



# **DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION: AN INVITATION FOR ACTION**

*By the members of the Diversity, Inclusion & Gender Equality Working Group  
of the AEC - Empowering Artists as Makers in Society project*



Association Européenne des  
Conservatoires, Académies de  
Musique et Musikhochschulen



Co-funded by  
the European Union

**1. INVITATION**

**2. DIVERSITY, EQUITY  
AND INCLUSION LANDSCAPE**

# **DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION: AN INVITATION FOR ACTION**

*By the members of the Diversity, Inclusion & Gender Equality Working Group  
of the AEC - Empowering Artists as Makers in Society project*

**3. REFLECTIONS FROM  
CHANGE MAKERS**

**4. DEALING WITH  
RESISTANCE**

**5. RESOURCES FOR INSPIRATION:  
THE SHORTLIST**

**BONUS: AEC RESOURCES**



Association Européenne des  
Conservatoires, Académies de  
Musique et Musikhochschulen



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Music Education: An Invitation for Action**

*By the members of the Diversity, Inclusion & Gender Equality Working Group of the AEC - Empowering Artists as Makers in Society project*

<b>1. Invitation</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Diversity, equity and inclusion landscape</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.1 DEI work's connection to the artistic vision of the institution .....	7
2.2 A historical perspective on DEI in the US .....	9
2.3 A perspective on DEI from Southeast Asia .....	11
<b>3. Reflections from change makers</b> .....	<b>14</b>
3.1 Berklee College of Music - Valencia Campus .....	15
3.2 Royal Conservatoire Scotland .....	21
3.3 Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki .....	27
3.4 Royal Conservatoire Antwerp .....	31
3.5 Universidad Central del Ecuador .....	35
3.6 Conservatorio Statale di Musica Arcangelo Corelli .....	38
<b>4. Dealing with resistance</b> .....	<b>44</b>
4.1 Resistance in HME: the outset .....	44
4.2 Resistance and institutional change: what we know already .....	48
4.3 A proactive approach to resistance in HME: 3, 2, 1... Action! .....	55
<b>5. Resources for inspiration: the shortlist</b> .....	<b>60</b>





## 1. INVITATION

With this “invitation for action”, the [Diversity, Inclusion & Gender Equality \(DIGE\) Working Group](#) of the [AEC - Empowering Artists as Makers in Society](#) project (hereafter, ARTEMIS) welcomes all the AEC member institutions to explore, discuss and implement practices fostering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in Higher Music Education (HME). We invite our colleagues to collectively dream up possible futures for HME through DEI work, which responds to the need to accommodate the plurality of backgrounds, artistic paradigms, access capabilities, identities and aspirations amongst current as well as future students and staff. Through this publication we wish to encourage the AEC member institutions to grasp this simultaneously evident and complex task and to explore what diversity, equity and inclusion could mean if musicians are seen as “makers *in, for and of society*” (Gaunt et al. 2021). For us as a Working Group, this proactive view has been central to our work from the beginning, as we asked ourselves whether HME institutions find themselves predominantly adapting (or not) to inevitable local and global changes and pressures, and whether the HME institutions could see themselves as part of a network of change makers in society. Focusing on the latter, we see DEI work as being directly connected to the core artistic practices of the institutions. As reflections from many of our colleagues in various AEC member institutions illustrate, the commitment to DEI work nurtures artistic imagination, widens pedagogical approaches, and expands the scope of professional practice.

At the beginning of the ARTEMIS project, the DIGE Working Group was given the task of producing guidelines in relation to DEI. This task sparked lively discussions amongst the group as we asked ourselves how such recommendations could be crafted, given that AEC member institutions exist in such a variety of geographical locations and different cultural environments. Despite the global networks and the volume of interaction, each institution is dealing with local and global changes, trends and challenges at their own pace and in their own ways related to the particular context of the



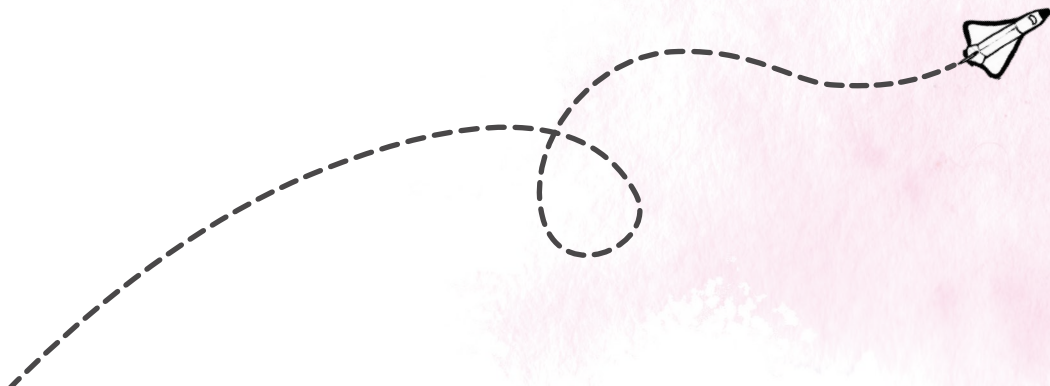
institution. This means that what is considered pertinent in the institutions in terms of DEI is varied, with issues ranging from policies dealing with the (legally) protected characteristics of students to questioning the formation of canon repertoire. However, regardless of whether the discussions focus on musical traditions and heritage, definitions of high standards, diversities of human characteristics, qualities and orientations, curriculum development, code of conduct, or the purpose of musicianship in the changing society and the natural environment, the DEI topics appear to raise a shared experience of *resistance* amongst the institutions. As a group, we have found the idea of resistance to be a rich and useful theme to embrace and employ in processes of change. Resistance has therefore thematically informed our work from the beginning and is a thread that continues throughout this publication.

Implementing DEI within Higher Music Education involves both everyday choices and interactions, as well as wider, futures-oriented strategic planning. Both of those dimensions are present in this publication, which includes practical suggestions combined with encouragement and support for ongoing self-reflection and long-term visions. While external experts may be needed at times to support DEI work within institutions, sustainable changes come from internal commitment. As the [Gender Equality and Non-discrimination Mainstreaming Task Force](#) members emphasise, DEI work is something that the institutions “need to do themselves”, which requires time and resources from the institution. Furthermore, there may already be individuals within the institution whose perspective or expertise could be more carefully listened to and better harnessed in DEI work. As a Working Group, we acknowledge that our areas of expertise are informed by our own lived experiences. Including our collaboration, DEI work always struggles to reach the extent of perspectives it seeks to address. It is worth noting that the focus in this publication is on the aims and experiences of the teaching and research staff and the administration of the institutions. During the next steps, we very much wish to extend the scope of our work to include the perspectives of students and the different communities the institutions engage with, or are hoping to engage with.



This publication results from our first year of collaboration as the DIGE Working Group and we build on the work developed by the [Diversity, Identity, Inclusiveness Working Group](#) of the [AEC - Strengthening Music in Society](#) project (AEC-SMS, 2017-2021). Drawing inspiration from the previous Working Group's publication [Artistic Plurality and Inclusive Institutional Culture in HME](#) we continue to portray practices dealing with DEI while asking some fundamental questions such as *who* the Higher Music Education students and staff are, *what* values underlie the artistic content and forms of expression, and *how* and *where* our students learn in today's world, and in the future. In other words, we are interested in "how artistic motivations may interact with societal awareness and social engagement" (Gaunt et al., 2021). Interconnected to this is paying attention to the nature and quality of care within the institutions and the institutions' capability to recognise and transform power relations present in teaching, learning, and all artistic practices (see [PRiHME - Stakeholder Assembly on Power Relations in Higher Music Education, 2022-2023](#)).

The publication is divided into five sections, including the landscape of DEI in HME institutions, personal experiences and reflections by colleagues from different AEC member institutions and digital resources to support the ongoing DEI work. There is also a section dedicated to resistance in order to unpack this overarching theme within the context of HME.





## 2. DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION LANDSCAPE

### 2.1 DEI WORK'S CONNECTION TO THE ARTISTIC VISION OF THE INSTITUTION

The aim of DEI work in Higher Music Education could be encapsulated like this: to welcome students and staff from various backgrounds and ensure support that allows them to perform to the fullest of their abilities. While the name of the Working Group (DIGE) includes the word “equality”, we have chosen to use the established DEI framework including the term “equity”. This implies that we do not all start from the same place and therefore we must make adjustments to imbalances (some institutions refer to EDI, while others have extended their strategy to include “belonging” (DEIB), for example). As stated above, within the context of Higher Music Education, DEI simultaneously deals with the artistic purpose of the institution and the required support systems for all. Our experience as a Working Group is that successful and forward-looking DEI work stems from recognising its connection with the artistic vision(s) of the institution. In this sense, DEI reaches beyond the responses to individual needs, although this is an integral part of the work. As one of our AEC colleagues has articulated: “It’s not about us inviting the students to the institution and then staying the same. Students come in and change us. We make the effort to help students disclose what they need, but belonging is more than what the legal term ‘reasonable adjustment’ implies”. Navigating the tensions arising from change is discussed in more depth in the section about resistance.

In our Working Group collaboration we have constantly encountered the inherent problem with defining diversity: if we narrow the focus to particular backgrounds, identities and characteristics without discussing the overall purpose of HME, we will end up being reactive and tokenistic. At the same time, we have needed to identify and name “diverse diversities” to be able to understand what kind of DEI landscape we as a field are coming from, where we are now, and how we may shape the future.





Types of diversities - The result of a mentimeter exercise during a DIGE Working Group workshop in 2022 centred around the question "What types of diversities do you notice at your HME institution?"

DEI work involves investigating the values, choices and often contested concepts which illustrates that HME institutions cannot claim to be neutral players in societies despite the institutions' main focus on the arts and artistic expression. Discussions on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ability and disability, neurodivergence, socio-economic backgrounds, and age, for example, are rooted in specific social-historical circumstances, which has then led to different policy expectations locally. Similarly, the meanings of "tradition", "high quality", "creativity", "entrepreneurship", "activism" and "social engagement" in the field of HME are varied, often even within one institution. In our Working Group





we have members from several European as well as North American and Asian institutions. Navigating the various viewpoints and emphases has revealed some of our own blindspots and helped us see how our own institutions play a part in the global web of HME institutions. In the workshops with our AEC colleagues, we have found the multilayered discussions very rewarding. These discussions have evoked new perspectives, knowledge and inspiration as well as discomfort, which is characteristic of DEI work.

Below are two perspectives on DEI landscape provided by the DIGE Working Group members representing AEC's Associate members outside Europe.

## 2.2 A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON DEI IN THE US

By Dr. Ronald C. McCurdy, USC Thornton School of Music, Los Angeles

We now live in a multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-racial world. Organizations recognize that it is necessary to engage in training to facilitate diversity, equity, and inclusion. The primary focus is to encourage self-awareness, cultural competency, and empathy in employees. Another objective is to address unconscious biases while creating a safe space and a welcoming environment for those from marginalized communities.

At the AEC Annual Congress and General Assembly in Lyon in November 2022, we provided analogies that defined Diversity as being invited to the party, and Inclusion as being asked to dance. I would like to add that inclusion is having diverse voices seated at the table where decisions are being made. From a global perspective, the world has demanded that institutions address this kind of change. Historically, institutions, businesses, and other organizations have a history of silencing or oppressing those with less social, political, or economic power.



It is important to note that Diversity training is nothing new and has been a global phenomenon as we have evolved as a global community. For example, Asia has found it useful in increasing productivity in multinational companies, while addressing the challenges of achieving harmony between different religious communities. South Africa employed diversity education as a means to dismantle an Apartheid system. In the United States, there is a 400-year history of addressing a plethora of racial and ethnic communities that have been systematically marginalized.

