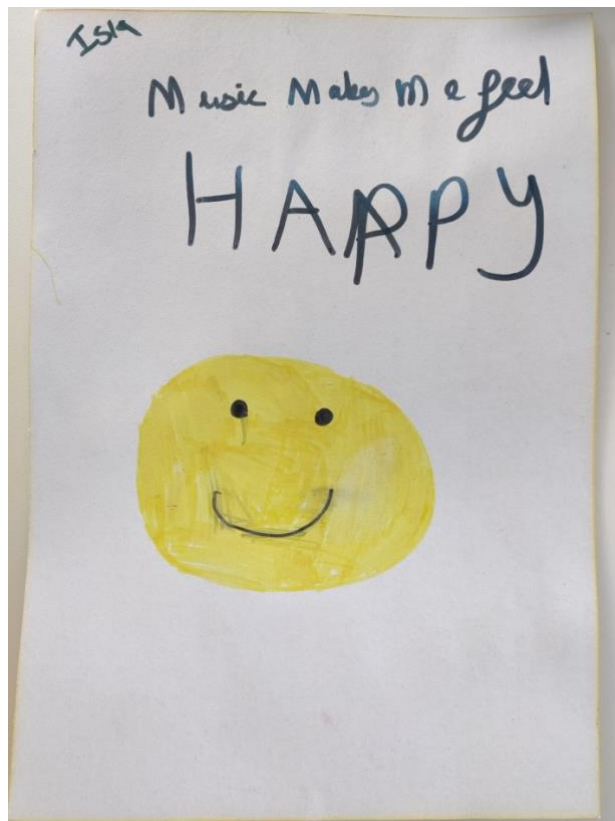


Figure 12. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

Figure 13. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

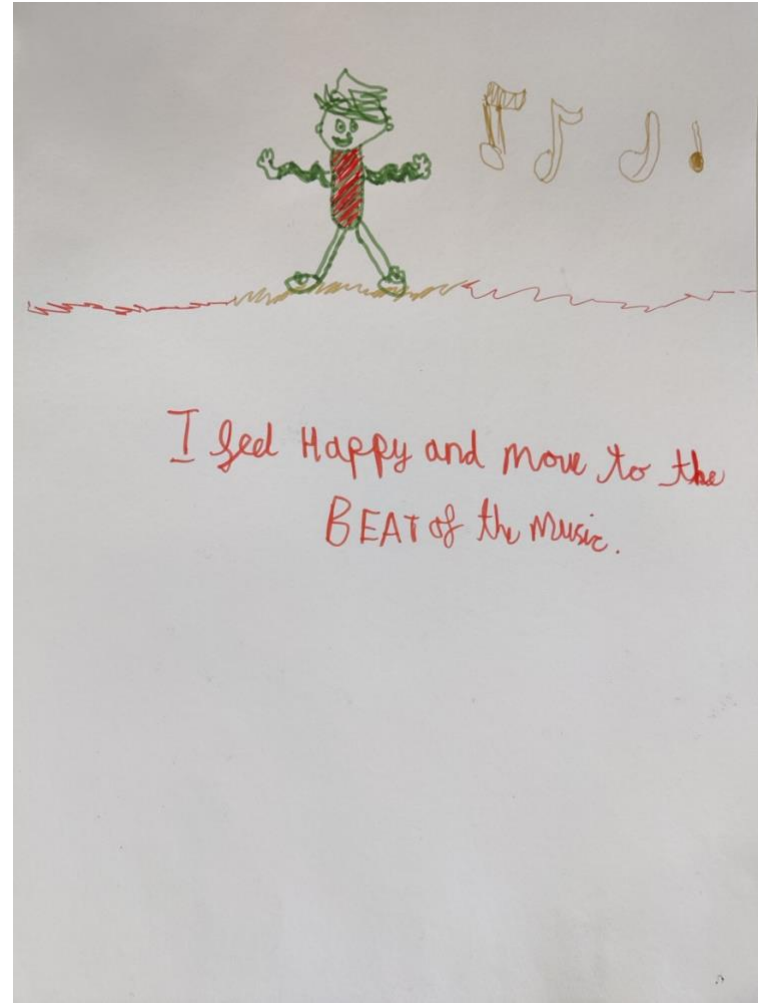
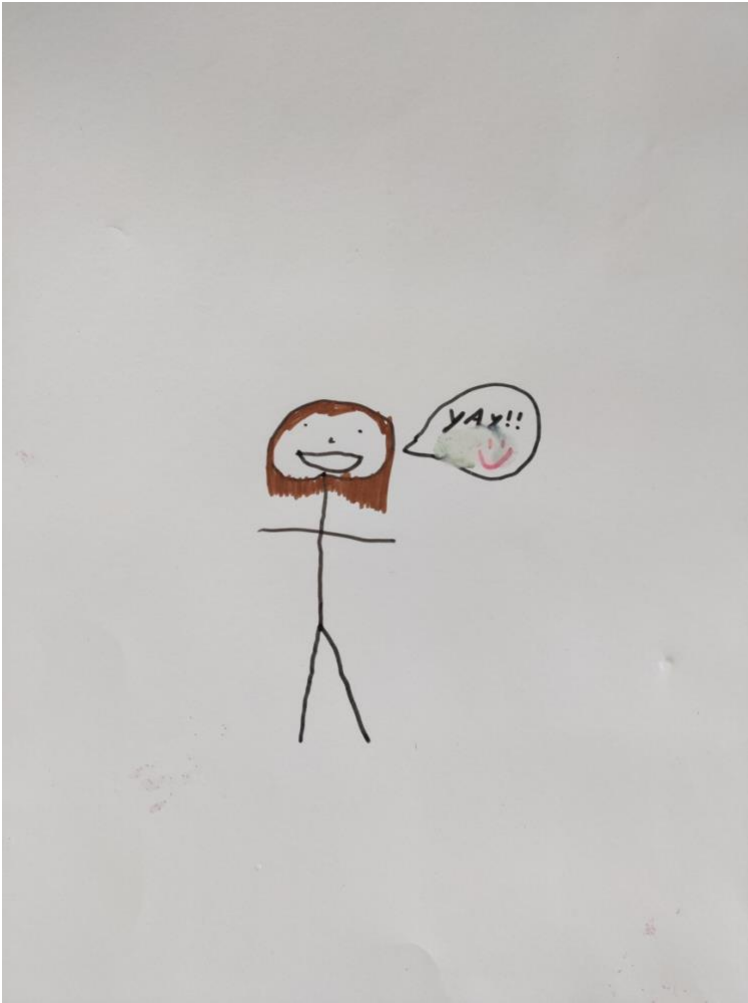


Figure 13. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

Figure 14. Drawing by Year 5 pupil, Liscard Primary School. The pupils were asked to draw "How music makes you feel".

5.2.1.2 Young people

As mentioned in the previous section, the 15 students aged 12 and over who took part in the research were involved in the Academy and orchestral activities. These activities comprise Musicianship and Early Music String Technique training, concerts, awaydays and international residencies. Students' perception of EMAE activities was positive and enthusiastic. They recognised the constructive role played by these activities in their musical and personal development. Students expressed the deepest appreciation for the variety of activities they took part in, weekly practice, musicianship programme, early music string technique, concerts, flash mobs, and the residencies abroad. For ease of exposition, this sub-section will group the various activities that the students shared opinions on in three broad categories: musicianship and early music string technique, concerts, and flash mobs, and residencies abroad. It should also be noted that some of these activities will overlap (e.g., concerts and flash mobs, concerts and residencies abroad).

Musicianship and early music string technique. In the students' descriptions, these two activities represented a significant proportion of the training programme (Academy Intermediate and Advanced programmes) and focused on developing musical and rhythm skills and familiarity with the baroque technique. The students reflected on how these activities helped their musical training and development. Young people have shown self-awareness about the impact of these experiences in musical learning processes and their lives (extract 6).

Extract 6 *"I feel like I learned a lot in those sessions, and I feel like I improved on things that are very fundamental in those sessions. So yeah, it's definitely the technique sections for me."* (Young person, male).

Students who also trained in other schools/organisations reflected on how EMAE practice and string technique is different from the standard musical training (extract 7) and allows them to develop their technique in unexpected ways (extracts 8, 9).

It was not only parents, tutors and trustees who highlighted the uniqueness of the charity's approach, children also recognise how the pedagogical method adopted by EMAE is different from other, more traditional methods they have experienced during their educational paths (extracts 7,8 and 9). One participant (extract 9) also emphasised the inspirational impact of this experience on his "critical thinking" and a "new perspective" never before considered along with heightened self-awareness. Self-development of self-awareness in young people is an important life skill that can effectively increase self-esteem and self-confidence (Bussu et al. 2018; Bussu & Burn, 2022).

Extract 7 *"I think the main thing to say about it is really that it's sort of very different to any of the strings group I've been in."* (Young person, female).

Extract 8 *"I would say the most interesting aspect [...] it's developing our technique in a way that we wouldn't explore otherwise. So, our normal music teachers won't teach us these things and we're getting a very specialised, very high-quality education. And it's helping us to improve our output when we do concerts and things, and it just opens up a new level of expertise and understanding for musicians."* (Young person, male).

Extract 9 *“It’s been really interesting, what I really love about the sessions is it makes me think in a very different way, and it makes me consider something I hadn’t previously really thought about. Maybe it lends a different perspective on something [...] so in that way it’s very interesting.” (Young person, male).*

These reflections are particularly noteworthy in light of some findings (Resmana & Anggraeni, 2018) showing how exposure to baroque music has positive effects on high school students’ narrative writing. Listening to baroque music has also been associated with an increase in student focus and improved reading comprehension skills (Ahmad, 2020).



Figure 15. Beginners Programme Liverpool

Concerts and flash mobs

As part of the Orchestra ensemble, students are involved in outreach concerts and *flash mobs* (Donald & Grieg, 2015) overseas (Italy, Spain, France) and in Liverpool. Young musicians are primarily involved as players but are also actively engaged in designing and organising the events. These active learning experiences are deemed important factors contributing to personal growth, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills (Bussu & Burton, 2022; Beaudoin, 2012; Schaber et.al, 2015). Parents also usually help with organisation and advertising.

According to Grant et al. (2012) flash mobs enhance consumer arousal, connectedness, and positive emotions. Participants are enthusiastic about the concerts, and they consider them an opportunity to put into practice their training whilst strengthening the social bonds in the ensemble. For some students, concerts represent the culmination of their practice (extracts 10, 11, 12).

Extract 10 *“I think I enjoy the concerts the most because it's the final thing you've been working for ages, so to get there and then complete the concert for the audiences who have sometimes paid to come and watch you.” (Young person, female).*

Extract 11 *“I love the concerts. I think the concerts always such fun cause everyone's like on edge and like you've worked so hard.” (Young person, female).*

Extract 12 *“So we had a concert at the end of it, which is sort of like the penultimate task. That's what we're building up to.” (Young person, male).*

In the past, orchestral flash concerts have taken place in spaces like airports; in the case of EMAE the flash mob took place in a very central road in Liverpool to maximise its effectiveness. As Greig & Nicolini (2015, p 190) point out, a musical flash mob requires “patient, persistent, and concerted preparation, effort and co-configuring together a variety of people, things and organisations”. In light of this, EMAE flash mobs can be considered an additional opportunity for students to play as a group and connect with their peers and the wider team (including tutors and trainers) to reach a common goal. For older students who have left the training programme, concerts are a way to reconnect with the ensemble (extract 13).

Extract 13 *“I come back for every concert I can, it's great to engage with the orchestra. It's very fun. Yeah.” (Young person, Male).*

This extract displays the *powerful connective role of music effectively*. Indeed, as discussed more extensively in section 5.2.2., one of the major impact dimensions that emerged from the interviews and focus groups was the idea of *connecting with others through music*. Extract 13 suggests that this connection is not only situated in space and time (concerts, rehearsals), but is also extended in time. Additionally, it suggests that musical activities may be used as a starting point to foster the development of wider connections and relationships between the students. This long-term collaboration between older students and the orchestra

could even take the form of a *collaborative partnership* in which a “deeper, prolonged connection has additional benefits that augment and enrich the musical awareness of members” (Langley & Burch, 2019, p. 34).



Figure 16. Sounds in the Park 2021



Figure 17a. Opera Production Sounds in the Park 2021



Figure 17b. Opera Production Sounds in the Park 2021

International residencies

As mentioned previously, every summer select members of the Academy travel nationally and internationally to work intensively with EMAE tutors as well as guest tutors to give concert recitals in prestigious venues under the banner of the Early Music Youth Orchestra. Not unlike concerts, international residencies represent an opportunity for students to hone and practise their skills and develop social cohesion in the group.

Furthermore, summer programmes/international schools are useful for building skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours that promote academic achievement and healthy development (McLaughlin & Pitcock, 2009, 5). In areas with high rates of poverty, summer learning programmes exist to narrow the achievement gap and increase rates of high-school graduation, college entrance and college completion among low-income and minority youth.

The relationship between residencies and social cohesion has been explored extensively in the literature; for example, Pinto et al. (2020, p. 4) noted how “Since 2010, artist residencies are identified as a key instrument in European urban development for social cohesion and community building”. Moreover, for some students, this was their first international experience and the first occasion they had lived away from their family for any length of time. Such an experience could contribute further to social cohesion in the group, as international trips have been shown to foster social cohesion in graduate students in higher education (Slantcheva-Durst & Danowski, 2018). In our research students were able to appreciate the positive effects of all activities but were also keen to acknowledge the level of commitment and discipline required (extracts 14, 15 and 16).

Extract 14 *“I enjoyed it a lot actually. It was very relaxed and something I really appreciate because you, I mean, it’s not quite a holiday. You still have to work hard.” (Young person, Male).*

Extract 15 *“Well, we weren’t like overworked. We weren’t forced to play because it was hard conditions for British people. But I think we usually played for about 2 hours and then we just had about 2 hours to just relax and then an hour in between. So yeah, it was well worth it.” (Young person, male).*

Extract 16 *“So I think EMAE was something that I took a lot more seriously than other things and I think even like I’ve been at university this year. I took, I’ve taken EMAE a lot more seriously than like my hobbies at Uni, if you know what I mean.” (Young person, female).*

These reflections suggest that students deeply appreciated the time spent practising during these summer residencies and that they are aware of the level of discipline required to play at a very high level: despite offering a relaxed environment, summer residencies were not considered a holiday, but a time for practising and improving. This level of discipline was such that some students would report prioritising training over their hobbies on some occasions. Some students also reflected on how they played hard but also enjoyed their time away in a foreign country with their friends (extract 17). They also identified how these trips gave them the opportunity to bond with the ensemble whilst reaching out to the general public in a new way (extract 18).