Diversity education in America was largely inspired as a reaction to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The message from the freedom fighters was always to implore America to abide by the words of its own constitution and Declaration of Independence. “We hold these truths that All Men (and women) are created equal.” The Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, and Housing Rights Act also uplifted a multitude of other marginalized ethnic, racial, and gender communities.

In an article from Strategic Diversity & Inclusion Management Magazine three reactions emerged from a study depicting the reactions from those who were exposed to Diversity Educational Training. One group of whites became more insightful regarding the barriers to race relations after being alerted to the systemic racism that exists. Another group became more averse to racial harmony and reacted negatively when the facilitator labeled them as racists. A third group was labeled as being “fanatics” given their advocacy against any form of addressing racial injustice.

Social change was used as a tool to create a more stable society and was a rationale for diversity education which addressed training to increase sensitivity and awareness of racial and ethnic differences. In the wake of George Floyd’s murder, that sensitivity has expanded to include sexual orientation, religious differences, and a host of other “isms” that plague our global community.



In conclusion, it is safe to state that addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion is a very complex matter. Given the world history of white supremacy, it is difficult for the dominant culture to relinquish a kind of privilege many feel is a birthright. From the outset, the goal has been to build allies with those who agree that everyone should have the opportunity to realize their dreams and goals without fear of discrimination or being confronted with social disparities.

### 2.3 A PERSPECTIVE ON DEI FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA

By Lin Xiangning, Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Singapore

The introduction of Western classical music practices and cultures is inextricable from the history of colonialism that many Asian, especially Southeast Asian, countries share. In recent years, the push to decolonisation –on both an individual and collective level– has radiated perhaps more strongly than ever before across various sectors in society, including music and education. This presents a challenging, and no less interesting, conundrum to HME institutions in the region. How could decolonisation look like within an institution that has Western classical practices foundational to its establishment? How can we find innovative ways to move forward, while acknowledging our pasts? What are some ways that our curriculum can reflect this shift; are we looking at curricular tweaking or a systematic overhaul?

At its core, the decolonialism discourse that Asian and Southeast Asia institutions are responding to reflects an urgent call towards deeper inclusivity of diversities that the region is inherently rich in. Most pertinently, it is about aspiring towards plurality, and not exclusion or elimination. Perhaps it is time that practitioners of the region can, through their time in HME institutions, find conviction and confidence in acknowledging their regional and cultural identities in tandem with their Western artistic practices.



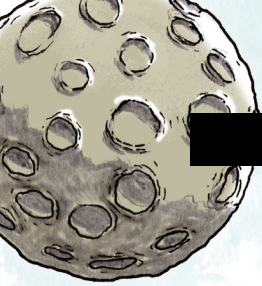
Such call for diversity, inclusivity and plurality in curricular practices is therefore a collective movement that has global resonance, differentiating only in its regional or local permutation. For Southeast Asian HME institutions, much like our European and Transatlantic partners, the form, content, and degree of “change” varies across different social realities that institutions find themselves in. For instance, a term such as “community engagement” could mean deeper interaction between the HMEI and their existing network of local arts organisations, or it could manifest in curricular courses that bring students to work extensively with a less-privileged community. Ultimately, the relevance and impact of change comes from an acute listening to the community’s voice.

In the recent [SEADOM](#) (Southeast Asia Directors of Music) Congress 2023, members of the “30 Under 30” project shared what “change” in the music education landscape looks like for them. Despite coming from various institutional and cultural backgrounds, there is a strong commonality in the overarching themes of change. This includes: more multi-disciplinary and cross-cultural collaborations, more community engagement, more financial support, and more care towards the sustainability of artistic projects and artists’ personal energies. There is also a consensus that we should continue aspiring towards greater social relevance in institutional and personal artistic practices. Such an aspiration requires bi- or multi-lateral hearing between musicians and their communities of intended impact– How well are yours, and ours, needs heard? How can we build or extend platforms to amplify your stories? Why should you be tuning in to us at this time and place? It also means greater dedication to creating and financing projects that could palpably energise one’s musical, or non-musical, community.



Any discussion of DEI inevitably invites frustration alongside hope. While there is collective endorsement that “change” needs to happen, resistance and splintering happens at the seams of negotiating how much change we are looking at, how far we are taking it, and what is it really that change will apply to and affect. Change is afoot, and oftentimes just “few feet away”. Much like how frustration and hope are two sides of the same coin, challenges and opportunities are so too. It is therefore about putting our minds together to find ways to turn frustrations into hope, and challenges into invigorating opportunities.





### 3. REFLECTIONS FROM CHANGE MAKERS

This section sheds light on the grassroots level actions taken to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in recent years within HME institutions. In the discussions below, individual teachers, programme leaders, administrators, and researchers reflect on the various strategies, projects, and study programmes they have initiated or been deeply involved in. By sharing these practitioners' personal viewpoints and recommendations through six interviews we want to encourage staff and students in AEC member institutions to ask new questions, envision possible futures for DEI, and find their own ways to implement artistic and pedagogical ideas and institutional strategies related to DEI.

The interviews are connected to the recent AEC publication *Artistic Plurality and Inclusive Institutional Culture in HME* by the AEC-SMS Diversity, Identity, Inclusiveness Working Group (5 cases are connected to the eBook, where the full versions can be found, while case 6 comes from one of the DIGE Working Group members). Ranging from institutions' responses to wider (national) government initiatives and decolonial strategies to new study programmes and cross-departmental collaborations, the "cases" open windows into the variety of approaches to DEI work. Each interviewee was given the same set of questions. They were first asked to give an update on the case in question, and to describe the main achievements they wanted to highlight. They were then asked to describe the challenges and the potential resistance they had encountered along the way. Finally, we asked the interviewees to make suggestions for those currently working on or contemplating on similar activities and endeavours.

This type of work has been going on, and continues to do so, in many forms across HME institutions, and this section represents only a fraction of that work. Alongside the interviewees, the DIGE Working Group also acknowledges that these reflections emerge from personal experiences situated in particular settings, and that each institution and its



circumstances are different. The approaches and recommendations shared here can therefore be seen as ideas to be modified, reworked and adjusted when applied to other institutions. As a Working Group, we want to keep learning more about the variety and further developments of projects related to DEI, and to strengthen the connections between the AEC institutions through this topic.

### 3.1 “ENGAGING FEMALE STUDENTS AT BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC VALENCIA” AND “BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC’S EQUITY POLICY AND ITS ADAPTATION TO THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT”

By Clara Barbera (Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus)

#### Background

The challenges related to Diversity and Inclusion strategies vary across geographical locations and unique sociologies; there is no one-size-fits-all solution. As such, the relevance of an institution’s Diversity and Inclusion strategies relies on deep listening and a proactive response to its community’s needs. Berklee College of Music–Valencia Campus is a dynamic example of this strategy. Since its launch in 2012, one of the campus’s biggest challenges has been adapting Berklee’s existing Diversity and Inclusion strategies and designing measures to fit its new European reality.

“Engaging Female Students” covers the initiatives that were introduced to overcome the under-representation of female students and faculty on campus. This initiative took a multi-prong approach—as reflected in the varying nature, degree of collaboration, and duration of its constituent projects—that involved the efforts of both the students and institutional leadership, and was aimed at engaging both the immediate and extended Berklee Valencia community. The objectives included raising awareness and acknowledgement of female leaders within the music industry, widening



the narrative and pool of references, and increasing mentorship opportunities for students. Additionally, Berklee Valencia's enrolment team has also proactively dedicated resources to attract more female applicants. Another initiative, "Berklee College of Music's equity policy and its adaptation to the European environment", addressed the considerations involved in translating Berklee's equity policy to the Valencia campus and further strengthening it in relation to Valencia's context. The two-year process included the formulation of a Valencia Equity Leadership Team and furthering connections with similar programs in Spain.

*How would you describe the current situation of the initiative/project/programme?*

The College has experienced a number of significant changes starting with the arrival of a new President, the appointment of a new senior leadership team, and the establishment of a new strategic plan, focusing on five pillars that have emerged as central to Berklee's community in this particular order: 1. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion: Values, Culture and Campus Climate, 2. Affordability, and the Lifelong Value of a Berklee Degree, 3. Curricular and Programmatic Innovation, 4. Global Strategy, Partners and Presence, and 5. The Higher Education Infrastructure of the Future.

There appears to be a renewed emphasis in acknowledging that DEI is a critical aspect of the future of the institution. This has been crystallised in the creation of a new position of Senior Vice President of DEI, Community, and Campus Culture and Climate, and the appointment of Dr. Loretia Flash as the inaugural SVP. It is worth noting that, at the time of the case studies, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion were part of the Student Affairs Division (SADI). Now, by separating this portfolio of responsibilities from the area of Student Affairs, and into an area of its own that reports directly to the President, the institution elevates the importance of the transversal and interconnected work that needs to happen at all levels of the College, making it central to Berklee's mission.





Additionally, under this new structure, the Equity policy, process and team report directly to the Senior Vice President of DEI, Community, and Campus Culture and Climate (instead of being two separate entities) in an important acknowledgment of the connection between general compliance with Equity and Title IX policies and the campus culture that is fostered across the institution. Here in Valencia operations, we continue to have Diversity and Inclusion merged with Student Affairs, although as SADI we have always reported directly to the campus' Executive Director. Valencia's Equity team, formerly led by our Executive Director, is now led by a new Deputy Equity Officer who is our Dean of Academic Affairs. Under her leadership, the Valencia Equity Leadership Team has grown and solidified, with more staff members being trained for the various roles within the policy, as new incidents continue to take place every year.

Our efforts to engage female students have continued in different ways. Whereas [She Knows Tech](#) has grown to be a separate, independent entity to the College (while continuing to have a student chapter rooted on our campus), other student-led initiatives that focus on closing the gender gap in the music industry have continued to emerge, and in some ways, to evolve, pushing the conversation and initiatives into the realms of gender diversity.

Through a process of continued learning and development, the institution also currently finds itself immersed in improving its understanding of the whole spectrum of gender identity and expression and as such, the support we are able to provide to trans or non-binary students from the moment they apply to one of our programs (i.e. revision of language practices during our Admissions practices) to when they are officially enrolled (i.e. medical care, facilities, classroom dynamics, etc).



*What have been some of the highlights and most inspiring achievements in the work so far?*

I would draw attention to the fact that our campus has now explicitly defined an approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion that a) acknowledges the nature and context of the Valencia campus, and b) allow us to work transversally at incorporating these concepts into all our operations:

In January 2022 we launched a 3-year Valencia DEI strategy to take us to 2025, the final year of [Berklee's current vision](#). This DEI strategy was drafted in alignment with efforts spearheaded from Boston, but it has its own vision, values and key priorities. Worth noting is the fact that, as well as racial justice and gender equality, this new strategy also incorporates mental health, accessibility and global climate as other essential dimensions to consider as we think about the future of our community.

The 3 year action plan driving this strategy forward is divided into four impact areas: Curriculum & Pedagogy; Structural and Demographic Diversity; Admissions Practices; and Student Engagement & Community Building, and each has a defined set of goals which, at times, are interconnected.

At the time of this interview, we are finalising year 1 of this plan with a better understanding of where we are as a campus in terms of our collective efforts to push the DEI work forward, and where we want to be in year 2 and 3.

*Which kinds of challenges have you faced along the way?*

We have, of course, encountered challenges throughout this time: from my own maternity leave as project coordinator for the DEI Valencia strategy, to the difficulty of engaging key part time employees in this work (despite a grant



dedicated towards their engagement), and further structural changes both within our teams, and also in Boston, that have impacted our capacity to move forward as fast and steadily as we would have wanted to.

On a larger scale, and in full consideration of the place DEI will be taking in shaping the future of Berklee as a global institution, there is an even bigger challenge we need to consider, and that is whether we have the necessary expertise and resources to implement meaningful DEI practices in this campus that support the new College-wide strategic plan for the years to come.

*What kind of resistance has the initiative/project/programme encountered, if any?*

In terms of resistance, what we are facing at the moment rather than resistance is a perceived weariness towards this work. For the last few years, employees (and students) are continuously asked to participate in committees, training sessions, surveys, workshops, conversations, campaigns, etc. yet the outcomes of this work aren't always that apparent or visible. This can result in people getting frustrated, drained, or simply losing interest, as it is also easy to lose perspective of the fact that the nature of this work requires both the understanding, and the resilience, to know that building a strong culture is a long term and ongoing process. The process involves improvements as well as setbacks as a result of changes in both the internal and external environments. In addition, compliance based or aspirational approaches can be perceived by some as performative, rather than purposefully action driven, adding another layer of disenchantment on those tasked to take care of this work in the long run.

Finally, there's another dimension to consider when we think of resistance: What is the incentive or benefit of pushing this agenda forward, when everyone doing this work with the necessary decision-making capacity to make it meaningful, appears to represent the traditional "majority"? In other words, they do not represent a wide range of



different lived experiences to fully grasp the depth of DEI. As a result, community members who identify as traditionally underrepresented may be sceptical towards this type of situation.

### *How have you tackled these challenges?*

Over the years, we have tested out ways in which to tackle these challenges and resistance by:

- Engaging with external expertise to provide professional development to students, as well as staff and faculty that take into consideration the European and African perspective (i.e. Melanin Madrid, IntersectMadrid, Gurumbé: Afro-Andalusian memories' documentary and post-viewing discussions with the artistic team, International Decade for People of African Descent implementation team, etc.).
- Diversifying our workforce: hiring and retaining talent that reflects the diversity within our student body and supports the DEI vision for Valencia.
- Assigning key partners in different departments to ensure that DEI efforts are transversal across the campus and not centralised in one office or being the responsibility of one person.

### *What kind of advice would you give to a colleague doing work of a similar kind?*

- Identify what makes it important to you personally and reconnect with that purpose whenever you are faced with challenges or resistance.
- Be prepared to be in a constant process of learning (and unlearning), and checking yourself and your beliefs, as the work evolves.
- Build resilience and find self-care spaces in order to be in it for the long haul.
- Acknowledge the sense of urgency in the work, and the tension between that and the fact that creating meaningful change requires time.



- Try not to take setbacks personally.
- One person alone cannot be expected to change the culture of a whole organisation, it requires commitment from stakeholders across the institution: find key partners with a personal investment in this work.
- Ensure that you are equipped with the necessary expertise as part of your team, or outsourced if needed, to carry this work through.

### 3.2 “WIDENING ACCESS TO THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES” (WACI)

By Jesse Paul & Joshua Dickson (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)

#### Background

Since 2013, The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) has received SFC strategic funding for its fair access initiative, Transitions (formerly Transitions 20/40). Transitions has grown demonstrably since then, notably impacting on the positive learning experiences and potential of more than 950 core learners from some of Scotland’s most marginalised communities. Transitions has continued to develop, learning from each of the previous years of delivery to ensure that we provide an effective, measurable, and meaningful pathway for our learners, enabling them to access outstanding arts education provision through to positive destinations.

In 2022-23, RCS Transitions received targeted funding for its schools and community outreach programme “Widening Access to the Creative Industries” (WACI). This change was advised and supported by the SFC National Schools Coordinator. Prior to that, and since 2012, RCS received WACI funding through Focus West. Over time, WACI has grown demonstrably, notably impacting on the positive learning experiences of participating learners from the West of



Scotland's lowest progression schools, and since 2020 across the whole of the West of Scotland for other marginalised learners. Since 2021, WACI has supported a growing number of pupils from other SHEP regions across Scotland. WACI seeks to raise awareness of and provide access to meaningful pathways to further studies and work opportunities in the creative industries in Scotland.

*How would you describe the current situation of the initiative/project/programme?*

Both WACI and Transitions support marginalised young people in schools and communities across Scotland—where Transitions has always been a National programme, WACI is increasing its reach. Together, the two initiatives support students from a grassroots interest level through to dedicated pathways into and through performing/production arts Higher Education. Where WACI is an open access schools and communities programme that is growing beyond the central belt, supporting young people in a range of delivery settings with an interest to study the performing and production arts at college, university or conservatoire, Transitions is an auditioned National programme for young people aged 7+, providing a progression route to degree study in the performing arts for people across Scotland with talent and potential and who are interested in pursuing further study and a career in the performing arts.

RCS Fair Access programmes are managed and co-ordinated by a small, dedicated team of staff employed at RCS that work collaboratively with others across our own institution and with external partners. These include schools, colleges and creative/community organisations. The programmes currently offer a range of activity from audition and interview preparation to taster workshops, intensive practical and transferable skills training, short bridging programmes, coaching and industry masterclasses as well as an extensive outreach programme. These are delivered in-school, in-house, in-communities on-line (as part of our commitment to technology-enhanced, blended delivery) and with external partners.



*What have been some of the highlights and most inspiring achievements in the work so far?*

Of all the Transitions students that have progressed to UG/PG study here at RCS, only 5 have not completed the programme to date. Others, for a variety of reasons, may take longer to complete than the nominal 3 or 4 years of the programme, but we still anticipate that they will complete. This means that of the 212 students starting UG/PG programmes at RCS since Transitions started, 207 potentially will complete, which gives us a completion rate of approx 98%. A good number of our Fair Access Transitions students have gone on to win prizes in their arts discipline. The work we have done over the years to improve access to specialist arts education has been highly regarded by the Scottish Government, SFC and the Commissioner for Fair Access.

*Which kinds of challenges have you faced along the way?*

Financial—we can't achieve our work without substantial funding. The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is a small specialist institution and Scotland's only Conservatoire. We have a national remit and an international reputation for arts education. Our Fair Access work is unique because it is the only provision in Scotland dedicated to assisting people from marginalised backgrounds progress and gain entry to a prestigious performing arts education and ensures that individuals with talent and potential can access this education irrespective of their background or their ability to pay for the training required to reach the skills levels required to meet RCS' audition standards.

As a small and specialist institution, we recognise that if a young person is to reach the high standard of performance needed to enter its undergraduate programmes, they need to invest in their art form from an early age. RCS' Junior Conservatoire has fulfilled a national role in developing talent from across Scotland, but this is funded by those parents who have the capacity to pay the fees. A young person from a disadvantaged area or care experienced background is



unlikely to be in a position to finance the additional immersive training needed to reach the audition standards required to successfully enter undergraduate study at RCS. This situation has worsened in recent years as Local Authorities have cut back access to performing arts education and continue to charge for music tuition. The funding received from SFC for the Transitions Programme is essential, therefore, to be able to make this training and support free to address this inequality.

Covid 19 and technology. Over the last two years, the COVID pandemic has forced us to think creatively about how we can invest and use technology to deliver our programmes in cost effective ways to support learners and teachers. This is particularly important for remote parts of Scotland including the Highlands and Islands. While we know that in person delivery is highly valued in conservatoire arts education, we know too that technology-based activities are effective, especially when it comes to widening reach to those who are not in traveling distance of Glasgow. Our learning over Covid 19 means we are committed to the following:

- Develop a range of technology enhanced resources and events targeted at learners in geographically remote parts of Scotland.
- Develop and launch our Fair Access VLE to aid our blended provision.
- Provide online professional update and information sessions for teachers/SDS career advisors as part of our outreach work. This will ensure that young people are provided with accurate guidance and support in relation to career and progression choices in the performing and production arts. It will provide synergy between the RCS “access offer” and Curriculum for Excellence as part of a unified system of tertiary education and training system.

Research and Evaluation. When we first started the initiative, there was very little research and evaluation about Fair Access in the performing arts in Scotland for us to draw on. As a result, we have increasingly engaged with research,





knowledge exchange and evaluation to ensure best practice—and to inform the work we do. We now undertake the following:

- Commission relevant research to inform the impact of our fair access interventions and to signal future enhancements and/or new developments.
- Evaluate core fair access provision annually and assess impact towards achievement of institutional/ priorities and measures as set out in our Outcome and Impact Framework with SFC.
- Use national reports from, for example, Scottish Government, SFC and the Commissioner for Fair Access to assess the effectiveness of our interventions towards national measures and priorities and to signal future enhancements and/or new developments.
- Actively engage with key national widening access communities and forums (e.g. SCAPP) to influence widening access policy development in Scotland, share knowledge and effective practice, learn from others, access priority training, professional accreditation and mentoring offered nationally.
- Provide guidance, training and resources to RCS staff and other relevant partners to raise awareness of fair access developments and to influence policy and practice.
- Provide key members of the core Fair Access Team with evaluation and impact assessment training.
- Contribute examples of best practice in a variety of formats including videos and case studies.

Reaching the people we want to engage with. We now know how important Outreach is in order to reach the communities we wish to work with. Prior to having a dedicated outreach team, we were finding it hard to reach people. We are seeing a significant difference through our outreach in schools and communities. We work with key collaborators in targeted areas/communities of deprivation and rurality using both in person and technology enhanced methods to raise awareness. This aids building routes to further study for those with talent and potential in the performing arts.



We have an annual outreach plan of action designed to reach, engage, gain trust and recruit eligible individuals from priority groups as set out in the RCS Outcome and Impact Framework with SFC, contribute to fair access recruitment and evaluate its impact.

*What kind of resistance has the initiative/project/programme encountered, if any?*

We haven't really experienced resistance. Quite the opposite. I would say that we have carefully positioned ourselves to build bridges, form meaningful partnerships and collaborations both internally and externally. One thing that does occur is a misunderstanding between Fair Access and Equality and Diversity. Though there are natural crossovers, Fair Access is a Scottish Government Initiative that seeks to support those from Scotland's poorest postcodes or those who are care experienced/estranged.

*How have you tackled these challenges?*

We've worked hard to ensure that people, partners, colleagues and organisations understand what Fair Access is through:

- Training and information sessions.
- Developing and improving our contextualised admissions process (see also "Contextualized Admissions": in pursuit of diversity and the widening of participation at Scotland's national conservatoire", RCS, by Joshua Dickson).
- Improving our messaging (e.g. through our website and portals) <https://www.rcs.ac.uk/fair-access/>

*What kind of advice would you give to a colleague doing work of a similar kind?*

- This kind of work takes time, commitment, and a willingness to develop meaningful partnership/relationships.
- Being responsive to the world around us, the needs of the learner and the barriers they face is paramount.



- Be creative and inventive—believe in the power of what arts education can be to effect transformation in all those involved in it from participants to stakeholders to the wider world.

*Anything else you would like to bring up?*

RCS would welcome developing connections with other conservatoires in their widening access endeavours.

### 3.3 “GLOBAL MUSIC BACHELOR PROGRAMME PROVIDING PATHWAYS FOR STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS”

By Nathan Thomson (Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki)

#### Background

The Global Music Department embraces pluralistic, fluid approaches to sound, music, culture, and identity, creating an educational environment where musicians are supported in their efforts to develop their own unique voices, exchange and merge practices, and create new music through intercultural collaboration. Our Bachelor and Master’s Degree programmes provide pathways for students from diverse musical and cultural backgrounds to develop creative, flexible, musical, pedagogical, and research skills, intertwined with an in-depth understanding and hands on experience of working in intercultural and transcultural environments. Students will develop the ability to perform, create, communicate, collaborate, facilitate, and lead in a wide range of musical, cultural and socially engaged contexts, fostering a strong sense of global citizenship and responsibility.