Extract 17 “So every day we did practise together, we worked on our skills. We worked to perform on the Saturday and, but we also had a lot of free time where we enjoyed ourselves. It created social activities.” (Young person, male).

Extract 18 “The locals, like, the French people, they were so appreciative. It was so lovely to experience cause. I guess EMAE tends to outreach a lot like on tours we go on. You know, we went to San Ginesio in Italy with like lots of earthquakes. And I think the people were quite grateful we were there. And that's a very nice part of it [...]” (Young person, female).

Extract 18 illustrates an instance of *connecting with others through music*, one of the main dimensions that emerged in the analyses. The students reflected on how they were able to connect with the wider community and audience and how they were able to create positive experiences through their music.

Peer mentoring

Another feature of EMAE’s training programme is *peer mentoring*: older students are invited to mentor younger colleagues and help them develop their music practice and skills (see figure 31). Peer mentoring is embedded in the weekly rehearsals, where older students are sometimes paired with younger players and help them practise. In the activities taking place at Liscard Primary School, they help look after younger children and assist tutors in their activities.

Students involved in peer mentoring described how it is mutually beneficial for both mentor and the mentee, allowing the former to reflect on their music practice and the latter to learn from someone they perceive to be closer to them in age than the more experienced tutors (extracts 19 and 20).

Young people, as peer mentors, have learned to provide straightforward explanations to younger musicians. They have also developed effective and empathic communication creating a reciprocal relationship with the children (mentees). Peer mentoring is a clear pedagogical practice that empowers both peer mentors and mentees and develops reciprocal life skills (Bussu & Burton, 2022).

Peer mentoring is a consolidated pedagogical practice that focuses on developing a sense of belonging to a community, enhancing the learning development of mentees and peer mentors (Fox et al., 2010; Bussu & Burton, 2022). Peer mentoring programmes have also been adopted to facilitate the transition of students from school to university, to prevent student drop out and support social inclusion and cohesion (Colley, 2002; Bussu & Burton, 2022).

Peer mentoring is useful for developing self-awareness. “Awareness of one’s own emotions and the ability to empathise and understand the emotions of others is a core interpersonal skill because emotional intelligence is an integral part of human intelligence. Socio-relational skills are equally important to cognitive skills because cooperation and collaboration are fundamental components of self-efficacy” (Bussu et al., 2018, p 5).

Extract 19 “It's really beneficial that the mentors are closer to their age. Of course, all the tutors have more experience and well, know how to play the pieces better, but sometimes the

message can be better conveyed when you're closer to that age as well. So, it's really important to have these peer mentor sessions in my opinion.” (Young person, male).

Extract 20 *“And it's just really nice to help the younger ones how the tutors have helped us and try and pass on what they've taught us to the younger ones.” (Young person, female).*

According to Goodrich (2022; 2018), peer mentoring in music learning and education is an effective practice for developing effective student leadership and offers a practical guide to peer mentoring in music education, enabling music teachers to implement and benefit from this technique with their students.

The value of peer mentoring in music training has been discussed in the literature, with evidence suggesting that “working with a mentor or mentee is (...) valuable for musicians, irrespective of the actual detail of the knowledge exchanged” (Stagg, 2011, p. 20). More generally, peer tutoring has potential benefits for music education as well as specific limitations (e.g., rejection of change, reinforcement, or transfer of erroneous knowledge) to consider (Fernández-Barros et al., 2022).



Figure 18. Afternoon Practice, France Music Residency 2022



Figure 19. Music Practice, France Music Residency 2022



Figure 20. EMYO Summer 2022 Normandy, France



Figure 21. Whale Watching, Scotland Music Residency 2021



Figure 22. Scotland Music Residency, Hike 2021



Figure 23. Lunch break, Scotland Music Residency 2021



Figure 24. Gairloch Museum, Scotland Music Residency



Figure 25. Italy, Summer Residency 2018

5.2.1.3 Teachers', tutors' - trainers', trustees' and parents' perception of activities

As already discussed, the specific role played by teachers-trainers/parents/ *trustees* significantly impacted on their perception, opinion, and perceived impact of the activities.

Primary school teachers

As mentioned in the previous section, musical activities in primary school involve games and exercises to familiarise the children with rhythm, pace, and musical vocabulary. Primary school teachers usually attend these activities along with EMAE trainers. The one teacher from Liscard primary school who was involved in the research gave a reflective and insightful account of EMAE activities and how they seem to impact children, their development, and their wellbeing (extract 21).

Extract 21 *“I think for now they've really started to understand and reflect on what makes up a song and kind of like the differences and how those differences can affect mood [...] I think a lot of them. [unclear], when they run around, you can see how excited they are and when they play a slow, slow song, they're walking a lot slow, and we when they said to how does that make you feel? They're much better being able to kind of verbalize that, I think.” (Teacher, male).*

The schoolteacher valued their collaboration with EMAE, and the learning activities planned for the children. Furthermore, the teacher observed the impact of the activities on children involved (extract 21).

Teachers' involvement and appreciation for the project are essential for it to be effective and well received by the children and their parents. Indeed, as suggested by Temmerman (2000), collaboration between teachers and students is essential in order children develop a positive attitude towards music.

Research on the association between music training and emotion comprehension provides conflicting evidence. An empirical work (Schellenberg & Mankarious, 2012) examined whether music training in children (7-8 years old) related to an ability to understand emotions and found that IQ scores may play a more significant role instead. On the other hand, a more recent systematic review (Blasco-Magraner et al., 2021) suggested that music does have beneficial effects on *emotional intelligence* and children's *emotional development*.

Trustees

Some *trustees* reflected on their participation in the activities (extracts 22 and 23).

Extract 22 (...) *“But lately I joined one of their music residencies, well I've done most of the music residency in the summer and probably the last one was the most successful one from my point of view” (Trustee, female).*

Extract 23 *“I know that doing the summer school, the music residency at the end of the academic year is such a valuable thing to do at the end because you are recharging the energy, recharge and you know, the enthusiasm” (Trustee, female).*

As mentioned in the previous section, *trustees* were involved in the pedagogical and outreach activities to various extents, with some of them playing a higher-level organisational role or primarily experiencing the activities through the children, with others getting involved in pedagogical activities and summer residencies. Extracts 22 and 23 are contributions from a *Trustee* who had also been involved in the pedagogical activities first-hand in the past and is still involved in the music residencies. While this member has tangible terms of comparison to assess the success of training activities and, to a certain extent, is responsible for it, other less involved *Trustees* may have to rely on the feedback and experiences of others (e.g., their children, see extract 18 on page 20) to assess the quality of the activities.

Tutors

Tutors and trainers talked about the personal and musical improvement and development they saw as a consequence of children’s involvement in the activities (extract 24).

Extract 24 *“The week in France was exactly the mirror of everything that I said until now, because even like in the other years, there were always a nice atmosphere and everything. This year in particular and also talking with other tutors and people that were there, it was a whole one group of people.” (Tutor, male).*

Parents

Parents’ opinion on EMAE activities is heavily mediated by their involvement and their children’s experience (extracts 25, 26 and 27).

Extract 25 *“[...] It's really nice to see, EMAE will encourage the young children to take part [...] in concerts.” (Parent, female).*

Extract 26 *“EMAE’s concerts have always been very enjoyable. The music is involving, it’s well played, and the overall atmosphere is excellent.” (Parent, male).*

Extract 27 *“That's I suppose the pinnacle of where they've got the really great balance of significant hours spent per day of rehearsing. And I went together, and they work hard and play hard as well. And yeah, it it's a formula that really works, evidently.” (Parent, female).*

These extracts suggest that parents also enjoy EMAE activities not only because of their impact on their children, but also because of the quality of music and atmosphere. They also

appreciated the type, quality, and extent of involvement required with the activities. Parents' involvement and appreciation for the activities is essential for their success. This resonates with the idea of *musical parenting*, introduced in section 5.1, suggesting that the quality of interactions between parents, trainers, and students impacts music learning processes (Ilari, 2018; Ho, 2009).

Some parents were more involved than others and would attend some rehearsals (when allowed) or would help organise flash mobs and outreach events, while others adopted a less involved approach (extract 28).

Extract 28 “(...) Whenever there are rehearsals of course, I will be driving them to the venue and all that and supporting them. I think I wouldn't say that I'm actively involved [...] in organising, I see other parents that they do a lot of organising” (Parent, female).

Gratitude was a recurring theme amongst the parents talking about EMAE activities and the excellent impact they had on their children. Parents were grateful for the quality teaching that the charity provides to their children but also for the healthy environment it created for their children to grow and develop their skills (extract 29).

Regardless of their level of involvement, parents shared their satisfaction with the charity's activities (extract 29) and reflected on how the charity represents/represented a *safe, familiar environment for the children* to put themselves out there and experiment with their musical and social skills. Indeed, opportunities for social skills can be acquired by interacting with one's surrounding environment (Paškevičė et al., 2021).

Extract 29 “It is also very satisfying to see your children actively engaged and passionate about something. They laugh quite a bit but are also concerned with getting it right and being better.” (Parent, male).

5.2.2. The impact of activities on participants

On an intuitive level, it's hard to overestimate the effect of music training and music activities on children and young people.

As we will argue in the present section, when our research participants (students, parents, EMAE tutors, schoolteachers, and *trustees*) were invited to reflect on the impact of EMAE activities, they referred to a wide array of cognitive, socio-relational, and musical skills and how they improved thanks to the involvement in the charity.

Román-Caballero et al. (2022) presented some promising research results, including a small but significant benefit with short-term programs and a small advantage at baseline in studies with self-selection, supporting a nature and nurture view of the relationship between learning to play instruments and cognitive skills. Furthermore, a recent empirical work (Ilari et al., 2020) showed a positive association between collective music-making and the emergence of prosocial behaviours in children and adults. This work focused on an interesting private music training programme offering music classes for children between 0 and 8 years old and their families in 10-week-long modules.

The key differences between this programme and EMAE activities include the duration of the music activities and the level of involvement of the families. Indeed, most of the families involved in EMAE have been part of the charity and involved in its activities for years: this temporal dimension may be a crucial element for relationships and community building.

Additionally, musical training has been linked to the development of empathy and prosocial behaviours. The literature has also explored the effect of music training and practice on specific cognitive skills (e.g., rhythm, auditory and linguistic processing (Neves et al., 2022), executive functions (Holochwost et al., 2017) and children and young people's social and emotional skills development (Schellenberg et al., 2015; Blasco-Magraner et al., 2021; Ilari et al., 2020). In this report, we will focus on the impact observed in relation to the latter dimension (psycho-social wellbeing and development).

5.2.2.1 Children and young people's opinions of the impact of activities

Children

Year 5 children from Liscard primary school were invited to take part in a *circle time* (Cefai et al., 2014). Circle time is an activity that facilitates the development of positive relationships between children and gives them the tools to engage with each other and to develop critical thinking and other important life skills. During circle time, children were asked to share how they felt during circle time activity, when listening to music and when participating in school based EMAE tutor led activities, and to identify what they liked about these musical activities. At the end of the *circle time* (Cefai et al., 2014), children were then invited to draw a picture of how music makes them feel.

When asked about their opinions on EMAE activities, children talked about their feelings and impressions during the activities but did not address medium-long term benefits; on the other hand, they still came up with suggestions and wishes for future activities.

Young people

Young people reflected on the impact of activities on their personal and musical skills.

They observed very positive results in their skills and development. Furthermore, they recognised that they developed skills useful to other relevant dimensions. Older students reflected on how EMAE activities helped them to prepare for the workplace and higher education effectively. Music training positively affected cognitive and social skills, life skills, organizational and self-management skills, self-expression, and self-confidence (extracts 30 and 31).

Extract 30 *“I feel like it also helps me with my schoolwork and all my other commitments because it helps me with my organisation and gives me the set times where I need to do other things. So yeah, that's really helped with my organisation.” (Young person, female).*

Extract 31 *“I think it's also helped a lot with my confidence, with me playing in front of large audiences with all the concerts and things like that. I was saying before, I get quite nervous playing on my own. So, when it's in the group, it's just helped a lot with my confidence.” (Young person, female).*

These two contributions from young people further corroborate findings from the literature that suggest music-making and practice foster the development of self-motivation and organisational skills in university students (Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011) and professional careers (Hartman et al., 2020). In respect of the long-term effects of music practice Extract 32 provides further support for the association between music practice and the development of self-confidence already highlighted in the literature (see Hallam, 2010 for a literature review).

In addition to increased self-confidence and organisational skills, students also reflected on other life skills (extracts 32, 33 and 34).

Extract 32 *“And I think my critical evaluation is better, maybe not the contents of my critical evaluation, but what I look for.” (Young person, male).*

Extract 33 *“Guess it's like maybe a better listener, because you have to, especially with this organisation, this orchestra, you have to be aware of everything that's happening. You have to notice what other people are doing.” (Young person, male).*

Extract 34 *“So it's just building all of your character traits, music, in a way that not many other...walks of life can. It really builds your resilience, your strength, your motivation, in particular your motivation.” (Young person, male).*

Interestingly, several works exploring the association between music training and critical skills are actually focused on the teacher/trainer, exploring the link between music *teaching* and *critical thinking* (see e.g., Small, 1987; Latifah et al., 2019). Focusing on the learner, research has shown that music training can facilitate the development of critical thinking skills (Hodges, 1989) and that listening to background music while being engaged in daily cognitive tasks is positively associated with critical thinking performance (Goltz & Sadakata, 2021).

Community building was a big topic of discussion and a recurring theme in students' narrations. The students reflected on how *teamwork and reciprocal collaboration with peers and tutors* had a positive impact on musical and personal development and on how there is little to no demarcation between playing together as an ensemble and being together as friends or friendly acquaintances.

This excellent teamwork effect is consistent with recent findings (Schellenberg et al., 2015) showing how group music training in third and fourth-grade children (so younger than the sample who took part in the interviews) was associated with larger increases in sympathy and prosocial behaviour, thus suggesting how group music training could facilitate the development of *prosocial skills* (Rabinowitch, 2020) (extracts 35, 36, 37 and 38).

Extract 35 *“I think I'm just learning to interact with people better and just to get on with people in ensembles better, and I think you certainly do learn teamwork and in a different way from other ways because. As I said, it's all about responding to each other.” (Young person, male).*

Extract 36 *“I'm much more able to talk to people. I wouldn't be able to do this interview for example, I don't think, had I not been in the charity. I've really come along socially as a person emotionally. I've developed, I like to think anyway.” (Young person, male).*

Extract 37 *“I enjoy the charity work so much more because I'm with my friends. There's no one there I don't want to be with, you know. I mean, we all enjoy spending time together.”* (Young person, male).

Extract 38 *“(…) about playing with others. I think it's just fun. It's teamwork. We've all achieved something together. That's the best bit.”* (Young person, female).

Training, practising, and playing in groups helped the students develop strong interpersonal connections. As discussed in par. 5.2.1.3 –*Teachers', tutors'- trainers', trustees' and parents' perception of activities*, these extracts suggest that the students may feel more comfortable engaging with others, talking to people, and playing with others because they feel safe in an environment that allowed them to push their limits at their own pace.

There is extensive literature on the relationship between music training and the development of prosocial skills in children (see. e.g., Schellenberg et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2015; Blasco-Magraner et al., 2021). The reflections from this study show that positive effects can also extend to adolescence and early adulthood.

The idea of connecting with others through music was a recurring theme in students (extracts 39 and 40).

Extract 39 *“I think you do meet other people and you meet people of like minds and musicians are fairly social in my experience. So, you get to widen your social circle.”* (Young person, male).

Extract 40 *“Playing repertoire that was playing with lots of different people and people from outside the charity, which is also an interesting experience.”* (Young person, male).

When commenting on extract 13, we anticipated the idea of *connecting with others through music*. It should be noted that this connection is also bi-directional: in other terms, in addition to university students going back to EMAE to take part in concerts, friendship relations started in EMAE have continued away from it, at universities. As a third instance of connecting with others through music, some students described meeting friends in university thanks to their shared passion for music (extract 41).

Extract 41 *“In particular, I'm thinking that most of my friends that I met at university have all been from, a lot of them, from music society. So, I really enjoyed this special aspect.”* (Young person, male).

Also related to community and friendship building, another major topic was the idea of feeling like a family. This was raised by students, but even more so by parents and tutors (extracts 42 and 43).

Extract 42 “*But I think because EMAE just feels like a family. Like we always joke they're like mom and dad.*” (Young person, female).

Extract 43 “*(...)Particularly the residentials but also how we all interact together. I think that. Particularly in the more advanced group, it's much more like a sort of musical family. I think that's the dynamic one gets.*” (Young person, male).

This idea of ‘musical family’ resonates with the experiences of people involved in Community Music (CM) in church settings (de Villiers & Rossouw, 2021) and College Concert Bands (Yates, 2016).

5.2.2.2 Teachers’, tutors-trainers’, and trustees’ opinions on the impact of activities

During the semi-structured interviews, trainers and tutors were invited to reflect on what participants learned during the musical activities, which life skills they thought participants had developed, and which benefits they observed. While reflecting on the positive impact of music on children’s technical and personal skills and on themselves as well, some tutors discussed how social activities proved to be particularly helpful and useful for children with poor prosocial skills.

This finding is particularly noteworthy in light of empirical work by Schellenberg et al. (2015) which showed that group music training in childhood is associated with increases in prosocial behaviours, but that this effect is limited to children who had poor prosocial skills before the training began.

Parents talked about the positive impact of EMAE activities both on their children and their families. This positive impact included the development of discipline and life skills as well as musical skills (extract 44).

Extract 44 “*They also come to appreciate that personal responsibility is also tied in with group responsibility: the ensembles are only as good as the engagement and positivity of all those taking part.*” (Parent, male).

Gratitude was a recurring theme amongst the parents talking about EMAE activities and the excellent impact they had on their children. Parents were grateful for the quality teaching that the charity provides to their children but also for the healthy environment it created for their children to grow and develop their skills (extract 45).

Extract 45 “*So yeah, I'm very grateful for keeping that going, you know, making him step up and be willing to try it because he was very reluctant*” (Parent, female).

Yet again, parents recognised the central role of EMAE in their children's development and recognised how the charity may help students ‘step out of their comfort zone’.

The interest that the parents showed for their *children's social and personal development* aligns with previous empirical findings suggesting that parents' motivations for supporting their child's music training are based on intrinsic (appreciation for music, life enrichment) rather than extrinsic motives (Dai & Schader, 2001).

Community building is considered a relevant dimension that everyone who took part in the research raised. Community building as a whole affected the musical practice, the development of friendships and social skills, and the involvement of entire families in the charity' activities (Steele, 2016).

Even more so than their children, parents would talk about EMAE, comparing it to a familiar environment (extracts 46 and 47).

Extract 46 *“And it's like, even though they're not my kids. You feel this warmth towards them and a family. And you know, you just feel like it's like just one big extended family.” (Parent, female)*

Extract 47 *“And I don't know if it's, you know, the Italian sense of family that they've extended to all the kids and their parents. I don't know what it is, but anyway, it works.” (Parent, female).*

As we will discuss later, this idea of being a family would sometimes encompass the negative aspects of the familial dimension in addition to the more positive elements. Some *trustees* reflected on the impact that they saw in their children (extract 48).

Extract 48 *“When I look back now, that he's sort of left. What came out of it was personal growth and flourishing. The music was good, the music was very good, but actually he blossomed, he was already blossoming quite a lot anyway.” (Trustee, male).*



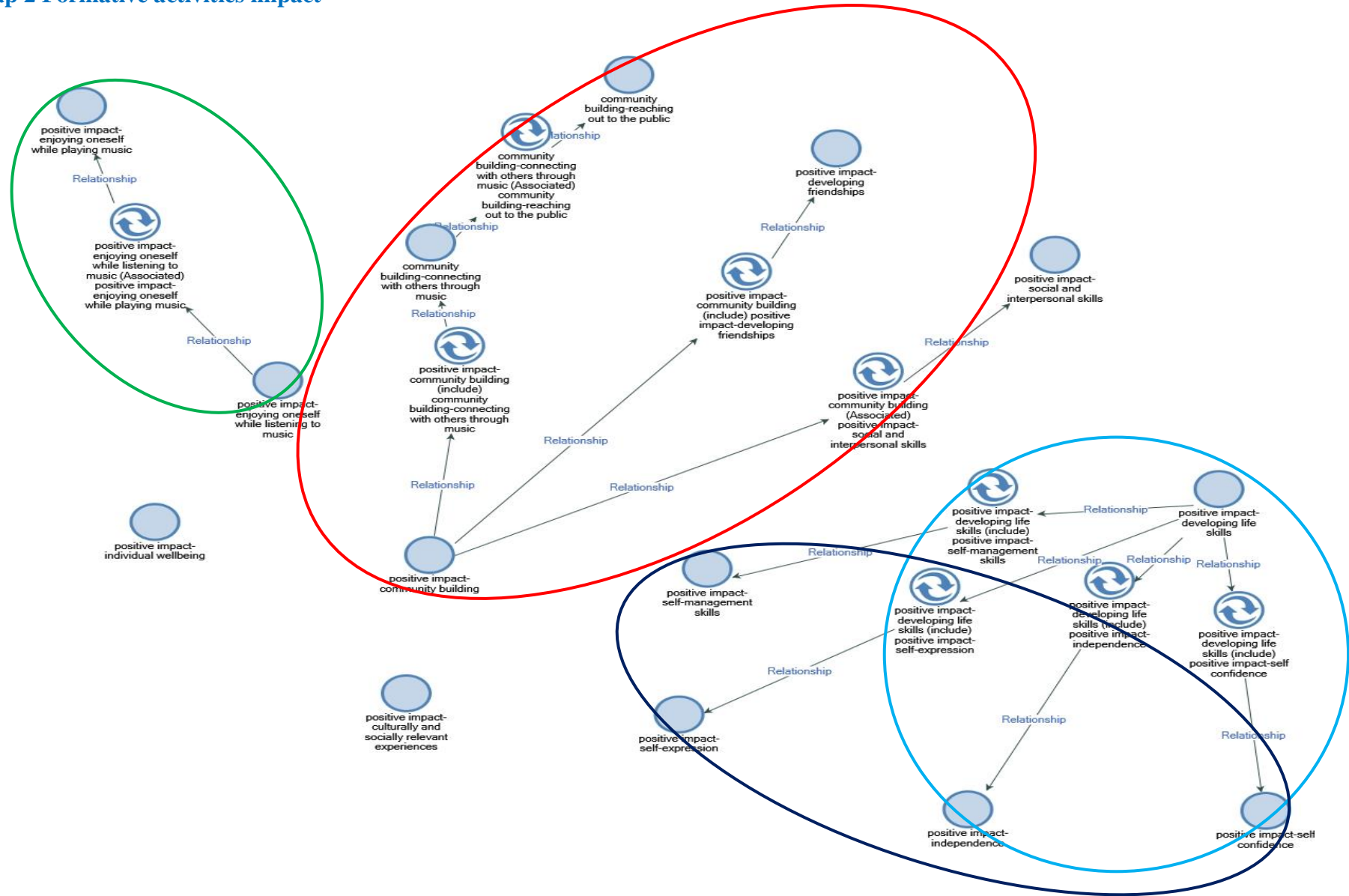
Figure 26. London - Liverpool String Academy



Figure 27. Early Music Youth Orchestra & Liverpool String

Map 2 “*Formative activities impact*” illustrates the different types of impact of EMAE activities, as described by the participants. Three major dimensions emerged and related to the *enjoyment of music* (as a player and as a listener), *community building*, and the *development of life skills*. *Community building* was a very central aspect, and it included connecting with others through music, developing friendships, and developing social and interpersonal skills. The third major dimension, *developing life skills*, included the development of self-management skills, self-confidence, independence, and self-expression. Notably, self-efficacy and autonomy underpin all these characteristics (self-confidence, independence, self-expression, and self-management skills).

Map 2 Formative activities impact



5.3 Challenges and improvements

Along with unveiling participants' self-perception and the impact of EMAE activities, the interviews, ludic activities, and focus group highlighted ongoing challenges and areas for improvement in the charity, its organisation, and activities. Students, parents, trainers, and trustees were invited to share what they would like to add, change, or implement and to reflect on possible changes/improvements to the formative experiences that could be useful to support children's and young people's learning experiences.

This section will present challenges highlighted by the participants along with improvements that were suggested.

Following the division introduced in the previous sections, the first sub-section will focus on children and young people and the second section will address teachers, tutors, trainers, trustees, and parents.

5.3.1 Children and young people

Liscard Primary School

Two main challenges were raised by the children involved in the activities; specifically, children mentioned that they would like to play more instruments (extract 1) and learn how to make music (extract 2).

Extract 1 *"I feel like we should do more instruments, so maybe keyboard, I'm (unclear) the drums myself." (primary school child, male).*

Extract 2 *": I want to see...(inaudible) a different activity every day (inaudible, unclear) so that's how like...it's like when are we going to actually start learning how to make music?" (Primary school child, male).*

These extracts suggest that children appreciate the activities they are involved in, so much so that they would like to expand on them and play a more active role in a variety of activities.

Unfortunately, the charity currently has a limited number of hours for implementing activities with children at school. In the future though, this could be considered as a potential expansion in agreement with the schools and more resources if available.

As highlighted by Boal-Palheiros and Hargreaves (2004), different modes of listening to, and engaging with music have important implications for music education and the emotional involvement of children. However, as Iușcă (2016) points out, music activities in the classroom should involve a balance between cognitive tasks and less structured music listening.

Challenges in the learning process

The learners discussed challenges in their learning process, reflecting on the struggles of learning to play an instrument and learning a new music style and technique. Indeed, baroque techniques and instruments differ from those that are modern (see Vanscheeuwijck, 1996). As a consequence, students talked about their struggles with learning a very different technique (extracts 3 and 4). However, facing “learning challenges” for young people is an opportunity to boost self-confidence and improve *problem solving* (Bussu et al., 2018). From a pedagogical perspective, this experience can be useful for their psycho-social development.

Extract 3 *“A lot of the tutors were saying if you want to study early music, you often have to stop the modern playing for a while, like maybe for a year or two and focus on just early music, because the bow technique is so different because it's a lighter bow. But I do find it a little bit difficult to go between modern and baroque.” (Young person, female).*

Extract 4 *“You have different types of ways of ending passages and sections like, for example, a lot of baroque music bulges towards the end of the playing it or in the chord it sort of goes loud and then quiet, and then you experiment. On the bow having more. And more dynamics and more like variation in dynamics rather than just having and the plain and simple bowing.” (Young person, male).*

Students described how modern and baroque playing differ, so much so that some of the suggestions they received involved focusing on one technique only for a consistent amount of time in order to master it. Another related issue is that teachers not involved in EMAE may not be familiar with baroque playing, and thus their demands/expectations for the students may differ (extract 5).

Extract 5 *“You know, EMAE has this type of technique? And my teacher would like me to play with this type of technique. So where is it the difference? And I just must get used to playing two different styles.” (Young person, male).*

As argued in the previous section, there is some evidence of a positive impact of baroque music listening on cognitive and academic skills (e.g., improved reading comprehension skills (Ahmad, 2020). Future research could focus on the challenges and opportunities of learning different music styles/techniques, maybe even drawing from ongoing research on the impact of multilingualism and/or multi-instrumentalism.

Students’ struggles with the learning process would sometimes be associated with feelings of frustration and feelings of not being up to scratch and having to catch up with the others (extracts 6 and 7). “Frustration” is common when people are learning new challenging activities. Managing “frustration” and developing “emotional self-regulation” (Brown et al., 2022) are important phases of children's and young people’s personal development.