The term Global Music is viewed in the broadest sense, incorporating multi-disciplinary and collaborative inter-art approaches, alongside pluralistic forms of musical expression. With intercultural collaboration at the heart of the



programme, applicants are welcome from diverse cultural and musical backgrounds. Musicians may apply on any main instrument, voice or composition, including traditional instruments from around the world. Applicants with a background in other art forms may also be considered for the programme, provided they have a sufficient level of musical skills. The Bachelor of Global Music is a 3-year programme taught in English and is a pathway to the 2.5 year Master of Global Music. Applicants with a previous qualification may also apply directly to the master's programme.

*How would you describe the current situation of the initiative/project/programme?*

Since autumn 2020, the Global Music Department is now a fully established department within Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts, Helsinki, with studies ranging from youth (12-17 years), bachelor's, master's, and doctoral level degrees. There are currently approximately 50 active students from 33 different cultural backgrounds studying in the department. Applicants may apply for the studies from any musical and cultural background, with their own unique form of artistic identity.

*What have been some of the highlights and most inspiring achievements in the work so far?*

Some of the most inspiring achievements so far include:

- Global Music studies being recognised as an independent and equally important study line alongside other departments at Sibelius Academy, including jazz, folk, music education, music technology, arts management, and Western classical music.
- Being able to re-imagine and re-structure admissions processes. This has included creating the possibility for applicants to apply from any musical and cultural background, removing the requirement for knowledge of Western music theory, and designing all auditions online to avoid inequitable situations caused by visas and travel issues.





- Redesigning the language policy that formerly required applicants to prove English language skills through previous education or international language tests. From 2023, language and communication assessment are now a naturally integrated part of the audition, which is connected to the various musical and discussion tasks during the audition.
- Creating pathways for musicians from immigrant and refugee backgrounds in Finland. The Global Music department currently has students from more than 33 different cultural backgrounds, including students with a refugee background from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Palestine and the Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region.
- Securing external funding for the department, enabling a scholarship programme for students outside the EU, increasing and diversifying core teaching staff, and building ongoing community engagement projects.
- Establishing community engagement as an integral part of studies, with students working on ongoing local and international community partnerships, including collaborations with a Syrian Women's choir in Helsinki, a local prison, local schools, immigrant communities, and a refugee community in Jordan.
- Employing teaching staff from diverse cultural backgrounds as core teachers in the department.

*Which kinds of challenges have you faced along the way?*

It has been a challenge for the studies to be recognised equally alongside other study lines and taken time for the institution to value diversity in all its forms.

*What kind of resistance has the initiative/project/programme encountered, if any?*

There was initial resistance to the studies becoming a fully structured department and some fear that it would take away resources from other, older departments.



*How have you tackled these challenges?*

These challenges have largely been tackled by showing the value of the studies and the value of diversity through artistic, pedagogical, and research action. This has included establishing an annual festival that makes the work of the department visible, documenting and producing video and audio publications, establishing ongoing community engagement projects and collaborations with local and international community groups, and actively engaging in research and producing publications connected to the work.

*What kind of advice would you give to a colleague doing work of a similar kind?*

In my experience, taking the approach of initiating systemic change by modelling new ways of doing things through practical action has often led to tangible changes and steps forward. Maintaining a positive, constructive, step by step approach to initiating new ideas has also been crucial, as opposed to trying to simply break apart old structures quickly. Active dialogue and collaboration with others across the institution is also crucial.

*Anything else you would like to bring up?*

From my perspective, through placing musical and cultural difference at the centre of music making, teaching, and learning, I believe Higher Music Education institutions can create more equitable, pluralistic educational environments that are truly reflective of a diverse, pluralistic society. Furthermore, difference, diversity, intercultural collaboration, and community engagement are essential elements for the future of higher arts education, which can no longer be seen by institutions merely as “added extras” within a dominant Western framework.



Intercultural learning environments become increasingly important as they not only create opportunities to expand and deepen musicianship but enable us to explore the hybridity and fluidity of musical and personal identities, and continuously reimagine the ways in which musicians are able to connect with and contribute to the world around them. Thinking further ahead, perhaps the extent to which students are given opportunities for intercultural artistic dialogue, collaboration, and community engagement during their studies will have a meaningful impact on their later lives, livelihoods, and societal contributions.

### 3.4 “NEXTDOORS - INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECT WEEK” CASE BY INE VANOEVEREN, FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW WITH JEROEN MALAISE (ROYAL CONSERVATOIRE ANTWERP)

#### Background

NextDoors is the annual interdisciplinary project week at the Royal Conservatoire Antwerp, produced in collaboration with the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp. The project fosters exploration, exchange, and communication between the different disciplines in the institution. During this week students can explore the advantages of and difficulties presented by other artistic programmes, in addition to conducting research at the Conservatoire and the Academy. Students can work on their own interdisciplinary projects as well as subscribing to other interdisciplinary workshops given by teachers and researchers of the Conservatoire and the Academy. All doors stay open throughout the week, so that everyone is free to visit all of the varied projects and workshops. Students will receive full logistic and technical support (within the staff’s limits and possibilities) and can rehearse in the same room/hall for the whole week. On the last day of NextDoors week, there is a festival where they have the opportunity to show their work. The project is also a fertile ground for further collaborations, and a further development of the conservatoire’s curriculum. As the project



week comes to an end, students often insist on continuing to develop their creative ideas through optional courses and specialised coaching.

*How would you describe the current situation of the initiative/project/programme?*

The NextDoors project takes place over one week each year within the institution, usually in February. It is currently organised by a team I initiated and we aim to connect the different programmes in music, dance and drama. The week is a meeting point for everything happening during the year, and it is where people and activities come together. During the week the students don't have other lessons or lectures, and they work together in different combinations of various group sizes. The project is aimed at third year bachelor students and so far it has been optional, but from next year, it will become mandatory. The latest NextDoors week was built around the themes of interdisciplinarity and the intercultural experience. For example, we had visitors from Palestine, Tunisia and Uzbekistan as well as other coaches from outside the conservatoire for the students to dive into interdisciplinary ways of working.

*What have been some of the highlights and most inspiring achievements in the work so far?*

The highlight, which is also the challenge, is the connection between the departments. The main thing is how NextDoors promotes links between the departments and creates new and wider networks amongst the students and teachers. These connections emerge during the week through the processes despite the outcomes and "success" of the activities. The collaboration feeds into the entire academic year and beyond, it's a "meeting moment".





*Which kinds of challenges have you faced along the way? What kind of resistance has the initiative/project/programme encountered, if any?*

The main challenge is to convince teachers from all departments, not so much the students. This generation of students knows there are many possibilities there for them. The teachers are not sure if this change is for them, and if it is necessary. The challenge is to convince the teachers that the students or the department will not lose the grip on their identity when they open the doors to other departments. They sometimes say, "this is how we work in this department". We need some more networking and discussion to find out why this is such a sensitive topic. But many teachers also think this type of work is important. I think if you are a good musician you will be able to act in many different circumstances. I sometimes ask the teachers what happens, when a student encounters new situations, are they able to play well in those circumstances? This usually sparks something in the teachers. Otherwise, the student will have the ability to act only within one type of circumstances, with very limited options. If you are a good musician, you will be able to thrive in many circumstances, and we offer these changing conditions for the students. I actually see this as strengthening the student's artistic identity. As I have mentioned, although the majority feels positive about NextDoors, there is resistance from some staff members and a small group of students.

*How have you tackled these challenges?*

If a teacher is reluctant, I try to find students that are enthusiastic about the work and create a buzz amongst them. I try to find ways to communicate the ideas we have for future artists. The motivation of the students usually also convinces the teachers. Sometimes I turn the situation around and ask the teachers why they would want to stop the student from participating in this big happening. It is very hard to give a specific answer to that question, and often the only justification is the lost study hours, which is not usually very much. This sometimes works when I discuss with the teachers. What kind of advice would you give to a colleague doing work of a similar kind?



I would encourage them to connect with other people doing similar work in other institutions and in this way learn about the “best practices”. But it is not just about the best practices. Each institution is a part of a particular societal environment with its local strengths and values, like Antwerp is my mini society where I can test a lot of things. We need to understand where we are and what works in our local settings. This includes acknowledging the strengths of the local environment. If someone visits my environment, I would never say it would work exactly the same in another place. But sharing the best practices is still a very good idea. Also, contemporary issues should be part of the work with students. However, they are best incorporated through students’ approaches, giving space for the students’ profiles so that the students can “feel the heartbeat of the era”.

NextDoors happens mainly within the institution, but I also recommend looking for external partners such as organisations dealing with social issues (I have recently been in touch with an organisation focused on human trafficking), museums and local venues, communities of different religions, local, inter-local, and international. Last year one student did a project with the Hasidic Jewish community in Antwerp. We had a full hall of people from the community and there was a very special atmosphere. While we initially had some concerns about security, I was so happy to see the student create this connection. In another project, an all-female orchestra was created last year, and they still play together. We wish to connect the institution with the area around it, which is also connected to entrepreneurship.

### *Anything else you would like to bring up?*

There should be a playground for experiments created during the studies. My approach is “don’t leave it after you graduate, do it while you are a student!” As teachers we offer some examples: I want to break some walls, but the aim is that the students then go for it in their own way.



### 3.5 “DECOLONIAL STRATEGIES FOR THE INCORPORATION OF ECUADORIAN INDIGENOUS MUSIC IN HIGHER MUSIC EDUCATION - THE CASE OF THE LAM-UCE PROGRAMME”

By Abner Pérez Marín (Universidad Central del Ecuador)

#### Background

Launched in 2018, Universidad Central de Ecuador’s Licenciatura en Artes Musicales (LAM-UCE) is the country’s first BA Music programme to academize two traditions of local popular music: the Andean- and Afro-Ecuadorian. As a direct product of then-president Rafael Correa’s “Citizen Revolution”, the program contributes to the country’s decolonial discourse by directing recognition towards local indigenous groups and empowering their artistic traditions. The program adopts two main strategies of decoloniality: 1) the construction of local instruments, and 2) research on local material and expressions. The curriculum’s teaching is multi-modal: while formal pedagogies are used for subjects such as composition, the indigenous method of orality is often used during instrumental instruction.

The tensions between preservation, progress, and decoloniality form a turbulent stream that the programme has devoted itself navigating. In Marín’s words: “Preservation is not to rescue, and progress is not to ignore.” Therefore, the curriculum of LAM-UCE is one that both embraces Ecuadorian indigenous music and also encourages innovation within it, in tandem.

*How would you describe the current situation of the initiative/project/programme?*

Complex. At an academic level, things are still looking up with strong faculty and students with diverse backgrounds, especially rural and low-income, who really appreciate the opportunity to study and make the most of it. At an administrative level, it lacks the infrastructure that it was promised at the beginning: still no recording studio, lack of classrooms



acoustically treated, lack of equipment, etc. With the pandemic and poor economical situation of the country, funding has been cut so there is no improvement on that side. Also, nobody has graduated yet, so it is difficult to evaluate the relevance of the programme at a professional level.

*What have been some of the highlights and most inspiring achievements in the work so far?*

Applications keep increasing and the students keep developing their musical skills still with a decolonial approach, focusing mainly on the local market. Most of them are working performers in local bands that cater local “popular” music events, but also “academic” music.

*Which kinds of challenges have you faced along the way?*

I am not involved in the project myself. I am an external observant. I think, as mentioned before, the biggest challenge is the infrastructure one. But this goes hand in hand with the reputation and characteristics of public education in Ecuador, in general. Unfortunately, the expectations of the students are very low even before starting because the attitude of not paying makes them think that they cannot demand anything. Therefore, the institution does not feel the pressure to improve this as quickly as it should. The number of applicants keeps increasing regardless of knowing the situation.

*What kind of resistance has the initiative/project/programme encountered, if any?*

Administratively, the problem is always funding. This repercutes in teacher’s attitudes developing lack of motivation and loyalty towards the programme itself. However, they tend to find solutions outside the programme (privately mainly) to keep teaching and providing students with opportunities to play and produce music.



*How have you tackled these challenges?*

The administration just keeps trying. And, as I mentioned in the previous question: privately.

*What kind of advice would you give to a colleague doing work of a similar kind?*

It always depends on the type of educational system where the program is operating: private/public, north/south. The main advice is that ideology does not depend on funding, so the ideology must be, and remain, clear. In this case, decolonial education is the ideology. That doesn't change. How to execute this in a public institution in a country like Ecuador, where funding to Higher Education keeps being reduced and where education becomes highly politicised, that is the challenge. Lots of patience, creativity and commitment to the cause, not for the institution, but for the students.

*Anything else you would like to bring up?*

I believe that for someone who has never experienced the inefficiency of public education in the Global South, in terms of funding, it is difficult to understand how this can work. However, it is admirable how teachers and students pull it off because of their passion and commitment to the cause. Providing free education with a decolonial approach in a country where most rural students would not be able to pay for it, is a decolonial statement in itself, and a key element to be maintained at any cost because of its relevance with regards to cultural sustainability. It is partly one of the reasons why political leaders do not feel rushed to change things, but it is also part of the reasons why a programme like this will keep developing and growing even within the most difficult circumstances.



### 3.6 “STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN HME INSTITUTIONS: WORKING WITH NEURODIVERGENT STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES, TEACHERS, TUTORS AND ADMINISTRATION TOWARDS A TRUE INCLUSION”

By Francesca Innocenti (Conservatorio Statale di Musica “Arcangelo Corelli” di Messina)

#### Background

In the context of Higher Music Education, the presence and needs of students with neurological differences has not been adequately acknowledged. In Italy, since 2021 a national coordination of efforts to address disability, SLD (specific learning disabilities) and SEN (special education needs) has officially brought together a total of 35 conservatories to date. The initiative aims to organise efficient actions in support of inclusion and monitoring as well as proposals furthering those goals. In reality, this is currently limited to monthly communications on the initiatives and actions conducted by each individual conservatoire. The initiative is part of a broader vision for the rights of each human being, of justice and the equal opportunity for each of us to express our own ideas and capabilities, and of the inclusion of previously excluded individuals.

In the conservatoire where I carry out the role of coordinator for individuals with neurological differences and disabilities, there are at present several students with dyslexia, learning and attention difficulties, and individuals on the autism spectrum. We approach diversity as a resource, rather than a disadvantage for the community. We aim to support the students throughout their educational journey, from the time of their admission to their study programme through the variety of subjects they will study with different teachers. This involves assessing their need for personalised study programmes but we also pay attention to their interactions and relationships, not only with their teachers but also with the other students and with the staff of the institution.



The need for a sense of acceptance and a great desire for communication has been highlighted in the coaching work with the students, especially with peers and in extra-curricular relationships. The students with specific learning differences have been paired up with peer tutors that are chosen to support these students. Additional learning support is needed, for example in courses such as Harmony and Musical Analysis, as well as other courses like Music History, that requires expressing and demonstrating ideas verbally. The peer tutor support has helped the students successfully participate in and pass these courses.

Autism is a spectrum, which means that autistic people can have varying support needs. Some autistic people also have a learning disability. It is important to differentiate the typologies of didactic interventions and learning, both those in the classroom with teachers and those with peer tutors, so that the students feel comfortable about expressing themselves and can demonstrate their aspirations and full potential. The question is: Isn't that the case for everyone? Each of us needs to feel accepted and welcomed to give our best.

We have observed that there is a strong desire to form relationships amongst the students, and it seems that the presence of peer tutors in study activities is very well received.

Therefore, we believe it is important to increase their participation in such studies, not only to provide study support but also to strengthen the development of social relations. In addition, there is a plan to involve an expert specialised in psychological counselling, with the idea of providing support for the students with learning differences and disabilities as well as for the teachers and the tutors who deal with the academic pathways of the students.



*How would you describe the current situation of initiative/project /programme?*

This academic year, my work in the coordination of SEN and in general of the Inclusion project is more intense and complex than the previous year. The number of neurodivergent students entering in the Messina Conservatorio's courses is very high. This has demanded a greater effort to solve several issues. Currently there is a selection process for peer tutors and there is a proposal to get a psychologist to support the course work, the relations between the students and the teachers and amongst the students themselves. The students attend all courses regularly and are able to take the exams with astonishing results both in terms of quality and expected standard.

*What have been some of the highlights and most inspiring achievements in the work so far?*

In my experience, firstly the possibility to include students with neurodiversities, obtaining positive and significant results at the general and academic levels, that are absolutely equivalent to those of non-neurodivergent students. Neurodivergent students have not before been admitted to the conservatoire in an official way, at least in Messina Conservatorio. Moreover, an inspiring achievement is the network and the relations built between the SEN students and the peer tutors—that are students too. This is something that does not only contribute to the personal and social growth of SEN students but also that of the tutoring students and the whole academic community, raising the sense, and level, of responsibility and accountability among all parties involved.

*Which kinds of challenges have you faced along the way?*

The HME environment is quite heterogeneous, so the context is ever varied and unpredictable. It has been a challenge to make each student feel welcome and to create collaboration synergies among students without prejudices but also





without over-facilitating and underestimating their potential pathways and their objectives. The tailored study plans do not have the aim to lower the learning levels, but instead to facilitate the learning process and to carry out goals by making them more achievable for different skills.

The obtained results are promising and overall the feedback is very positive but it is obvious that continuous psychological support is necessary. One wonders how in an institution like the conservatoire it is possible to manage these critical issues over time. The work requires continuous commitment to the relationships between all parties: the students, families, teachers and peer tutors. A change of perspective should perhaps start from the awareness of what the starting point is and what should improve, but also if and what one really wants to change.

*What kind of resistance has the initiative/project/programme encountered, if any? How have you tackled these challenges?*

From a didactic point of view the teachers need more training in order to expand their professional skills in this context. Also, the administrative system may not be equipped to deal with the alternative arrangements for the student. We come up against a certain resistance to change and a struggle to create tailored study plans. Students turn out to be less narrow-minded than teachers, even if they struggle to welcome and include students with learning differences, especially in the social life of the conservatoire.

Indeed, there are several preconceptions coming mainly from the teachers, as it is easier to stick to the structure of a stereotyped lesson. In truth, the great challenge and resistance to overcome, and accept, is training. It is essential to know well each specific case and the difficulties must be faced always in a different way, depending on the complexity, in order to develop the appropriate strategies of intervention for reaching the goal. Towards that direction, we are activating shared learning courses for both students and teachers.

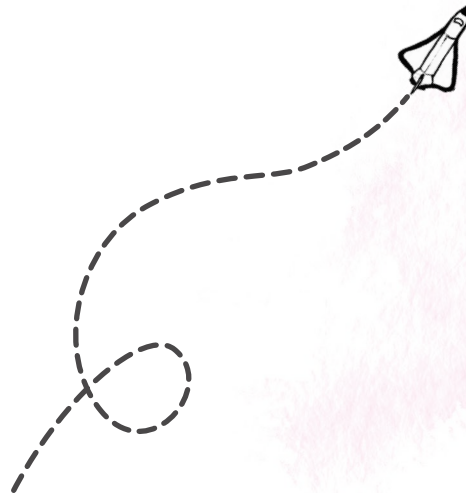


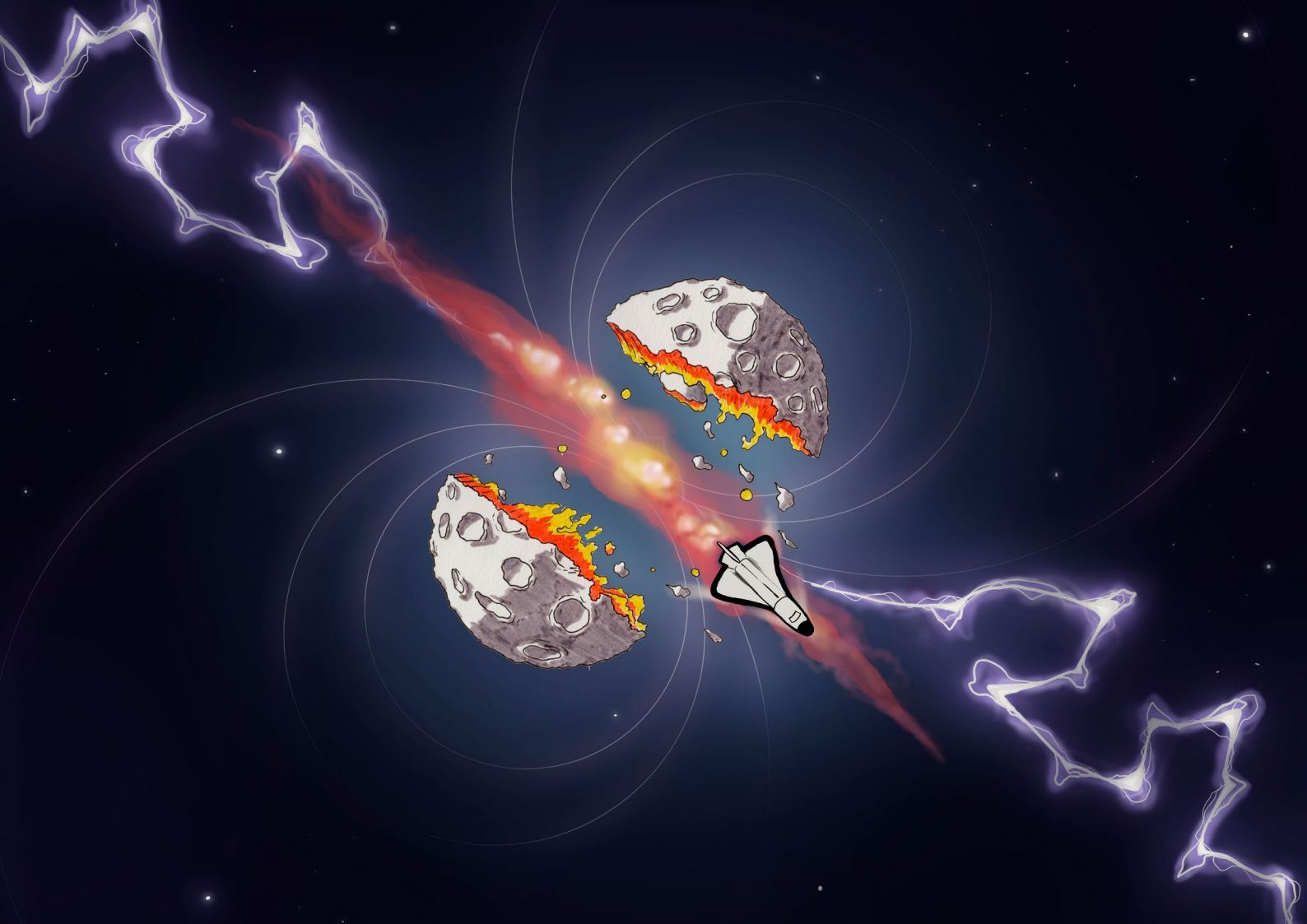
*What kind of advice would you give to a colleague doing work of a similar kind?*

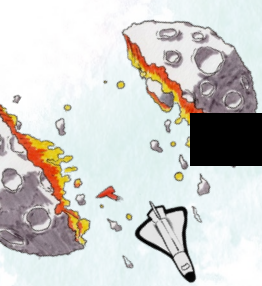
To arm themselves with patience and the ability of listening to the needs of everyone. Every person is special and deserves to be carefully listened to.