Extract 6 “And sometimes you get frustrated. I often get frustrated if I’m [unclear] a difficult passage hard and I’m going over it and it’s not working.” (Young person, male).

Extract 7 “I really had to really work to catch up to everyone else. And that was a lot of, like, adversity, if you will. And since it’s a very steep learning curve, but I’m keeping on top of it and it’s very enjoyable to do so.” (Young person, male).

Frustration has been associated with music playing in a survey of practice behaviours among middle and high-school string musicians (Geringer et al., 2015): specifically, when asked to share practice advice, students seemed sensitive about moments of frustration but shared specific skills to limit it. Frustration has also been associated with very high demands in instrumental practice and performance (Valenzuela et al., 2018), but it has also been shown to decrease as students become more self-regulating in their music practice (McPherson & Renwick, 2001).

However, this finding comes from a study involving children between 6 and 9 years old whereas the students who took part in our interviews were aged 12 and older, and therefore in a very different phase of their cognitive and behavioural development. Nonetheless, feelings of shame and frustration also emerged in a descriptive study involving advanced violinists’ music practice, all of them pursuing an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in music education (Miksza & Brenner, 2022). “Challenges in the learning process” were also associated with feeling insecure about one’s own skills and performance (extracts 8 and 9). In this regard, perhaps the charity could integrate specific group activities for learning “how to manage negative emotions” and develop socio-emotional learning. In this regard, EMAE tutors already use constructive feedback for supporting young people’s confidence.

Extract 8 “What if I am doing everything completely wrong and they’re just not telling me because I don’t know... but I guess that’s part of being a student as well” (Young person, female).

Extract 9 “I was sort of insecure because of my technique and also because of the social side, it was obviously meeting a lot of new people I think.” (Young person, female).

In the literature the intricate relationship between self-confidence and musical performance has been extensively investigated with empirical works having focused on the subjective experience of players and their emotions, and the proposal of conceptual frameworks for understanding musical performance anxiety (Papageorgi et al., 2007). Interestingly, some students would highlight feelings of insecurity during training and rehearsal more than during concerts; concerts and similar exhibitions were usually associated with positive feelings of connectedness and satisfaction.

This could be due to students being confident in their skills and technique by the time they take part in the concerts, thanks to the quality of their training. Another explanation, proposed by Woody (2021, 1325), is that “Musicians who look to performance simply to impress people and strive to avoid mistakes are susceptible to performance anxiety [...]”.

Some of the challenges shared by the students resonate with findings from interviews conducted with musical performers with different levels of experience and practice. Such findings focused on psychological challenges, coping and beliefs, reporting social comparison and competition in relation to their practice (Pecen et al., 2018). Interestingly, in our study very few instances of competition emerged from the students' narration of their training and playing practice. On the contrary, students reflected extensively on the idea of *connecting to others through music* (see extract 10). This means that tutors are working very well in supporting young people's cohesion and reciprocal / peer support.

Extract 10 *"I think it definitely does help. Like when socializing with people because you already know that you've got all play instruments. It's kind of like you've got a common interest and it really kind of helps to... breaking the ice. I guess you can ask like what instrument do you play or something like that? And then go from there or. I mean it just helps."* (Young person, male).

Another major aspect that emerged related to similarities, differences, and overall experiences of playing in a group *versus* playing alone. It is interesting to note that preference for individual vs group playing was very subjective, with students expressing their preference for either context (extracts 11, 12 and 13). These two contexts are formative for young musicians and participants recognised the importance of both.

Extract 11 *"Because when you're playing alone or like with maybe five more people. It's not as fun as playing with like 30 or so people, you know."* (Young person, male).

Extract 12 *"I feel like when you're playing alone, you can play pieces that you like your part in more."* (Young person, male).

Extract 13 *"And as I said before, I like playing with lots of different people. And I always get quite nervous when I'm playing on my own."* (Young person, female).

Both contexts appeared to reflect specific concerns and issues with the setting and ongoing interactions in the ensemble. It is also interesting to note how individual practice appears to be a much more widespread training choice; indeed, as noted by Petersen (2018), "very little is known about how students learn to practice in a large ensemble" (p. ii). However, as discussed in the previous section, ensemble playing presents a number of positive benefits in terms of musical skills, life skills development, teamwork and community building among others (e.g., see Schellenberg et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2015). However, it can also bring specific challenges. For example, playing in an ensemble requires the musician to be more receptive to others' actions (extract 14) and gives them less freedom and choice over what to play (extract 15).

Extract 14 *"When you play with others in an ensemble unless you're the one that's taking the ensemble, I think you just have to listen more, and you have to respond and be receptive to*

what other people are telling you so. I think the way that you are all playing and what you're playing is very different in that way.” (Young person, male).

Extract 15 *“I feel like when you play alone, you just have many choices over the part you play, and it's kind of like you have control over what you're playing, and you can then, like choose more. But then when you're playing a supporting, like an accompaniment, you'll have less choice in what you play, but it will sound better because you're playing with the whole group of people who also practise their part.” (Young person, male).*

These two extracts suggest that ensemble playing introduces boundaries and rules in music practice; however, students appear to be aware of the importance of these rules and boundaries for an optimal ensemble performance (“it will sound better because you’re playing with the whole group of people”).

Linked to the importance of boundaries and rules, one of the positive outcomes of music training is an increased sense of discipline and self-management (see also Dai & Schader, 2001). However, maintaining the level of discipline needed to persevere with the training was also one of the challenges that emerged in the students’ description of their activities (extracts 16 and 17).

Extract 16 *“... The problem with me is that I'm not very disciplined with my practice all the time, so having that discipline just built into the schedule helped a lot.” (Young person, male).*

Extract 17 *“(…) I used to be quite lazy, like I needed the motivation. I needed to look around, be like gosh, my peers are doing like, really putting the time, and putting the hours and I need to also amp up the effort. So, I think it's good in that sense” (Young person, female).*

These extracts suggest that students sometimes struggle with their discipline and motivation, but, at the same time, they are fully aware of their importance. Furthermore, they are supported by their tutors.

Another challenge emerged related to tutor interaction, specifically, to understanding tutor feedback and its impact on self-confidence during practice; students reflected on the negative impact of not being able to understand, or even receiving, tutors’ feedback (extracts 18 and 19).

Extract 18 *“That's how they get the point across the quickest to each other. But I think as students sometimes we're like, we don't understand what they're talking about. So, we don't really understand what's going on. We don't know what we're supposed to do. What have we done wrong?” (Young person, female).*

Extract 19 *“Because they just speak and don't tell you anything. And then you're like. Are they just choosing to say something like [...] It adds that bit of not paranoia, I guess, cause it's just because you want to be the best you can be.” (Young person, female).*

These reflections suggest that students may sometimes find it difficult to communicate with the tutors; this, in turn, may make them insecure about their performance and skills. However, this feeling appeared to decrease with practice, training, and increased confidence (extract 20).

Extract 20 *“I think now it's not so much a problem because I'm more confident in my ability and in my place in the orchestra [...]. So, I'm sort of, and I've been there for a while. So, I sort of I'm quite confident. I know what I'm doing. But I think at first it was a bit like. What if I am doing everything completely wrong and they're just not telling me because I don't know it's, but I guess that's part of being a student as well.” (Young person, female).*

Older students involved in the peer mentoring scheme, described in 5.2.1.2 reflected on their challenges with the peer mentoring programme (extracts 21 and 22).

Extract 21 *“I think I have to think about... And how it feels to someone who doesn't know what it feels like because it feels so normal to me and them kind of like, what do you mean you twist your hand this way is it's weird to explain cause it feels so normal.” (Young person, female).*

Extract 22 *“You can help them get it, you need to try and speak to them in a way even if they are frustrating, then you need to speak to them in a way that you can still maintain a good rapport with them.” (Young person, male).*

These extracts suggest that it can be hard for the students involved to share their knowledge in the most effective way and to interact with their mentees appropriately to keep a good rapport. To help this process, the charity could ensure all peer mentors receive appropriate training about which notions/content to convey and the best way to do so.

Peer mentoring can be a central resource for EMAE with potential for real transformation: a recent literature review (Fernández-Barros et al., 2022) on *peer mentoring/tutoring* in music education revealed the potential of peer tutoring in music education, highlighting multiple benefits in terms of musical and *social skills development* and learning in both mentee and mentor, corroborating students' reflections.



Figure 28. Liverpool String Academy Launch Event 4

5.3.2 Teachers, tutors-trainers, and board trustees

Tutors reflected on the challenges present in the learning and tutoring process. As highlighted by Malvezzi (2014), the supervisory role carried out by tutors and trainers is central for learners to be able to see and appraise their own performance and skills. The challenges discussed by the tutors and trainers were related to the organisation of various training activities (extracts 23 and 24).

Extract 23 *“That the organization... With the pandemic, you didn’t really have time to organize things in time. But you always need to wait the last minute to do things. And that for a small charity like ours. Doesn’t help.” (Trainer, male).*

Extract 24 *“So of course, the fact that it is a small charity means most of the time, like the things that you need to do in order to achieve music [unclear], I don't know, a concert series. So even a day out, it means that you really have to sometimes arrange stuff that you're not really prepared to do.” (Tutor, female).*

These extracts suggest that tutors sometimes find it difficult to plan and organise activities effectively in a relatively small charity like EMAE, where people may have to clearly establish their priorities and make decisions accordingly. Trainers also felt responsible for providing *high quality teaching* and the best experience possible for the students involved in the activities, and for pushing and driving them (extracts 25 and 26).

Extract 25 *“That would be a challenge and I always want to give the best to the kids and for them to have the best experience.” (Trainer, female).*

Extract 26 *“(…) And I think musically, always trying to get the children to play at the highest level that they can.” (Trainer, female).*

Another challenging aspect shared by trainers, *trustees*, and parents was the importance of keeping music accessible, linking back to EMAE’s main goals as outlined in section 5.1.1: “[*trustees*] described how the main goals of the charity were: 1) to provide equal opportunities for all students to perform; 2) to create equal music opportunities to high standards; 3) to prevent discrimination among young people and 4) to have a positive impact on the community. Furthermore, they also discussed new strategies for improving the promotion of events and activities and expanding community networks.

Keeping music accessible provides benefits for the local community (schools, general public), by allowing a wider group of aspiring musicians to come into contact with EMAE’s activities. Such accessibility also benefits the charity as it widens its reach, which has a potentially positive impact on outreach and student recruitment. That said, equal opportunities for students should be embedded in a well-thought-out programme. As argued by Lamont et al. (2003), applying social inclusivity to music activities in school involves a widened access to world music and a broadened curriculum. However, at the same time, it could reduce the time and opportunities to teach classical musical skills that pupils may want to familiarise

themselves with should they want to pursue musical training at a higher level (e.g., conservatoire, university degrees).

Within the EMAE context, keeping music accessible means reaching out to learners from different backgrounds, working in local schools, providing free high-quality music training, and providing students with cultural and social experiences (extracts 27, 28).

Extract 27 *“I think one of the aims is exactly that to give children that [the]. Never thought about music as a possibility.” (Trainer, male).*

Extract 28 *“And in particular, in relation to the delivery of that, the emphasis over the last two years has been to get into primary schools, certainly in areas of Liverpool and possibly London in the near-term future, to provide access to children who would not have that opportunity, mainly due to the withdrawal of state funding within the state sector for anything that is not deemed to be, of course, subject (unclear).” (Trustee, male).*

Tutors and *trustees* talked extensively about inequalities in the educational system that affect music provision in schools; most of the existing literature addressing inequality in music education focuses on the American setting (see e.g., Elpus & Gris , 2019; Powell et al., 2020) with much less focus on the European or British setting, despite the issues highlighted by our participants. To make music more accessible, EMAE has worked systematically to reach out to wider society and to share awareness about its activities and goals in schools and among the general public. However, charity members and tutors are conscious that they can further increase their visibility and expand their social networks (extracts 29 and 30).

Extract 29 *“[...] because if we do just videos or advertising on the Internet, it's not that we have millions of followers or we worked international, you know, we have to build our charity in Liverpool and the kids have to show what they're able to do and get maybe other kids more excited, ‘oh I want to do that also’. So, you need to go around more. In places where we’ve never been, and do that...” (Tutor, male).*

Extract 30 *“So I think that people are starting to get to know who we are in the community and seeing what we're doing, which is great” (Tutor, female).*

Liscard Primary School

Useful observations and suggestions emerged in the interview we carried out with the one Liscard teacher we were able to engage in the research. This person provided valuable insights and an extensive description of the activities the children were involved in and their related impact. In the future, it may be useful for the charity to collect more feedback from the teachers to gather different opinions and points of view and, crucially, understand whether and how the impact of EMAE activities changes over time.

Trustees

As already mentioned, (section results summary, page 15), EMAE tutors have the key pedagogical role of facilitating and motivating learning and co-creating a positive educational environment. The best way to achieve this is by building and nurturing stable relationships with the learners and the wider EMAE community (e.g., parents).

As we have previously commented in the results summary (section n. 4) trainers are supported by the charity and very well trained, however, one challenge that the charity has experienced in the past is “tutor turnover” (extract 31). In light of this, tutor turnover may pose an obstacle to the development of a solid pedagogical bond between trainers and learners. Therefore, one of the challenges raised by the *trustees* related to being able to recruit and retain the best tutors.

Tutors are a key part of EMAE’s musical training, and their pedagogical and technical competence is central to the charity’s goals. Due to the specific baroque technique adopted by EMAE, recruiting, and retaining excellent tutors, able to teach children and young people effectively, can be challenging (extracts 31 and 32).

Extract 31 *“So I, I can say that [...] replacing or finding new tutors, it’s a challenge.” (Trustee, female).*

Extract 32 *“(...) And the difficulty is that in the Northwest, in Liverpool we don't have any movement, any early music movement. So, you're always recruiting professionals from the mainstream field.” (Trustee, male).*

Members of the board of trustees reflected on how most musicians are trained in classical technique, with baroque technique rarely being taught at the same level. As a consequence, tutors may not feel as confident providing and supporting training in a different style. We should point out, however, that the tutors involved in this research did not raise issues related to these different music styles and techniques. Another concern that did emerge while talking to the board of trustees however, related to the career perspectives of EMAE tutors/trainers (extract 33).

Extract 33 *“The two biggest challenges [...] are: Recruiting. Good, good, good tutors. And because they all trained to be performers, none of them has trained to be a teacher. And the common perception is that if you train for so many years [...] then surely being a teacher is demoting you. So, they don't understand it's a different job. That requires a different set of skills. There's nothing. So, this is a cultural barrier” (Trustee, male).*

In this regard, the charity has already provided workshops and learning materials to make sure that all tutors are able to adopt the same pedagogical framework and pedagogical practices. However future opportunities and strategies may eventually be considered to enhance staff development and minimise turnover.

Parents

Parents reflected on the importance of maintaining effective communication within the charity and shared examples of some helpful tools currently used (extract 34).

Extract 34 “And then the parents, we have like a parental support WhatsApp group. So only the parents are in that. The kids have their own WhatsApp group and then we have a big EMAE WhatsApp group. So, the parents have two and then the children have two.” (Parent, female).

Effective communication is an extremely relevant challenge, especially in conjunction with the whole idea of ‘feeling like a family’ highlighted in the previous section. In section 5.2, we described extensively how community building is one of the central dimensions highlighted by all the participants in the research. As highlighted by Bussu and Pulina (2020), teachers need to be trainers and learning facilitators, but also to facilitate community building and involve students. Indeed, music ensembles can include technique or repertoire-focused learning goals, as well as social skills, musicianship, and community building (Gilbert, 2018).

EMAE relies extensively on informal, ad-hoc communication due to the size of its organisational team. If the team grows, it may be easier for them to manage and streamline communication processes. At the same time, an informal environment and atmosphere surely facilitates community building and the development of friendships, and we hope that these elements will stay present even with a (potentially) wider team.



Figure 29. Young people & Community building

Map 3 highlights key dimensions for the challenges that emerged during the research. Students, trainers, the board of trustees, and parents discussed their challenges in relation to the learning process, tutors/tutoring, and community building.

Struggles in the learning process include issues with learning to play in a group vs alone, learning to play an instrument, providing peer mentoring, keeping motivated and dealing with tutors’ feedback.

Challenges related to the tutors and their roles included issues with the tutoring/training process and recruiting tutors. Issues that were raised as regards to community building included keeping music accessible, reaching out to the wider society, and specifically bringing music education to schools.



Figure 30. Liverpool String Academy Launch Event 2



Figure 31. Liverpool String Academy Launch Event 3



Figure 32. London - Liverpool String Academy Event



Figure 33. Peer mentoring among young people



Figure 34. Young musicians



Figure 35. String Academy



Figure 36. London String Academy



Figure 37. Early Music Youth Orchestra



Figure 38. Early Music Youth Orchestra

5.4 EMAE and best practice

The interviews and focus group highlighted several practices adopted by EMAE in its training programme that we believe make it both successful and invaluable in terms of music and life skills development. Five of these examples of *best practice* (figure 1) stood out because of their relevance and importance: *the pedagogical model and learning practices, the focus on group activities, peer mentoring practice, community building and the use of music residencies*. Despite pertaining to different domains (musical, social, and pedagogical) these five examples of best practice are clearly interconnected: the pedagogical model informs and shapes a programme largely relying on ensemble playing and including, among others, *peer mentoring activities* (Bussu et al, 2018, 5; Bussu & Contini, 2022; Bussu & Burton, 2022) and summer residencies (McLaughlin & Pitcock, 2009).

Taken together, group practices, peer mentoring and summer residencies contribute to community building with a positive impact on participants.

This section will describe each of them, reflecting on their impact in light of the participants' reflections and pedagogical literature. In some cases, these examples of best practice and their impact resonate with pre-existing empirical findings. In other cases, they suggest potential avenues for future research or case studies.

1) Pedagogical model and learning practices

EMAE's pedagogical model is highly innovative and based on solid theoretical and philosophical tenets. As extensively described in the introduction, EMAE's pedagogical model presents (Sanna, 2022) important differences that set it apart from other mainstream music training endeavours, one of them being a group-centred approach (see background section and next section *Group activities*). The model and its vision represent a possible implementation of an important theoretical proposal advising the use of collaborative learning in first-year music practice courses and presenting this as a viable alternative or complement to existing pedagogical models (Forbes, 2016).

In a more recent study, Forbes (2020) presented evidence of the value of collaborative learning in music practice, describing a series of activities that resonate with EMAE's training model: 2-hour long weekly workshops for instrumentalists, with groups working on tasks requiring negotiation and problem-solving skills, incentivising mutual learning.

Students involved in this research reflected on values and priorities similar to those shared and promoted by EMAE, such as participating and connecting, developing social relationships, having access to new learning experiences, and developing confidence, communication, and problem-solving skills. Our research highlighted various degrees of knowledge and familiarity with the pedagogical model based on the different roles. Specifically, some of the tutors and board of trustees have clear, thorough knowledge of the pedagogical model, while some others displayed a more surface-level knowledge that is highly dependent on, and mediated by, their role in the charity. The core of the pedagogical model goes beyond making music, focusing on making '*nice music together*' and '*engaging with another human being*' (extract 1).

Extract 1 *“I teach one fundamental principle. That is only through mutual love they can make nice music together. So, for me, I mean there's no such a thing as he's an idiot, but he plays very well. Now if he's an idiot, surely, he doesn't play very well because it will fail to engage with another human being.” (Trainer, male)*

This extract suggests that interpersonal relationships come first, and good music (and music playing) follows from them. Throughout this report, we have extensively reiterated the central role of social relationships and community building in the EMAE practice; this quote shows how the community dimension is at the centre of EMAE's pedagogy and philosophy.

Members of the board of trustees praised the pedagogical model and attributed at least part of its success to the founder and creator of the model (see extract 16, p.20). This extract suggests that what makes the pedagogical model effective is not just its applications and contents but the way it's delivered and by whom. In the case of EMAE, the creator of this model framed it in terms of an ideological position the implications of which clearly reach above and beyond music and technique (extract 2).

Extract 2 *“It's [a] fundamental ideological position. And so, it's with aesthetics. It really touches very deep into your conviction” (Trainer, male).*

2) Group activities

As discussed in section 5.1, group practice, rehearsals and heavy focus on ensemble playing are among the focal points of the pedagogical model. As observed by Forbes (2020), one-to-one learning models are still predominant, making the group-based approach adopted by EMAE an exception or, at the very least, a rarity. However, we should also point out the aforementioned works from Forbes (2016; 2020) proposing and presenting evidence for the effectiveness of collaborative learning practices.

Both individual and group music training have their own advantages and disadvantages. Specifically, individualised training allows for personalised attention and individual instruction, facilitating a deeper level of focus and concentration. On the other hand, group music training involves instruction in a group setting and a more social and interactive approach where students can learn from and collaborate with each other.

According to the reflections shared by students and trainers, within EMAE, personalised attention can co-exist with group practice, with a focus still on the individual (extracts 3 and 4)

Extract 3 *“Playing with others, well, it's better than playing alone in some senses. And I mean I'm not a person that feels like I must socialize all the time. I do like, I value independence.” (Young person, male).*

Extract 4 *“I think it was just a really good way for them to kind of bond as well outside of music. So normally, they will just have the practice sessions, but now they get time to reflect on it as well, and just, you know, talk about different things, and get to know each other properly...” (Tutor, female).*

These extracts show how students feel about playing in group vs playing alone and how tutors see their bond developing. Despite some of the students explicitly valuing autonomy and independence, they also see the potential in and the positive implications of playing with others. Specifically, playing with others seems to help alleviate nervousness and assist their bonding.

In addition to showing benefits for musical practice and skills development, group-based practice and training have a positive impact on students' social development and life skills and contribute to the development of friendships and a sense of community, supporting one of EMAE's main goals, *cohesion* (see section 5.1.1) and, more widely, community building.

3) Peer mentoring

As described in section 5.1, peer mentoring activities take place in EMAE in the Academy activities for secondary-school students (e.g., weekly practice and rehearsals) and during the weekly activities at Liscard Primary School. Peer mentoring activities effectively complement regular training and provide students an additional opportunity to work in groups and learn from each other (extracts 5 and 6).

Extract 5 “I think everyone learns from examples, so if you've got older, maybe more experienced people playing with you, then it's certainly useful just to see what they do and how they act.” (Young person, male).

Extract 6 “It's also nice because we're revisiting the old pieces that we started ages ago. But you can recognize yourself in them because you're thinking, I used to struggle with that, and I could not play this. And now I can. So, I understand what you're going through” (Young person, female).

Students discussed the benefits of peer mentoring, reflecting on their sense of responsibility towards their younger colleagues as they recognise the importance of their role. Their reflections resonate with findings from a thematic analysis of interviews and field notes from peer mentoring in US high school students involved in extracurricular music activities (Goodrich, 2021). Similar to EMAE peer mentors, students who took part in that research talked about how peer mentoring activities allowed them to consolidate their music skills, develop their musicianship and learn how to mentor.

Goodrich (2018, p. 418) also reflects on how “socialisation helped the interns share their knowledge and experiences with the beginners”. This is particularly interesting to point out as we have discussed extensively the opposite causal relation, namely that making music together and sharing knowledge has a positive impact on social skills and community building. In Goodrich's research, learning from the senior tutor was a major dimension of the students' reflection; this suggests that learning how to mentor and, conversely, “training the trainers” (see Meier, 2007) can be a point to expand and build on while continuing to invest time and resources into the implementation of peer mentoring for students (Goodrich, 2018).

Thanks to their role, tutors seem to have a privileged view on students' peer mentoring activities and related impact and benefits. Some of them would reflect on the opportunity they have to witness the dynamics between younger and older students developing trust and becoming more confident in their explanations (extracts 7, 8 and 9).

Extract 7 “The groups, they were always together, which was a good thing actually, because then the younger ones could learn from the older students as well in their [...] sectional groups.” (Tutor, female).

Extract 8 “(...) and I always go around and observe a bit, what they're doing, what they're saying, I was very impressed by the oldest ones, like how they really understood what we try to explain to them in the years. And so, they were doing very well.” (Tutor, male)

Extract 9 “This is something really cute also to witness because the fact that also younger students really trust and look up to older students really it's something so nice, so lovely to witness, right?” (Tutor, female).

The tutors seem to appreciate the social impact of peer mentoring in addition to its benefits in term of music development. Some of the trainers also clarified that mutual help and support is not only positively welcomed but expected and encouraged (extract 10).

Extract 10 “So yeah, I expect the 17–18-year-olds to act as mentors for the little ones. So, integration into EMAE ethos, and the orchestra discipline and standard straight away” (Tutor, male).

The focus on the integration into EMAE's ethos resonates with the aforementioned Goodrich's (2021) work, specifically with the teacher considering peer mentoring as a way of establishing a community of players.

4) Community building

Possibly as a consequence of the heavy reliance on group activities and community engagement, community building is a key best practice example in respect of EMAE's work. All the individuals who took part in the research talked extensively about the opportunities for community building and the development of friendships and social skills provided by the charity through music practice and summer residencies (extracts 11 and 12).

Extract 11 “Anything from little help when we are preparing for the concert and when we have to cook together or one of the kids is, you know, particularly not well or in a bad mood, or even when an adult is in a bad mood, you know, [everyone laughs] what I really love about our charity and our activities [is] that we are really there for each other and for all of us.” (Trustee, female).

Extract 12 “(...) And the older children were really good at kind of gathering the younger children to make their own groups and encouraging them to take part in the activity” (Tutor, female).

A tutor also reflected on how community building provides a safe space for individuals to get out of their comfort zone while still being in a safe environment (extract 13).

Extract 13 “So this is such a bonding experience for us as well because you are pushed most of the time to do something that is out of your comfort zone.” (Tutor, female).

Crucially, community building ‘affects’ not only trustees, tutors, and students but families and their local communities as well (extract 14).

Extract 15 “Parents could, especially the new ones wanting to listen to the orchestra. So, I invited them to attend the rehearsal and they brought along the grandparents or something. So, this is really, really nice. I think.” (Trainer, male).

The involvement of every party is of paramount importance for the charity to achieve its aims and goals (improving communication, providing equal opportunities to perform for the students, creating equal music opportunities to high standards, and preventing discrimination among young people).

By creating a community, EMAE facilitates the development of interpersonal relationships through music, between players and the wider public by enhancing friendships, social and interpersonal skills.

5) Summer residencies

Community building in EMAE occurs through group music practice, concerts, flash mobs, outreach activities, social media, and summer residencies. As mentioned in section 5.1, at the end of the academic year, the students are invited to take part in international residencies. Indeed, during the semi-structured interviews, the EMAE students talked extensively about their summer residencies in Scotland, Italy, Spain, and France.

These activities represent an opportunity for the students to engage in some intensive practice but also to spend time away from their family, sometimes for the first time, and to be involved in culturally and socially relevant experiences (extracts 16 and 17).

Extract 16 “How will you know? How will you know if you have never been to Paris? Like, how will you know whether you would like to live in France or not? So, I'll take you to Paris and then you can decide. That's perfect.” (Tutor, male).

Extract 17 “(...), and so that was the highlight because again, you could see how much fun they were having across all the age groups and just elevated it to, I don't know a very special experience. You know, they're never going to forget those experiences.” (Parent, female).

In extract 16, a tutor reflects on how these summer residencies represent a way for students to experience meaningful cultural and social moments that, in some cases, they could not experience otherwise. This exemplifies one of EMAE’s goals very well, namely, to keep music accessible and provide students with valuable life experiences and opportunities. Parents also report positive feedback in terms of enjoying themselves, aside from strictly musical benefits and improvement.

Indeed, extract 17 suggests that these meaningful experiences will have long-term effects (*“They’re never going to forget those experiences”*). Summer residencies could almost be considered as an ‘investment’ in the children and young people, who will take the memory of these experiences with them for the rest of their lives. As suggested by Keene and Green (2017), summer schools can have long-term implications in terms of changes in self-concept and identity.

Figure 1 Best practice



5.5 New ideas and perspectives

This section presents *future ideas and projects that have* been proposed in the interviews and focus group, involving the board of trustees, tutors/trainers, and parents.