*Anything else you would like to bring up?*

As I have already mentioned in regard to resistance, I believe that the pathway to embark on is the one of 1) education/training/learning, through courses/seminars by experts, 2) a thorough knowledge of the individuals and of adaptation, 3) academic elasticity for each student to have a tailored path.







## 4. DEALING WITH RESISTANCE

### 4.1 RESISTANCE IN HME: THE OUTSET

*It's friction that makes a vehicle go forward*—an adage with many variants. As we in the Working Group began to work on our given task of creating “guidelines”, we realised quite early on that we needed to approach this task with an understanding of the diversity amongst the Higher Music Education institutions themselves. While we could distinguish many common themes, aims, and problems when looking at HME through the lens of DEI, it was evident that each institution was also dealing with its own discussions and struggles. However, we identified a strong common thread: a resistance to change, and resistance to change concerning DEI issues in particular. We also noted that voices both for and against change, and especially the pace of change, appear increasingly louder and more divided in HME, which is not surprising as the institutions do not exist in a vacuum. Change is an ambiguous concept and does not offer any directions or solutions in itself—good or bad. As we discussed “suggestions”, “recommendations”, and other possible models that the guidelines could take, we acknowledged that the theme of resistance should take a central position in our output.

The emergence of this resistance within Higher Music Education institutions may reveal something about the nature of our institution at the fundamental level. This topic has already been touched on by the AEC-SMS Diversity, Inclusion, Inclusiveness Working Group. In their [eBook](#), Stefan Gies reminds us of the history of conservatoires: “Although the context in which education and higher education take place has undergone huge changes in the past 150 years, the conservatoire scheme and the conservatoire mindset have scarcely changed in key points to this day” (*Artistic Plurality and Inclusive Institutional Culture in HME*, Gies, p. 151). Gies points out that only from 1980 onwards did HME institutions start opening up to non-classical musical genres, and that the integration of such novel musical paradigms had to be done according to the educational traditions that classical music had already established: “If you want to become part



of our community, you have to accept our rules” (*Artistic Plurality and Inclusive Institutional Culture in HME*, Gies, p. 152). While much has also changed within HME practices, including pedagogical approaches, this perspective captures what the resistance may tell about HME institutions—and also what it may not reveal.

Recognising the plurality of artistic practices pursued by today’s musicians as well as the diversity of communities within which the students will operate, many HME institutions are rethinking their artistic and educational purpose(s). The increased attention to codes of conduct, power relations, and the broad spectrum of diversities has an impact on - or even reframed - these discussions. Within such processes of fundamental change, some voices manifest themselves stronger than others. This is what we have addressed as resistance: going against the prevailing vision or narrative of change. We agreed that resistance can be visible or invisible, and embedded in seemingly small, everyday choices. Resistance is something we all do and experience, and - depending on our position in the process of change - resistance can feel like anything from unrelenting, challenging, necessary, radical, visionary, backwards, safe, caring, spiteful, or incomprehensible. Nevertheless, it “makes the vehicle move forward”.

### Facilitating change

As members of the DIGE Working Group, we are aware that we perceive the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion as crucial, even urgent. While acknowledging the complexity of change and its intended as well as unintended consequences, we have nurtured an attitude of guiding change towards more diverse, equitable, and inclusive institutions as genuinely attainable and rewarding. During one of our more philosophical conversations within the group, we challenged ourselves to claim that “change is easy”. This initially light-hearted and even sarcastic proposition stuck with us. We argue that the inevitably occurring change in our existence and interactions as human beings constantly provides possibilities that can be made use of: it is then up to us to decide in which direction we steer the change.



# [CHANGE IS EASY]

It is clear that fostering systemic change at the grassroots level requires persistence, as the “reflections from change makers” demonstrate. The practicalities surrounding change can be tough: the existing structures can be very robust and inflexible. Clara Barbera, for example, points out that, even after implementing a strategic plan, the bigger challenge is to acquire the necessary expertise and resources needed to actually implement DEI practices in the institution. On a more specific level, Francesca Innocenti illustrates the constraints faced by organisations in adapting to the educational needs of neurodivergent students. She reflects:

*From a didactic point of view, the teachers need more training in order to expand their professional skills in this context. Also, the administrative system may not be equipped to deal with the alternative arrangements for the student. We come up against a certain resistance to change and a struggle to create tailored study plans. Students turn out to be less narrow-minded than teachers, even if they struggle to welcome and include students with learning differences, especially in the social life of the conservatoire.*

Whereas Gies underlines that the “scheme” and “mindset” of an HMEI can resist change, Clara and Francesca remind us that, even when institutions *want* to open up and change, the practical challenges can be significant and time-consuming and can therefore stand in the way of achieving the desired goals. Still, we want to reiterate the antidote to taking the rigidity of the existing alignment for granted: *change is easy*. Here Jeroen Malaise talks about how he approaches resistance to students taking time to participate in the annual interdisciplinary project NextDoors:



*If a teacher is reluctant, I try to find students that are enthusiastic about the work and create a buzz amongst them. I try to find ways to communicate the ideas we have for future artists. The motivation of the students usually also convinces the teachers. Sometimes I turn the situation around and ask the teachers why they would want to stop the student from participating in this big happening. It is very hard to give a specified answer to that question.*

### Positioning change

During a meeting we had with the AEC's International Relations Coordinators Working Group, a conversation emerged comparing a more central versus more peripheral position of DEI matters within institutional change. In line with what we have suggested earlier, it became clear that some HME institutions currently debate whether the diversity (of students) should have an impact on their core practices, or if diversity means sustaining the existing artistic and pedagogical practices while supporting a more diverse student body (and teachers) to adapt to those practices. It is clear that there is no one size-fits-all solution, and that questions about the social responsibility of the institution cannot be solved in isolation from its artistic and pedagogical practices. All of the following questions, for example, can be seen to have a strong social dimension while simultaneously dealing with artistic and pedagogical choices and change: What kinds of perspectives are music history courses based on? To what extent are the institutions willing and able to provide care and support for students with visual impairments? How should the institution support the process of a student going through a change of gender identity?



## 4.2 RESISTANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: WHAT WE KNOW ALREADY

In order to further explore resistance within HME institutions, we decided to dive into some scholarly sources on organisational change. We then used these ideas to draw out the characteristics of resistance in HME from the reflections of change makers.

### *Definitions and emergence of resistance to change*

To build a shared vocabulary, we started out by exploring the definitions of resistance. We found the following especially appealing and fitting to our context of HME: when institutional change triggers a response of fear, or when individuals or minority groups within the institution perceive the change as an unfair act, the phenomenon of *resistance to change* emerges (Rehman et al., 2021). So, resistance is therefore a phenomenon positioned at (groups of) individuals and “shaping or dealing with this resistance is vital to the success of the change” (ibid.). The idea that the resistance of people within an organisation has to be “shaped” or “dealt with” led our discussions of what exactly constitutes resistance in HME institutions, and how the different “groups” of professionals and students create a highly complex social setting. Due to this complexity, the various aspects and nuances of resistance are not always easy to grasp. It has often been mentioned in our Working Group as well as by our colleagues in the workshops, that resistance in HME is “not obvious, but subtle”. One manager, for example, saw resistance in the fears of the teaching staff who were worried about using the “correct” terminology in relation to the current DEI issues. The manager had noticed that the teachers were “holding back” and becoming overly cautious, whereas in other practices dealing with change the teachers would show more proactivity.







### Music as a catalyst for institutional change?

Discussing how institutional change could be facilitated in different HME settings led to us talking about the claims for “the power of music” and the notion of music as a catalyst for change. We acknowledge that music is regularly, and often uncritically, framed as “a thing” with powers to unite, heal, and emancipate, and these expectations also apply to DEI work. In the introduction of his book *Rethinking Social Action through Music* (2021), Geoff Baker illustrates how the “power of music” ideology has been critiqued from various angles. Baker notes that, instead of framing music as “a thing” that possesses power with predictable effects, music’s relational character should be understood and highlighted (Clarke, 2016). The “rhetoric of effects” is criticised by Gaztambide-Fernández (2013), who argues that “the arts don’t do anything” and that artistic forms are something that people do. In terms of the social effects of music education, Cobo Dorado (2015) and Henley (2018) claim that while there is no guarantee of desirable effects in the first place, it is the pedagogy rather than music that generates those potential effects. Furthermore, the findings of neuroscientific studies on music’s impact are often exaggerated when reported to the general public in the media (Odendaal et al., 2019).

So, what could these arguments tell us about resistance in HME institutions? Chérie Rivers Ndaliko (2016) points out that critical thinking on culture is lacking because art “often becomes a kind of moral oasis that shifts focus away from critical scrutiny of the conditions of its production to sentimental celebration of its very existence.” Linking the suggestions above with DEI work asks the field of Higher Music Education to view music as an “active and interactional phenomenon”, or what Christopher Small would call “musicking” (Small, 1998; Gaunt et al. 2021). Considering the phenomenon of resistance, we could ask what might follow when we assess our artistic core practices critically and allow for questions such as: What does this music mean for these people in this moment and in this space? Is what I teach and how I teach relevant to these people, and in what way? What do I consider central to my artistic and pedagogical integrity, and why? How is that affected if I consider who is included and excluded from this space?



### Acknowledging the power dynamics of HME

Thinking of resistance as something that has to be “shaped” and “dealt with” immediately triggers moral questions about who is in charge, and about the power relationships within the institutions. Conservatoire cultures have been criticised for their hierarchical dynamics of power as a whole (Kingsbury, 1988; Nettle, 1995) as well as those within the master-apprentice relationship (Gaunt, 2008, 2010) that is central to many HME programmes. Issues of power have been an important part of our conversations as a Working Group, and the specific dynamics of power at HME institutions has been a lens we have often used. These quotes reflect on the experiences across many different institutions:

*I feel that in my institution, the main instrument teachers are the ones who are **really** in charge. Or at least, they themselves perceive it that way, and that distorts the dynamics of power. They assume that students come only for them and it is their status as a performer that attracts.*

*Our programme is dependent on hourly-paid teachers who earn most of their living in the field. These are often well-recognized musicians and therefore role models for our students. These teachers are not always aware of our vision and culture. Students, however, often take these teachers' feedback more seriously than the feedback by some of the institution's full-time staff.*

*It has been a challenge for the [global music] studies to be recognised equally alongside other study lines and taken time for the institution to value diversity in all its forms.*

*The challenge is to convince the teachers that the students or the department will not lose the grip on their identity when they open the doors to other departments [in cross-departmental collaboration]. They sometimes say, “this is how we work in this department”. We need some more networking and discussion to find out why this is such a sensitive topic. But many teachers also think this type of work is important. I think if you are a good musician you will be able to act in many different circumstances.*



These examples illustrate how decision-making in regards to DEI is embedded in the everyday actions of the teaching staff and department leaders working closely with the students. For example, Demange et al. (2006) link pedagogical choices with “social and musical practices of reference” (p. 102, referring to Martinand, 1989), insisting on the fact that musical practices are connected to specific group organisations and types of interactions; in this way, changes in musical procedures act as a lever to work on the issue of “power” through music. With this in mind, we encourage the institutions to ask questions such as: How is decision-making distributed in the institution, both formally and informally, and how does this impact the potentials for DEI? How is power present in music and the musical practices? Are these power dynamics discussed openly within the institution?

### Dealing with resistance?

Considering the purpose of the DIGE Working Group, the most pertinent question about resistance is how it may be harnessed. An article by Thomas & Hardy (2011) provided us with new insight into responding to resistance at an institutional level. In their view, common approaches to resistance are either *demonising* it by viewing it as something that obstructs attempts to change, or alternatively, *celebrating* it, in which case the resistance is labelled as a source for change. The authors, however, continue to problematize both of these approaches:

*Demonising and celebrating approaches, despite very different conceptualizations of resistance, both privilege the change agent. In so doing, they legitimise asymmetrical power relations between change agents and change recipients, raising a series of practical, ethical and theoretical issues. (Thomas & Hardy, 2011)*



Thomas and Hardy understand change as entailing new understandings, practices, and relationships. They argue that “[w]hile change can be imposed, it is more likely to be taken on by members of the organisation if they have played a part in the negotiations of new meanings, practices and relationships” (ibid). In HME institutions this is manifested, for example, when teachers initiate new practices that draw on their expertise or choose to commit to a new practice in order to expand their professional scope. The authors argue that, instead of privileging the change agent(s), an approach to resistance should focus on understanding the nature of the power-resistance relationships.

*[O]rganisational change should be viewed as an outcome of the dynamics of both power and resistance, drawing on insights from Foucault's (1979, 1980, 1982) conceptualisation of power relations. By emphasising power-resistance relations, we shift the focus away from questions of who resists change and why, to questions of how relations of power and resistance operate together in ways that are constitutive of change. (Thomas & Hardy, 2011)*

Rather than developing a design to “tackle” resistance, Thomas and Hardy thus plea for engagement with what seems to underpin the resistance with those involved at all levels:

*In refusing to divide organisational members as change agents and change recipients, and eschewing preconceived notions of resistance, it becomes possible to incorporate input from a wide range of organisational members and accord a voice to marginalised identities. (Ibid.)*

The approach suggested here resonates with the complexity of the HME environment and reflects the DIGE Working Group's value of listening to all voices. Inspired by these arguments, we invite the HME institutions to develop their own approach through a dialogue on what constitutes resistance within their institution. A shift from “demonising or celebrating” change agents and instead acknowledging the situated, “messy” complexities of relationships of power



and resistance may involve asking questions such as: Looking back, what kind of key turning points and changes can we identify in our institution (or department)? Why did these changes take place? What values lie behind the current practices? What might we take for granted?

### From resistance to proactiveness

As a Working Group, we have been drawn to viewing DEI as a proactive rather than a reactive framework. We promote “collective proactiveness”, by which we mean a forward-looking, action-oriented and collaborative attitude amongst the teachers and students in HME institutions. This can manifest itself through artistic forms as well as include initiatives such as the [PRIhME example](#). An important part of DEI work in HME institutions takes place before the potential students consider HME, and in the admissions processes:

*RCS Fair Access programmes are managed and co-ordinated by a small, dedicated team of staff employed at RCS that work collaboratively with others across our own institution and with external partners. These include schools, colleges and creative/community organisations. The programmes currently offer a range of activity from audition and interview preparation to taster workshops, intensive practical and transferable skills training, short bridging programmes, coaching and industry masterclasses as well as an extensive outreach programme. These are delivered in-school, in-house, in-communities on-line and with external partners. (Jesse Paul & Joshua Dickson, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)*

*Being able to re-imagine and re-structure admissions processes. This has included creating the possibility for applicants to apply from any musical and cultural background, removing the requirement for knowledge of Western music theory, and 30 designing all auditions online to avoid inequitable situations caused by visas and travel issues. (Nathan Thomson, Sibelius Academy)*



The importance of involving the students and giving them space to drive change is also acknowledged in the reflections:

*Our efforts to engage female students have continued in different ways. Whereas “She Knows Tech” has grown to be a separate, independent entity to the College (while continuing to have a student chapter rooted on our campus), other student-led initiatives that focus on closing the gender gap in the music industry have continued to emerge, and in some ways, to evolve, pushing the conversation and initiatives into the realms of gender diversity. (Clara Barbera, Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus)*

These reflections, as well as our own experiences, illustrate two distinct (and at times) overlapping approaches to proactive DEI work. Firstly, there is the accommodation perspective: these practices are about *bending the system to adapt* to the needs of previously excluded minorities and individuals and provide them with the appropriate support in order for them to succeed in the institution as it is. The other perspective deals with the plurality driving institutional change: these practices may seek to *fundamentally transform the system* at its core, both artistically and pedagogically.

The first form of proactiveness contains a strong sense of *care for the other*. It is interesting to note that institutions differ in the ways that such care is formalised within their organisations. In a workshop run by the DIGE WG at an AEC event, two colleagues had a conversation about this:

*Representative 1: “At our institution we have a diversity officer, who is a professional, and we have a committee including staff and students with a mandate to address matters of DEI within the institution.”*

*Representative 2: “We don’t. We have an informal rule that we take care of each other. This is not translated into roles, nowhere is this made explicit in words, but we just do it. [...] I should say that this has its shortcomings. I would like that some things are formalised within the organisational structure.”*

*Representative 1: “I think our way of dealing with DEI also has its shortcomings. To get an exceptional treatment, for example, you need an official diagnosis. Could it be that we need a little bit of both?”*



While the second, “transformational” approach may tend to use different vocabulary from the “care approach” and anchor itself in artistic imagination and interdisciplinary in the arts, these perspectives compliment each other. In one of our workshops a conservatoire director explained:

*“At our institution we are currently going through a major reframing of what we are and want to be. We feel as an institution we need to stop telling students what they need to be or become, and instead, let students come to us and help them become what they want to become.”*

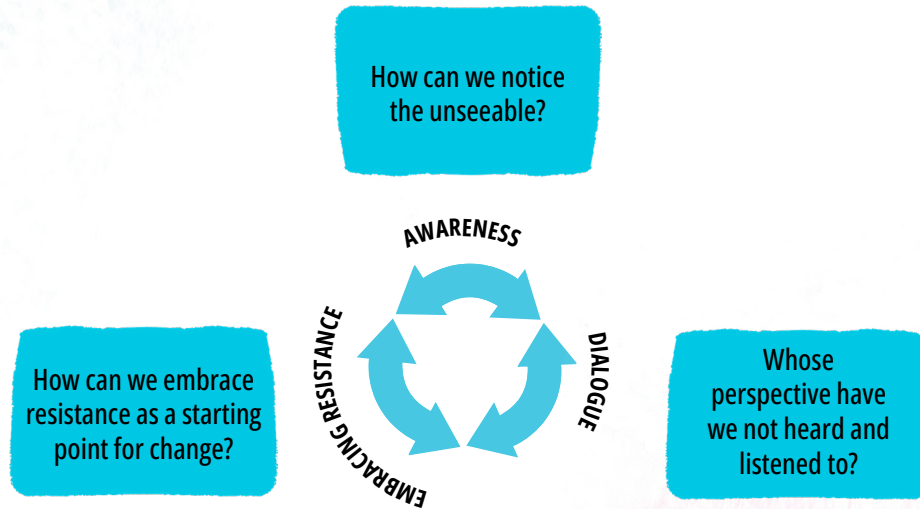
Placing the student and their needs, wishes, and dreams at the centre of our pedagogical pursuits, as this conservatoire promotes, seems quite a radical shift in the institutional culture from the perspective of the curricula-led and teacher-led HME tradition. It also brings forth other interesting questions about how we as teachers and leaders negotiate individual needs and (artistic) aspirations—our students’ as well as those of our own. How does accommodating individual needs support community-building? How does this differ from individualism? What kinds of approaches can nurture empathy and a sense of responsibility towards others and the natural world?

#### **4.3 A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO RESISTANCE IN HME: 3, 2, 1... ACTION!**

To conclude, we would like to invite the institutions to develop ways to proactively deal with resistance to change, each in their own way through dialogue, and tailored to their local contexts.



Our invitation can be portrayed as a triangle of three concepts:



### Awareness

Resistance can be made explicit through **describing what is going on** and developing a vocabulary for what we see, feel, and hear. As the reflections by the change makers show, resistance may be invisible and hard to grasp, and it may reveal what we take for granted. Articulating resistance is not the same as judging, and such a non-judgmental attitude can be the shared starting point. Neither is a non-judgmental attitude the same as quietly accepting discrimination or uncritically accepting the system as it is: it is about listening without making assumptions.





### Embracing resistance

Both the reflections and the research literature illustrate that resistance is inherent to change, but in practice we perhaps mainly “resist resistance”. This calls for accepting and even engaging with resistance as a part of institutional culture. Embracing **resistance as something that will always be there** may open up longer-term avenues for change.

### Dialogue

When it comes to eventually “dealing with” resistance—whether it is about a code of conduct, a new programme, or DEI strategy—we consider fostering spaces for dialogue to be the most important approach. Central to these spaces is the multiplicity of voices encountered there, which may also include contrasting voices. Here we present some questions that may be useful to consider either before engaging in dialogue or as part of the dialogue:

- Who is called to initiate change in the institution, and who is not?
- Whose agenda is being carried out?
- What kinds of values are taken for granted within processes of change?
- What are we as an institution responsible for?
- What can we not change, even if we wanted to, and why?
- What is the alternative to change?



## References:

- Baker, G. (2021). Rethinking Social Action through Music: The Search for Coexistence and Citizenship in Medellín's Music Schools. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0243>
- Cobo Dorado, K. (2015). La Pédagogie de Groupe dans les Cours d'Instruments de Musique. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Demange, E., Hahn, K. & Lartigot, J.-C. (2006). Apprendre la Musique Ensemble. Les Pratiques Collectives de la Musique, Base des Apprentissages Instrumentaux. [Learning music together. Collective music practice, basis of instrumental learning] Lyon: Symétrie.
- Gaunt, H. (2008). One-to-one tuition in a conservatoire: the perceptions of instrumental and vocal teachers. *Psychology of Music*, 36(2), 215–245.
- Gaunt, H. (2010). One-to-one tuition in a conservatoire: the perceptions of instrumental and vocal students. *Psychology of Music*, 38(2), 178–208.
- Gaunt, H., Duffy, C., Coric A, González Delgado, I.R., Messas, L., Pryimenko, O. & Sveidahl, H. (2021). Musicians as “makers in society”: a conceptual foundation for contemporary professional Higher Music Education. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.713648>
- Gaztambide-Fernández, R. (2013). Why the arts don't do anything: toward a new vision for cultural production in education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 83, 211–37. 33
- Gies, S. (2021). Beyond the classical mindset: the challenge of incorporating diverse musical cultures in Higher Music Education. *Artistic Plurality and Inclusive Institutional Culture in HME*.
- Kingsbury, H. (1988). *Music, Talent, and Performance: A Conservatory Cultural System*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Martinand, J.-P. (1989). Pratiques de référence, transposition didactique et savoirs professionnels en sciences techniques. [Reference practises, didactic transposition and professional knowledge of technical sciences.] *Les Sciences de l'Education, pour l'Ere Nouvelle [Educational sciences for the new era]*, 2, 23–29.
- Ndaliko, Chérie Rivers. (2016). *Necessary Noise: Music, Film, and Charitable Imperialism in the East of Congo*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.



- Nettl, B. (1995) Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Odendaal, A., Levänen, S. & Westerlund, H. (2019). Lost in translation? Neuroscientific research, advocacy, and the claimed transfer benefits of musical practice. *Music Education Research*, 21(1), 4–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2018.1484438>
- Perkins, R. (2013). Hierarchies and learning in the conservatoire: exploring what students learn through the lens of Bourdieu. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 35(2), 197–212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X13508060>
- Rehman, N., Mahmood, A., Ibtasam, M, Murtaza, S, Iqbal, N & Molnár, E. (2021). The psychology of resistance to change: the antidotal effect of organizational justice, support and leader-member exchange. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.678952/full>
- Small, C. (1998). *Musicking. The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Wesleyan University Press.
- Thomas, R. & Hardy, C. (2011). Reframing resistance to organizational change. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 27(3), 322–331 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2011.05.004>





## **5. RESOURCES FOR INSPIRATION: THE SHORTLIST**

In the field of DEI, many inspiring resources can be found on the internet. The world of Higher Music Education institutions is a relatively small one but searching in similar subject areas such as Higher Education, Art Education, and Performing Arts yields useful examples.