The section is composed of 5 subsections based on the group these ideas came from. The first sub-section will present ideas that emerged during the focus group involving the trustees; the second section will present suggestions coming from parents and, to a limited extent, trustees. The third section will present ideas that emerged during the interviews with young adults, the fourth section will focus on tutors' and trainers' suggestions, and the last section will present suggestions and ideas that emerged during the interview with the teacher from Liscard Primary School.

5.5.1 Board of trustees

Extending EMAE activities to other primary schools.

During the focus group, the board of trustees suggested that EMAE could extend its musical training activities to more primary schools across Merseyside. Extending the charity's activities to a greater number of schools would help reach the wider community and give opportunities to more children, pursuing some of its main goals as outlined in section 5.1. These school-based training activities would also benefit EMAE in the medium-to-long term, as there would be more potential for a greater number of children to become involved in the Youth Orchestra (extract 1).

Extract 1 *"I mean, we want to be in more schools across Merseyside at primary level because once we've got that programme running for a sufficient period of time, there will be a cohort of children who will have the skills and the desire to continue playing, who can join through the Academy and then qualify into the Youth Orchestra. And that is the thing, the process that we've now embarked upon, and it's very exciting, but we can only commit to the school when we know we've got funding for three years in the school because there is no point. "(Trustee, male)*

In addition to Liverpool, the board of trustees talked about the opportunity of expanding in London as well, where EMAE has recently opened a second branch. They reiterated this idea of providing opportunities and making music more accessible (extract 2).

Extract 2 *"And in particular, in relation to the delivery of that. The emphasis over the last two years has been to get into primary schools, certainly in areas of Liverpool and possibly London in the near-term future, to provide access to children who would not have that opportunity, mainly due to the withdrawal of state funding within the state sector for anything that is not deemed to be, of course, subject (unclear). "(Trustee, male).*

Training students to build and expand on the peer mentoring programme in schools.

Another suggestion was to consolidate and expand the peer mentoring programme, with a view to developing connections between children in schools and the String Academy.

In the future, EMAE could consider developing a "peer mentoring training scheme" where young peer mentors will be 'trained to mentor children.

Extract 3 “Do a mentoring type thing. with [redacted] and [redacted], obviously, you can have an individual connection with that.” (Trustee, female).

Extract 4 “And one of the things I think might be really nice is to make the connection between the children in the (unclear) in the String Academy... between them and the children in the primary schools so for the children in the schools to get the opportunity to see them rehearsing, to see what rehearsal is like, just to make more time, and to have those children go to the private school so that there's that like peer mentoring.” (Trustee, female).

This would be mutually beneficial for both the children in the Academy and those in school and it could inspire potential social change through music education, similar to that which the *El Sistema* programme has accomplished through public school partnerships in the US (Simpson Steele, 2017; Bolden et al., 2021).

Tackling food poverty

During the focus group, the board of trustees also talked about concrete action to keep music accessible. Specifically, one trustee talked about food poverty and how EMAE could help schools deal with it by implementing a programme aimed at supplementing the current food provision in schools (extract 5).

Extract 5 “My daughter's a teacher, and she has commented on this to me that when kids aren't eating properly, they don't concentrate well and that attention spans are weak. You know, they get tired easily. That is part of the programme. Depending on how many classes of the children [...] a drink, a cake or something like that just to sort of, supplement that. And food poverty is a real issue. And that's something that I think we've got to raise at our next board meeting, discuss whether we ought to try and start implementing that as well as the programme, really.” (Trustee, male).

There are many studies supporting the importance of an appropriate and balanced diet in maintaining cognitive skills and sustaining the prolonged cognitive effort needed over a school day, for example.

In the absence of appropriate food intake and/or intake of food with appropriate nutritious value, children's ability to concentrate and study can be depleted; more generally, sub-optimal diet and food intake are associated with poor cognition and lower academic achievement (Hoyland et al., 2009; O'Connell & Hamilton, 2017). In more serious cases, food insecurity can also be associated with maternal and child mental illness, and poor diet quality (Althoff et al., 2016).

Promotional documentary on EMAE activities

As already mentioned in section 5.1, EMAE's future plans could involve a promotional documentary aimed at spreading the word about EMAE and its activities. The trustees who pitched this idea suggested that ‘being value-led’ could be one of the main selling points of the charity (see extract 7, p. 17).

Introducing music as a value-led product may represent a deviation from the majority of music education marketing, focusing on the idea that “music makes you smarter” (see e.g., Vitale, 2011). In the case of EMAE, the focus is on the community and on social interactions, shifting the focus away from intellectual skills.

This proposal denotes strategic thinking, and it would need to be carefully thought through, as it would require the trustees and the charity as a whole to reflect on the best way to present, ‘package’ and market their activities to make them appealing to various audiences.

It was interesting to note the choice of words the board of trustees used when talking about EMAE in terms of a marketing product. This should not be confused with the concept of *hedonic consumption* promoting the idea of *music as a product* (see Lacher, 1989).

5.5.2 Board of trustees and parents

Assessment and monitoring the efficacy of activities.

Both the board of trustees and parents talked about the importance of monitoring the efficacy of activities, and also of inviting external ‘auditors’ to evaluate the activities (extracts 6 and 7).

Extract 6 *“No, totally, sitting here today is part of our learning curve. Yes, we need an evaluation study, and if you come back and tell us we’re doing nothing to help the children get through [...]” (Trustee, male).*

Extract 7 *“I don't know anything at all about the primary school programme, I can't comment on the quality of or anything like that, but it would, you know, potentially it could be interesting to maybe bring somebody in from the outside to observe or to input into it or, you know, to help evaluate it as well.” (Parent, female).*

Extract 6 explicitly mentions the need for an evaluation study; this is particularly noteworthy as it denotes the importance of the present impact study. Moreover, this particular trustee raises another relevant point saying, “...and if you come back and tell us we’re doing nothing to help the children get through”.

This highlights the importance of quantifying the impact of the activities for tutors, parents, and external stakeholders. Having a reference point or a benchmark to compare activities helps tutors and trainers recalibrate their teaching techniques, consider what is working well and what could be improved. Parents can also benefit from having more objective measures of their child’s improvement and technical development. For the purposes of the present impact study, external stakeholders are possibly the most crucial group to consider.

In the future, EMAE may need more resources, in terms of people and funds, to implement all the changes and suggestions that emerged from the research. To provide access to these resources and invest in the EMAE project, potential funders (corporate, trusts and

other investors) will be looking for evidence of the effectiveness of the various activities, which makes impact evidence, assessment and monitoring of paramount importance.

Extract 7 raises another relevant point, namely the need for an external person to carry out this assessment to avoid conflicts of interest of any sort.

More concerts and performances

Some parents shared that they would like to see more concerts and performances, especially from an audience point of view. However, they were also aware that performances need to be organised, and this takes time and work from trainers and students (extract 8).

Extract 8 “Well, from an audience point of view, I'd always like to see more performances, but I appreciate it takes a lot of work to get to a standard that they don't want to put on a performance that they think isn't ready. So, I understand that as well, and it's, you know, almost right won't do. So, it's got to be ready (...)” (Parent, female).

Another parent framed these performances in terms of ‘giving back to the community’ (extract 9).

Extract 9 “It's something that I would encourage if they could do more, you know, to give back to the community [...].” (Parent, female).

In addition to providing students with further opportunities for practice, these performances could foster more intense collaborations and connections between EMAE and the public, with mutual benefits.

More involvement/collaboration with other organisations

Some parents suggested that more involvement and collaboration with other organisations could benefit EMAE: specifically, collaborations with organisations with a bigger, more solid structure to help EMAE get the recognition it needs to grow and get to the next stage (extracts 10 and 11).

Extract 10 “That would be interesting for [redacted] and the trustees to chat with other music organisations.” (Parent, female).

Extract 11 “I feel that it's got to be connected with the xxx infrastructure to get that recognition and that the next stage of development in the primary schools has got to be really looked at carefully, the right people delivering.” (Parent, female).

Extract 11 raises an interesting point: for development and expansion to be effective, it needs to be planned and managed carefully by the right people. This is particularly relevant in light of what was discussed in section 5.3 about professionalism and upholding EMAE's professional environment whilst maintaining its informal and friendly atmosphere.

Similarly, to that raised by the *trustees*, another suggestion shared by the children's parents was to bring EMAE to more schools (extract 12).

Extract 12 *“Don't lose that. I think that was a vital way for my girls to get into that. They probably wouldn't have come across it otherwise, and I think that that's one thing I would say. Don't lose that aspect of it because I think it's a vital route in for a lot of people that may not get the opportunity, we're trying to help people that may not get the advantage of that elsewhere.” (Parent, male).*

This quote suggests that in-school EMAE activities contribute to keeping music and music training accessible and give children opportunities for high-quality music training that they may not otherwise have.

5.5.3 Young people

More technique work

Even though Early Music String Technique lessons are already a part of the EMAE pedagogical offering for its Academy students, some learners explained that they would appreciate the opportunity to do more technical work (extract 13) and to go over the music sheets and study them beforehand (extract 14).

Extract 13 *“Technique lessons I think that would really help, especially like maybe younger children.” (Young person, female).*

Extract 14 *“Think maybe analysing some of the music. Sometimes we play, but we play it, and then we look at how it should be played. I think it might be useful to have a look at the music beforehand and really analyse it and then try to play it, maybe listen to someone else playing it first and then try to repeat. Yeah, I think that might be a useful activity.” (Young person, male).*

In particular, extract 14 seems to suggest that students might appreciate a slightly different approach to music other than ensemble playing, based on *listening* and *analysing* it before playing. Even though both these activities could be carried out either individually or in group, they still seem to represent a deviation from the ensemble-centred training promoted by EMAE pedagogical model. Nonetheless, the activities could be embedded in the ongoing training programme by presenting them as an additional opportunity for learning and community building. Extract 15 could resonate with the idea of imitative learning, defined as the situation in which “the observer acquires new behaviours through imitation” (Ganos et al., 2012, p. 1222).

Invite guest musicians and organise masterclasses to inspire the students

Some students suggested that having guest musicians could represent an inspiring experience (extract 15).

Extract 15 *“like master classes or something or like maybe they could get in specific musicians that know certain pieces. Obviously, I'm not saying that our tutors don't know, but it may. It may give them the support of actually like ‘this is a person that's come to help us for this week. Let's focus on what they have to say’. I suppose.” (Young person, male).*

As shown here and in the next suggestion, inspiration is an important topic for the students. We could hypothesise that, after reaching a certain technical skills threshold, being inspired becomes more of a priority for students than gaining technical knowledge. Alternatively, this could suggest that, while EMAE provides the students with the tools they need to develop and become proficient, its offer in terms of inspiration and aspiration could be improved. As evidenced in a project evaluating approaches to collaborative chamber music instruction (Zhukhov & Sætre, 2022), working with experienced staff in a professional setting can inspire students in their music practice.

In alignment with what we suggested at the beginning of this section, the aforementioned authors also highlighted how students at different stages of their studies benefitted from different types of help: “more technical and targeted help for less experienced students and more professional polish for students finishing their studies” (Zhukhov & Sætre, 2022, p. 214). Receiving inspiration from masterclasses and external guests could also help EMAE share the weight of providing both emotional support and inspiration to the children.

As Chin and Harrington (2007) highlighted, emotional support includes two different elements, namely emotional encouragement, and inspiration. Whilst it is likely that EMAE children and young adults may turn to their already familiar EMAE tutors for emotional encouragement, the contribution of external guest musicians could focus more on providing inspiration instead.

Attending concerts and being inspired

Moreover, to be inspired, some students suggested that attending more concerts and listening to world class musicians could be beneficial and inspire their creativity (extracts 16, 17 and 18).

Extract 16 *“I think exposure to it personally. I think something that has really helped me is actually going to see live musicians (...)” (Young person, male).*

Extract 17 *“(...) Listening to world-class musicians, I think it's the big thing to get into music because they are inspiring and they worked really hard, and there's no doubt that they are the best so.” (Young person, male).*

Extract 18 *“I think it's just very inspiring to see the best and for anything really in any field. So, I think it can be applied across music.” (Young person, male).*

Similar to what was argued in the previous point, while EMAE involves excellent musicians and trainers, its students could benefit from attending external concerts with musicians and being inspired by them. Indeed, as discussed by Folkestad (2007, p. 121), “Music listening can, according to the participants, be a source of inspiration, it can be a means for recreating songs and learning to play in a certain musical style, and finally, it can be a means to create one’s own music.”

Chamber music groups

More than one young person talked about chamber music groups, suggesting that they could be brought back (extracts 19, 20 and 21). Chamber music is a form of classical music that is composed of a small group of instruments and musicians.

Extract 19 “*And I think I think I would like to bring back the Chamber music groups.*” (Young person, male).

Extract 20 “*Maybe play... I really don't know. Some chamber music is quite nice, and then just have everyone have their inputs and things that we can all work on together.*” (Young person, female).

Extract 21 “*We did chamber music, so we did chamber groups and the students, only the students from the chamber groups. But you were sort of trained by one of the professionals and I think that I would bring that back because on the two tours we've been in Scotland last year and this year France, we haven't done them. We haven't fit that in sort of the chamber groups. And I think that was something that was really beneficial. Everyone really enjoyed.*” (Young person, female).

Chamber music groups represent a valuable training opportunity for students as they allow them to think and behave like professional musicians, work closely with their peers, and learn from them (Berg, 2008). In a three-year longitudinal study focused on the role that chamber music practice can play in the development of musical expertise, this learning modality was shown to facilitate learning by giving students space for challenges, space for deep learning and space for developing transferable skills (Burt-Perkins & Mills, 2008).

5.5.4 Tutors and trainers

Outreach and dissemination.

Some tutors suggested that future efforts could focus on advertising EMAE’s activities and increasing awareness about the project using social media for outreach (extract 22).

Extract 22 “*So you need to go around more. In places where we have never been and do that. And maybe can be a little concert or flash mob or an event organised with other charities, and we do like 10 minutes of music. I don't know. Something like that.*” (Tutor, male).

While outreach and advertising could help increase awareness about EMAE activities, they also require significant investment in terms of time and resource allocations. Due to the limited human and temporal resources currently available in EMAE (see also section 5.3, challenges), outreach activities should be strategically focused to optimise everyone's efforts.

Collaboration with other charities.

To consolidate EMAE's presence on the territory, some tutors shared that they would like to develop collaborations with other charities (extract 23).

Extract 23 “*We should start to work more on the territory, like with other charities and maybe with a little group of students who go and play at the care home, for example, or at the hospital, and in this way, you also have a different kind of impact.*” (Tutor, male).

As already mentioned, joining forces with other organisations could be an optimal strategy to build a stronger presence on the territory and grow without putting too much of a strain on the trainers and trustees.

In extract 23, the tutor mentioned different places (care homes, hospitals) where music could represent pleasant entertainment and leisurely activity for the guests. For example, a systematic review aimed at analysing the use of music to facilitate social interactions in care home residents with dementia found that studies involving various types of music interventions (music therapy sessions, personalised music listening, structured music singing or instrument playing sessions, and music therapeutic care) reported a positive impact on residents in terms of verbal and non-verbal communication and a decrease in unsociable communication (Waters et al., 2022).

More specifically, attending chamber music concerts has been shown to offer benefits to older adults in terms of increased engagement, enjoyment, and connection, learning to increase mood and energy (Clements-Cortés, 2017). It should be pointed out that these positive effects may be more circumstantial than expected: indeed, an empirical study (Costa et al., 2018) found that listening to *preferred* music seemed to alleviate pain, depression, and anxiety in older care home residents, but also showed that the care home population may not all benefit to the same degree due to individual variables (e.g., pain level).

Moreover, playing in these types of contexts and situations could also contribute to the wealth of culturally and socially relevant experiences already organised in the charity.

5.5.5 Liscard Primary School teachers

Reflecting on their pedagogical role and the opportunities currently available for pupils of Liscard Primary School, the teacher shared various suggestions that could be implemented in the ongoing activities. For example, they talked about introducing different instruments in primary school activities to give the students the experience of, and exposure to, a musical instrument which they may have never encountered before; this resonates with children's suggestions asking for more hands-on involvement with musical instruments (extract 1,2, see p. 63).

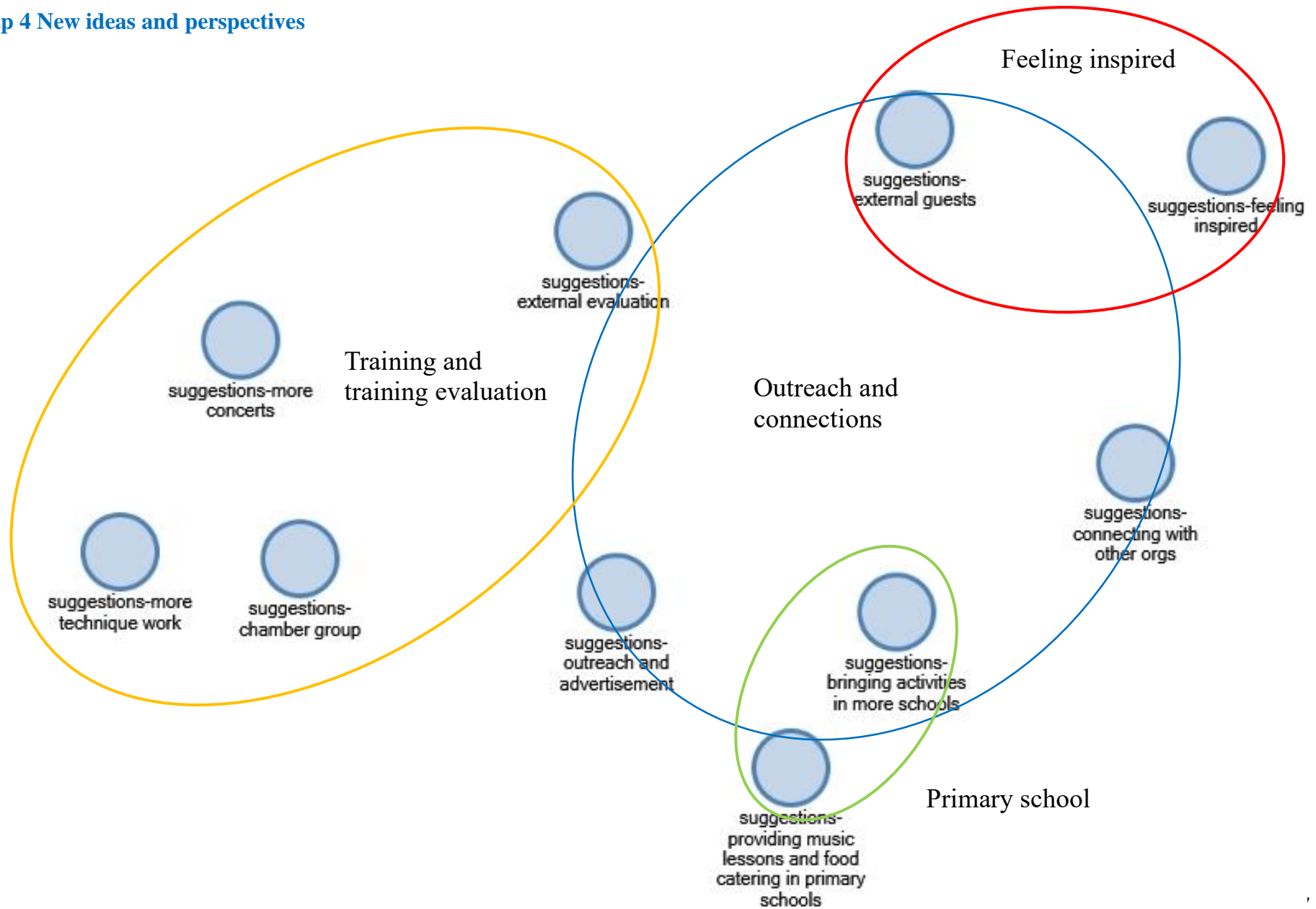
Another suggestion was organising the activities in smaller groups to make them more accessible for children who may get overstimulated or who may not like big group activities (extract 24)

Extract 24 “*And I think a really good approach potentially could be [...] if they are in a big group doing it, maybe one of the people who lead not just take a small group and they can kind of work in the corner and they can both kind of like, they can get used to it and then they can go into the wider group. Because I think sometimes, with the larger group particularly, some child will have sensory needs or, you know, any sort of, because they have ADHD or are autistic, an overload of the other children with this stimulus this wide-open space you’re taking*” (Primary school teacher, male).

An interesting suggestion involved setting up a *word wall* using the space already made available by school managers, turning the activities into a musical quiz with rewards and the opportunity for the pupils to have ownership over their learning (extract 25).

Extract 25 “*Obviously they use a lot of like these, a lot of terms, but I think sometimes it be a lot more accessible for the children to have it on that trustee and just can. You can almost turn it into like. Quiz. You know if the children were doing it like, right, everyone pause. Which word on the board means X and then the person who gets it right, they can choose over the we walk fast or slow during kind of turn in that kind of knowledge into like a. Of reward and they can kind of direct the session, so to speak, you know and kind of give them ownership over the learn and I think would work really well.*” (Primary school teacher, male).

Map 4 New ideas and perspectives



Map 4 illustrates the future plans discussed in this section. They can be grouped into two main themes that pertain to 1) training and training evaluation and 2) outreach and connections, respectively.

In regard to future plans for training activities and their evaluation, parents suggested introducing more concerts and external evaluations of the ongoing activities. Students (young people and children) shared their ideas for more technical work and bringing back regular chamber music sessions.

As for outreach and connections, tutors shared their plans for future outreach and advertisement activity and for bringing EMAE's activities to more schools, as well as connecting with other organisations and charities. Students talked about inviting external guest musicians and attending concerts to gain more inspiration. When talking about introducing activities to more schools, trustees shared their plans for providing music lessons and food in schools to supplement children's food intake and to try to tackle food poverty.

5.6 Word cloud: interviews/focus group key words

To conclude our data analysis, we adopted a ‘word cloud’. In regard to research, “a word cloud provides a graphical representation of knowledge that allows a viewer to form a quick, intuitive sense of a text. This tool is an easy way to share high-level data without information overload for the user” (Atenstaedt, 2012, p. 148).

The “word cloud” consists of a visual representation of *words frequency* (freq) (Ramsden & Bate, 2012).

According to the guidance found in literature (Depaolo & Wilkinson, 2014), we have implemented a “data cleaning process” and have combined different names and verbs (e.g., concerts/activities that have the same or similar meaning. This involves using editing features in Word to find and replace words. It is likely that a user will end up creating a few clouds before settling on one that it is meaningful, since it is sometimes difficult to know which words should be combined or excluded until one explores an initial cloud.

Figure 1 shows the key terms that appear most often in the interviews and focus group that we analysed.

The word clouds (Figures 1 and 2) emphasise several keywords relevant for the participants.

The most frequent and relevant key words are related to community, life skills/emotions, learners, learning actions, learning activities and, of course music.

This cloud highlights the importance of the community and learners and their satisfaction and development.

Keywords are classified by area:

- **Community:** community (freq: 322) and people (freq: 533),
- **Educative Contexts:** charity (freq: 472), EMAE (freq: 262) and schools (freq: 363),
- **Emotions:** feel (freq: 307), good (freq: 393) and different (freq: 393),
- **Gratitude:** thank (freq: 199),
- **Learners:** groups (freq: 397), children (freq: 413), young (freq: 355), kids (freq: 196), and students: (269).
- **Learning actions:** playing (freq: 931), working (freq: 365), making (freq: 290), taking (freq: 210),
- **Learning activities:** activities (freq: 572), concerts (freq: 198), tutorials (freq: 317), orchestra (freq: 272),
- **Life skills:** thinking (freq: 2696), know (freq: 1526), understanding, (freq:184), socializing (freq: 192), speaking (freq: 266), development (freq: 194), skills (freq: 217), experience (freq: 211),
- **Instruments:** instruments (freq: 197),
- **Music** (freq: 696),
- **Trainers:** teachers (freq: 220),
- **Time:** weeks (freq: 209) and time (freq: 389).

5.7 A case study: Joseph²

Joseph, 17 years old, violin.

Joseph first started learning piano when he was 7 years old. He picked up a violin around two years later; he has been playing the violin for about 8 years now. He joined EMAE in March 2017. He has faced several challenges related to his learning needs but despite these, he has achieved outstanding results in life.

As a member of EMAE, he takes part in the Academy and Orchestral activities. In fact, EMYO was the first orchestra he joined. In 2019 he also joined the Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Orchestra; in this regard, he talked about the positive impact of EMAE activities on his orchestral playing (extract 1).

***Extract 1** “But now I think EMAE's really helped me to learn what is the protocol in orchestra. How do we, how should we behave? And now it's much easier thanks to EMAE as I've joined the other orchestras, I mean.”*

He talked about how learning an instrument allowed him to develop commitment, resilience, discipline, and self-motivation (extract 2).

***Extract 2** “So it's. It's just building all of your character traits music in a way that not many other. erm, walks of life can. It really builds your resilience, your strength, your motivation, in particular your motivation”.*

As to his involvement in the EMAE training activities, he also shared his appreciation for the focus on the individual, in that tutors make an active effort to help everyone feel included (extract 3)

***Extract 3** “. [redacted] and [redacted] made sure that nobody you know felt alone. They always talked to everyone. They never left anyone out. I wouldn't say every tutor made the effort that they do to include everyone and make sure that everyone was happy. So, I think that's something that [redacted] and [redacted] really get in. This motive of the charity is to really nurture the individual.”*

He is also involved in training activities at Liscard Primary school, where he supports the tutors in basic musicianship and string technique activities. Joseph finds the activity fulfilling as it helped him develop resilience and communication skills (extract 3).

***Extract 4** “I suppose the biggest benefit is when they do get it and they do enjoy it and there's nothing more fulfilling than seeing a child learn, enjoy music, have fun. That they're the main benefits of going into the primary school and- it's a highlight of my week. I really do enjoy it”.*

² Pseudonym

Joseph's family is also supportive of his involvement with EMAE and share in his satisfaction and gratitude to the charity. In particular, his mother reflected on how the tutors understand different children's needs and encourage them (extract 4). His reflections, along with those from his mother, highlight his level of engagement and satisfaction with the charity.

***Extract 5** "They have more understanding of [redacted] than, say, his school does, and socially they've brought they understand different children's needs. But they also understand how to, in my opinion, it's only my opinion, but how to strengthen them and make them. You know more social and. You know more. I can't think of the words they just seem to understand how to get people involved and how to encourage in my opinion, but also understand when. Maybe with [redacted], he just needs a bit of alone time and a bit of quiet time."*

Joseph's journey represents an excellent example of the positive impact of EMAE's learning programme and activities on the community. EMAE has facilitated practical pedagogical experiences able to enhance learners' music and interpersonal skills and empowerment.

"Education is the passport to the future,
for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."

Malcolm X

6. Conclusions

Conducting qualitative research, the research team has collected personal perceptions and opinions on the formative activities delivered by *Early Music as Education* (EMAE). Qualitative data collection included semi-structured online interviews, an in-person focus group, and three ludic ‘circle time’ activities for children. The research participation was voluntary and anonymous.

A *thematic analysis* was carried out to explore the participants' opinions regarding their perceptions and to elicit suggestions for supporting students more effectively (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Thematic analysis is based on an approach to describing, understanding, or interpreting participants' experiences and facilitates reflection on the various, emerging conceptual issues.

The research highlighted that the *main goals of the charity* include: 1) to provide equal opportunities for all students to perform; 2) to create equal music opportunities to high standards; 3) to prevent discrimination among young people and 4) to have a positive impact on the community. Furthermore, it also discussed new strategies for improving the promotion of events and activities and expanding community networks.

In regard to its *aims and main results*, a key characteristic of EMAE's activities is a major focus on individual development in pursuit of the interpersonal, *group- and local community-level goals*. Keeping music accessible provides benefits for the local community (e.g., schools), by allowing a wider group of aspiring musicians to come into contact with EMAE's activities. It also benefits the charity as it widens its reach and potential positive impact on outreach and student recruitment. That said, equal opportunities for students should be embedded in a well-thought-out programme. As argued by Lamont et al. (2003), applying social inclusivity to music activities in school involves a widened access to world music and a broadened curriculum. Consequently, this approach could reduce the time and opportunities to teach the classical musical skills that pupils may want to familiarise themselves with, should they want to pursue musical training at a higher level (e.g., conservatoire, university degrees).

The primary way in which EMAE's goals and objectives are put into practice is through its innovative *pedagogical model* that diverges from the traditional graded system, widely used in music training in UK settings. From the point of view of musical practice, a key feature of the model is its heavy focus on *ensemble playing* rather than individual lessons. Crucially, this learning activity contributes to the learners' socio-cognitive as well as musical development; indeed, group music-training has been shown to facilitate the development of prosocial skills (Schellenberg et al., 2015).

The results highlighted the *participants' satisfaction* (children, young people, tutors, parents, teachers, and charity board). Children and young people feel they have been developing musical and socio-relational skills through the EMAE activities and projects. Young people and children highlighted the importance of group activities to promote community building.

Children and young people feel connected “*with others through music*”, including the wider community and public, and described how they were able to create positive experiences through their music. They feel confident and *excited about their progress*, despite the daily life challenges of learning music.

Young people, parents, teachers, tutors/trainers, and trustees described with enthusiasm a wide variety of pedagogical activities, including concerts, early music string technique, weekly rehearsals, orchestra, musicianship, residential activities, and school group activities.

EMAE's activities take place in primary schools, churches, and other various locations around Europe during their summer residencies. The model is, in fact, characterised by its extreme flexibility and adaptability in terms of settings. Adult research participants (trainers, trustees, parents, and schoolteachers) are aware of the benefits to children and young people's musical and skills development. The impact of concerts and outreach events is overwhelmingly positive in the children and families' experience.

Participants also discussed some *challenges in* the learning process, including issues with learning to play in a group *vs* alone, learning to play an instrument, providing peer mentoring, and keeping motivated. Challenges related to the tutors and their roles included issues with the tutoring/training process, recruitment of tutors, and maintaining high levels of professionalism in the charity, keeping music accessible, reaching out to the wider society/local community, and specifically bringing music education to schools.

Several examples of *best practice* were emphasised during the data collection.

EMAE's pedagogical model and "*group music training*" are fundamental aspects of best practice that involve instruction in a group setting and a more social and interactive approach where students can learn from and collaborate with each other. Although some students explicitly value autonomy and independence, they also see the potential and positive implications of playing with others. Specifically, playing with others seems to help with feeling nervous and bonding with others.

Group-based practice and training both have a positive impact on students' social development and life skills and contribute to the development of friendships and a sense of community, supporting one of EMAE's main goals. Another relevant aspect of best practice is the "*peer mentoring*" activity among participants, which allows young musicians to consolidate their musical skills, develop their musicianship, learn how to mentor, and consolidate relationships. The mentees appreciated peer mentoring facilitation through a variety of activities that the peer mentors planned for them in order to include them in a student community.

"*Community building*" is one of the key EMAE best practice examples that emerged from the qualitative data. All the individuals who took part in the research talked extensively about the opportunities for community building and the development of friendships and social skills provided by the charity through music practice but also the summer residencies. Parents and families are actively involved to a various extent in hands-on activities aimed at advertising and supporting EMAE's activities. They feel part of a "community" – a "musical family". "Community building" is a relevant topic of discussion and a recurring theme in participants' narrations. Effective interactions among teachers, students and parents significantly impact on music learning and teaching (Ilari, 2018).

The EMAE musicians talked extensively about their *summer residencies* in Scotland, Italy, Spain, and France. These activities represent an opportunity for the students to practise intensively but also to spend time away from their family, sometimes for the first time, and to be involved in culturally and socially relevant experiences.

Some *new ideas and perspectives* also emerged from the interviews and focus group such as extending EMAE's activities to other primary schools. Furthermore, the board is implementing concrete actions to keep music education accessible. EMAE could help schools deal with "food poverty" in the local area by implementing a programme aimed at

supplementing the current food provision in schools. Another interesting idea that emerged was that of making a documentary aimed at spreading the word about EMAE and its activities. Both trustees and parents talked about the importance of monitoring the efficacy of the activities and also of inviting external ‘auditors’ to evaluate the activities.

Some parents shared that they would appreciate more concerts and performances, especially from an audience point of view. However, they were also aware that performances need to be organised, and that this takes time and work from trainers and students.

The participants highlighted some potential *improvements*. Even though Early Music String Technique sessions are already a part of EMAE’s pedagogical offer to its Academy students, some learners explained that they would appreciate the opportunity to do more technical work and go over the scores and study them beforehand. Other young people suggested that to attend more concerts and listen to world-class musicians would be beneficial and would inspire their creativity. Furthermore, they had appreciated the chamber music groups, and some of them suggested that they could be brought back. Some participants suggested that future efforts could focus on advertising EMAE’s activities and increasing awareness about the project using social media for outreach.

From a school perspective, recommendations for the future included organising the musical activities in smaller groups to make them more accessible to children who may get overstimulated or not like big group activities. Another recommendation involved setting up a *word wall* using the space already made available by school managers, turning the activities into a musical quiz with rewards and the opportunity for the pupils to have ownership over their learning.

This research provides an interesting case for the outstanding benefits of children and young people’s active engagement with music throughout their lifespan.

EMAE’s pedagogical model and musical learning activities have helped participants to improve their music and life skills and aspirations and to consolidate meaningful relationships with other peers.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Exploring the Impact of Music on Liverpool's children, young people and families' psycho-social wellbeing and skills development

Interview young people (≥ 12 years)

Aims: To explore participants' perception of musical activities' impact on young people and children' psycho- physical and social wellbeing. To collect personal perceptions on the formative activities delivered by EMAE (tutorials, classes, seminars, music scores, copies of historical instruments, week-long residency, and a whole range of learning experiences at no cost).

Introduction

- 1) Researcher: Introduce yourself and explain the research

Opening questions

- 1) Could do you introduce yourself?
- 2) When did you start to learn music?
- 3) How long have you attended/have been attending the activities delivered by EMAE
- 4) What do you like about playing an instrument? Some benefits?
- 5) Did you face any challenges/problems in learning an instrument?
- 6) How do you feel when you are playing an instrument?
- 7) What activities do you usually do here? (e.g tutorials, classes, seminars, music scores, copies of historical instruments, week-long residency, other learning experiences)?
- 8) What do you like about your experience playing with others?
- 9) Could you explain the difference between playing with other others and alone?
- 10) What do you think you have learned /are learning during these activities promoted by EMAE?
- 11) What activity do you like more linked to music?
- 12) What do you think about your tutors/trainers?
- 13) What do you think about your peers here? Did you make new friends here? Do you meet them outside the music activities?
- 14) Do you take part in peer mentoring activities (teaching and supporting children younger than you here with younger children)?
- 15) What would you say are the benefits of helping other children?

Suggestions/ best practices

- 16) Suppose that next year you have the opportunity to plan a new activity for you and your peers related to learning music, what would you like to do? Why?
- 17) What do you think would be useful to support children and young people on learning an instrument?
Any suggestions?

Closure

- 18) Do you have any final suggestions and comments?
- 19) Have we missed anything important on this interview?

Thank you for your time and collaboration, your suggestions are very important, valuable, and interesting

Appendix 2

Exploring the Impact of Music on Liverpool's children, young people and families' psycho-social wellbeing and skills development

Interview trainers/tutors

Aim: To explore participants' perception of musical activities impact on young people and children psycho- physical and social wellbeing

- **Introduction**
- **Reciprocal presentation** (Moderators and participants)

1. Could you explain your role and duties as trainers/tutors?
2. How do you feel about your role as trainers/tutors?
3. Could you describe the formative activities delivered by EMAE (e.g tutorials, classes, seminars, music scores, copies of historical instruments, week-long residency,) you are involved in?
4. What do you like best about these pedagogical experiences?
5. What reflections would you make after this experience? (Could you share reflections, examples, choices etc)
6. What do you think participants have learned /are learning did during these experience?
7. What did you learn about yourself in role as trainer /tutor?
8. Which life skills (e.g music skills, cognitive, emotional and interpersonal skills-community building) do you think participants have developed?
9. What problems/challenges did you have to overcome as a trainer/tutor?
10. Which benefits did you observe for children and young people?
11. Which benefits did you observe for children and young people's families?
12. Which benefits did you observe for the community?
13. Which benefits did you observe for trainers/tutors?
14. How does your peer mentoring scheme work? In regard to the peer mentoring among young people and children, what benefits did you observe?

Ending Questions

15. Do you have final suggestions or comments?
16. Have we missed anything important on this discussion?

Thank you for your time and collaboration, your suggestions are very important and interesting

Appendix 3

Exploring the Impact of Music on Liverpool's children, young people and families' psycho-social wellbeing and skills development

Focus group board of trustees

Aim: To explore participants' perception of musical activities' impact on young people and children' psycho- physical and social wellbeing.

Introduction

Researcher: Introduce yourself and explain the research

Opening questions

1. Could you introduce yourself?
2. What is your role in the board of trustees?

Introductory Questions

3. What are EMAE's aims, mission and expectations?
4. What are the most important benefits of learning to playing an instrument? What are the most important benefits of learning to playing an instrument in group?
5. Could you describe to me the most important activities that you offer for children, young people, families and community? (e.g tutorials, classes, seminars, music scores, copies of historical instruments, week-long residency, and a whole range of learning experiences at no cost)?

Transition Questions

6. How do you evaluate the formative activities delivered by EMAE?
7. What do you think participants (children and young people) have learned /are learning during these experiences/activities?

Key Questions

8. Which life skills (e.g music skills, cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal skills-community building) do you think participants have developed?
9. What problems/challenges are you facing?
10. Which benefits did you observe for children and young people?
11. Which benefits did you observe for children and young people's families?
12. Which benefits do you anticipate for the local community in general?
13. What are your future projects/perspectives?

Ending Questions

14. Suppose that next year you have the opportunity to finance a new learning experiences for children and young people on learning and skills development, what do you think would be useful to plan?
15. What factors/aspects do you consider important to evaluate in regard to the formative experiences and music for children and young people?

Closure

16. Do you have final suggestion and comments?
17. Have we missed anything important in this discussion?

Final reformulations of the most important aspect/Thanks for participation

Appendix 4

Exploring the Impact of Music on Liverpool's children, young people and families' psycho-social wellbeing and skills development

Interview for teachers

Aim: To explore participants' perception of musical activities' impact on young people and children' psycho- physical and social wellbeing To collect personal perceptions on the formative activities delivered by EMAE (tutorials, classes, seminars, music scores, copies of historical instruments, week-long residency, and a whole range of learning experiences at no cost).

Introduction

1. Researcher: Introduce yourself and explain the research

Opening questions

2. Could you introduce yourself?
3. What do you know about EMAE's pedagogical music activities?
4. How do you evaluate the formative activities delivered by EMAE (e.g tutorials, classes, seminars, music scores, copies of historical instruments, week-long residency, and a whole range of learning experiences at no cost)?
5. What do you think participants (children and young people) have learned /are learning did during these experiences?
6. Which life skills (e.g music skills, cognitive, emotional and interpersonal skills-community building) do you think participants have developed?
7. What problems/challenges you had to overcome as a teacher in regard this collaboration?
8. Which benefits did you observe for children and young people?
9. Which benefits did you observe for children and young people's families?
10. Which benefits do you anticipate for local the community?
11. What are your reflections after this formative experience? (Could you share reflections, examples, choices etc)
12. As a teacher, what are the benefits that you observed from this collaboration between your family and the Emae formative activities?
13. Could you rate your satisfaction?

Suggestions/ best practices

14. Suppose that next year you have the opportunity to design and organize a new pedagogical experience for children and young people on learning music and skills development, what do you think would be useful to introduce/provide to improve support children and young people's learning experience?
15. What factors do you consider important to evaluate in regard the formative experiences and music for children and young people?

Closure

16. Do you have any final suggestions and comments?
17. Did we miss anything important in this discussion?

Thank you for your time and collaboration, your suggestions are very important and interesting.

Appendix 5

Exploring the Impact of Music on Liverpool's children, young people and families' psycho-social wellbeing and skills development

Interview for parents

Aims: To explore participants' perception of musical activities' impact on young people and children' psycho- physical and social wellbeing

Introduction

Researcher: Introduce yourself and explain the research

Opening questions

1. Could you introduce yourself?
2. What do you know about EMAE pedagogical music activities?
3. How do you evaluate the formative activities delivered by EMAE (e.g tutorials, classes, seminars, music scores, copies of historical instruments, week-long residency, and a whole range of learning experiences at no cost)?
4. What do you think participants (children and young people) have learned /are learning during these experiences?
5. Which life skills (e.g music skills, cognitive, emotional and interpersonal skills-community building) do you think participants have developed?
6. Which benefits did you observe for children and young people?
7. Which benefits did you observe for children and young people's families?
8. Which benefits do you anticipate for the local community?
9. What are your reflections after this experience? (Could you share reflections, examples, choices etc)
10. As a parent how did you benefit from this collaboration between your family and the EMAE formative activities?
11. Could you rate your satisfaction?

Suggestions/ best practices

12. Suppose that next year you have the opportunity to design and organize a new pedagogical experience for children and young people on learning music and skills development, what do you think would be useful to introduce/provide to improve support children and young people's learning experience?
13. What factors do you consider important to evaluate in regard to the formative experiences and music for children and young people?

Closure

- 20) Do you have any final suggestions and comments?
- 21) Did we miss anything important in this interview?

Thank you for your time and collaboration

Appendix Quality criteria guidelines

Quality criteria guidelines.

1. *Credibility*: member validation or validating findings with the participants to assess if they can relate to the researcher's construct of the phenomenon.
2. *Transferability*: the ability of the results to be transferred to situations with similar parameters, populations and characteristics, and require the audience to use data to assess the relevance of the findings to other situations.
3. *Dependability*: criteria of external validity that can be applied also through a careful description of the research context and of the research design.
4. *Authenticity*: participants can develop greater understanding of the phenomenon and can compare different perspectives.
5. *Confirmability*: or internal reliability if there is an agreement between the researchers who coded and interpreted the information; external reliability refers to the replicability of the study.