Why this shortlist? It ensures that the information is accessible and practical. In addition, the resources available on the Internet changes rapidly; sources will have changed, been added to, or even disappeared.

These sources are a starting point to search further, using the institutions linked in the list and the tags added. The resources are categorised by format (webpages, reports, policies, etc.) to increase accessibility: depending on the situation and their position within an institution, everyone is looking for their own type of information. Furthermore, it encourages inclusive thinking and solidarity.

The list compiled for this publication is based on the following criteria:

- applicable in and transferable to HME institutions;
- reliability of the source;
- representation of diversity;
- connection to the European context;
- balance between concise and comprehensive information.

By adding tags, the sources become an encouragement to search further on your own. The amount of sources on these topics can be overwhelming, but we hope that our colleagues in AEC institutions take their time to keep expanding their knowledge and understanding of the variety of diversity we encounter in our profession. For accessibility reasons, sources in the English language were chosen: therefore, there are relatively many sources from the United Kingdom.

List of resources, **5 categories** curated by members of the DIGE Working Group and Gender Equality and Non-discrimination Mainstreaming Task Force:

- Webpages
- Papers + Articles + Reports
- Toolkits + Action Plans
- Essays + Self-reflections
- Policies

**Tags:** abolitionism, adaptable pedagogy, beliefs, beyond western, country of origin, creative diversity, critical pedagogy, cultural diversity, decolonising, disability, diversity, equality, equity, ethnicity, European policy, gender, impact, inclusion, inclusive curriculum, legislative framework, LGBTI+, marginalised staff and students, neuro-diversity, (non)-religious, power relations, queer, race, racial consciousness, racial literacy, recommendations, SEN, social justice, society, staff, steps for change, structural discrimination, student's voice, system critique, systems, toolkit, visions, welfare, white privilege



## Webpages

 Name: Use of language: race and ethnicity

 Author, source: Advance HE

 Link: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/using-data-andevidence/use-of-language-race-ethnicity>

 Tags: ethnicity, race, racial literacy

 Name: Racial Literacy / Racial Consciousness

 Author, source: The Anti-Racist Educator

 Link: <https://www.theantiracisteducator.com/racial-literary>

 Tags: race, racial literacy, racial consciousness

 Name: Racial literacy, what does it mean?

 Author, source: Aishnine Benjamin, The Black Curriculum

 Link: <https://theblackcurriculum.com/blog/blog-post-title-three-dxgps>

 Tags: race, racial literacy, racial consciousness

 Name: Inclusive Assessment: Where next?





 Author: Dr Pauline Hanesworth, Advance HE

 Link: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/inclusive-assessment-where-next>





 Tags: equity, disability, inclusion, social justice, student's voice







 Name: Teaching disabled students  
 Author, source: Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre, University of Cambridge  
 Link: <https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/teaching-disabled-students>  
 Tags: adaptable pedagogy, equity, disability, inclusive curriculum, SEN, social justice





 Name: Disabled Students' Commission  
 Author, source: Advance HE  
 Link: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/disability-equality-higher-education/disabled-students-commission>  
 Tags: equity, disability, inclusive curriculum, social justice, student's voice, welfare





### **Papers + Articles + Reports**





 Name: Positionality as Knowledge: From Pedagogy to Praxis  
 Author: Sara Maria Acevedo et al., Integral Review Journal  
 Link: [https://integral-review.org/issues/vol\\_11\\_no\\_1\\_acevedo\\_et\\_al\\_positionality\\_as\\_knowledge.pdf](https://integral-review.org/issues/vol_11_no_1_acevedo_et_al_positionality_as_knowledge.pdf)  
 Tags: critical pedagogy, positionality





 Name: White Warnings  
 Author: Tyler Denmead, University of Cambridge  
 Link: <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1810/295515/144-Article%20Text-305-1-10-20191007.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>  
 Tags: racial consciousness, racial literacy, impact, white privilege



 Name: Disabled Students Commitment: formal consultation  
 Source: Advance HE  
 Link: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/disabled-student-commitment-formal-consultation>  
 Tags: equity, disability, recommendations, social justice, student's voice

 Name: Creative Majority report Report  
 Authors: Natalie Wreyford, Dave O'Brien, Tamsyn Dent  
 Link: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/resources/reports/creative-majority-report-v2.pdf>  
 Tags: creative diversity, cultural diversity, equity, policy, recommendations, social justice

 Name: Slow Train Coming? Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in UK Higher Education  
 Author: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Music Studies  
 Link: <https://edims.network/report/slowtraincoming/>  
 Tags: equality, gender, inclusion, marginalised staff and students, race

 Name: Delivering LGBT-inclusive Higher Education  
 Source: Stonewall  
 Link: [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/womens-health/sites/womens-health/files/delivering\\_lgbt\\_inclusive\\_higher\\_education-2019.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/womens-health/sites/womens-health/files/delivering_lgbt_inclusive_higher_education-2019.pdf)  
 Tags: LGBTI+, inclusion, recommendations, staff, students





 Name: ARTSEQUAL research initiative

 Authors: ARTSEQUAL's six research groups

 Link: <https://www.artsequal.fi>

 Tags: equality, equity, impact, inclusive curriculum, society, systems, visions, welfare

## Toolkits + Action plans

 Name: Learning and Teaching Toolkit for Programme and Module Convenors

 Source: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

 Link: <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/decolonisingsoas/learning-teaching/>

 Tags: cultural diversity, decolonising, inclusive curriculum, toolkit

 Name: Dismantling Systemic Racism at the Oxford Internet Institute

 Source: Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford

 Link: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fn4ddFgQT32Nf8SgRvdTMS\\_PJIMLL12tph6X6g\\_zNORY/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fn4ddFgQT32Nf8SgRvdTMS_PJIMLL12tph6X6g_zNORY/edit)





 Tags: steps for change, structural discrimination, system critique





 Name: Black Lives Matter at Trinity Laban - Action Plan





 Source: Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, London

 Link: <https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Black-Lives-Matter-at-TrinityLaban.pdf>





 Tags: race, racial consciousness, racial literacy

 Name: LGBTQ–Inclusivity in the Higher Education Curriculum - a best practice guide  
 Source: Stonewall, University of Birmingham  
 Link: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/teaching-academy/documents/public/lgbt-best-practice-guide.PDF>  
 Tags: queer, LGBTI+, inclusive curriculum

 Name: Inclusive Language Guide  
 Source: Oxfam  
 Link: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621487/gd-inclusive-language-guide-130323-en.pdf;jsessionid=1FF6A6C90A34B3BAECDD733AB0E98222?sequence=4>  
 Tags: disability, equity, gender equality, inclusion, LGBTI+, race

 Name: Keychange Pledge Action Plan  
 Source: Keychange, Erasmus University Rotterdam  
 Link: <https://www.keychange.eu/s/Keychange-Pledge-Action-Plan-2023.pdf>  
 Tags: European policy, gender equality, legislative framework


## Essays + Self-reflections

 Name: Abolition as Praxis of Human Being: A Foreword  
 Author: Dylan Rodriguez, Harvard Law Review  
 Link: [https://harvardlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/1575-1612\\_Online.pdf](https://harvardlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/1575-1612_Online.pdf)  
 Tags: abolitionism



 Name: White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

 Author: Peggy McIntosh

 Link: <http://codeofgoodpractice.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Mcintosh-White-Privilege-Unpacking-the-Invisible-Knapsack.pdf>

 Tags: white privilege

 Name: Vol. 8, Introduction: Beyond Western Musicalities

 Author: Maya Cunningham et al.

 Link: <https://engagingstudentsmusic.org/index.php/engagingstudents/article/view/8653/6321>

 Tags: beyond western, inclusive curriculum Policies

 Name: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

 Source: Royal Academy of Music, London

 Link: [https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/whitespace-ram/production/documents/83ed4b\\_01-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-policy.pdf](https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/whitespace-ram/production/documents/83ed4b_01-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-policy.pdf)

 Tags: diversity, equity, inclusion, legislative framework

 Name: The Gender Equality Plan

 Source: European Commission


 Link: <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/other/event220623.htm#general-info>


 Tags: European policy, gender equality



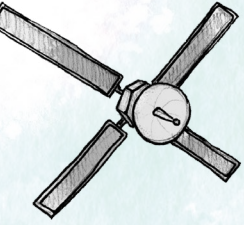
 Name: Our Commitment to Inclusion: A Statement from Berklee's Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

 Source: Center for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Berklee College of Music

 Link: <https://www.berklee.edu/diversity/our-commitment-inclusion-statement-berklees-centerdiversity-equity-and-inclusion>

 Tags: diversity, equity, inclusion, race, society, steps for change, white privilege

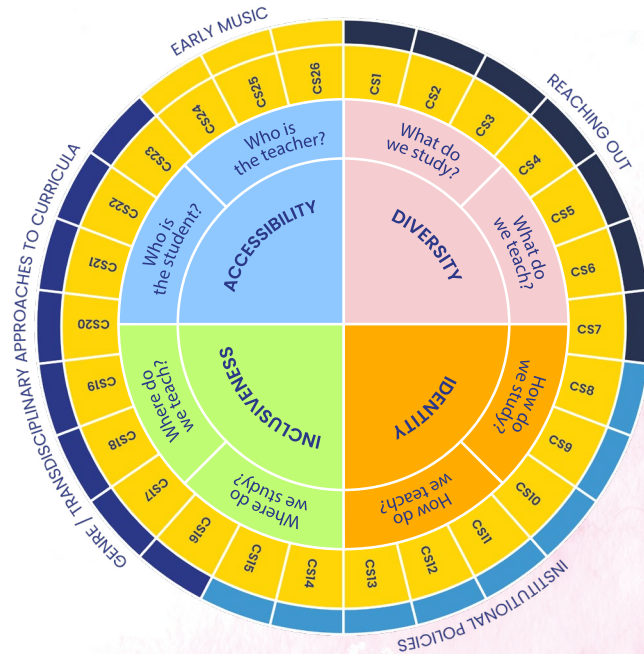












## BONUS: AEC resources





The [Diversity, Identity, Inclusiveness Working Group](#) of the [AEC - Strengthening Music in Society project](#) (AEC-SMS, 2017-2021), co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission, was aimed at encouraging HME institutions to open their educational offer so as to answer the needs and requirements of diversity and promote inclusiveness throughout their activities.

The group successfully prepared two online publications and one eBook, having evolved from the WG's personal experiences and reflections, consultations, continuous discussions and insights gained through a vast body of scholarly literature. Moreover, these outputs were enriched in myriad ways by reaching out to different HME institutions in search of existing practices and reflective actions on challenges posed by the wide area covered by this project strand:



 Name: How are diverse cultures integrated in the education of musicians across Europe?  
 Source: Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)  
 Link: <https://sms.aec-music.eu/diversity-identity-inclusiveness/how-are-diverse-cultures-integrated-in-the-education-of-musicians-across-europe-introduction/>  
 Tags: disability, diversity, equity, equality, gender equality, inclusion, society

 Name: Decentering Curricula: Questions for Re-evaluating Diversity and Inclusiveness in HMEIs  
 Source: Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)  
 Link: <https://sms.aec-music.eu/diversity-identity-inclusiveness/decentering-curricula-questions-for-re-evaluating-diversity-and-inclusiveness-in-hmeis/>  
 Tags: disability, diversity, equity, equality, gender equality, inclusion, society

 Name: Artistic Plurality and Inclusive Institutional Culture in HME  
 Source: Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)  
 Link: <https://aec-music.eu/publication/artistic-plurality-and-inclusive-institutional-culture-in-hme/>  
 Tags: disability, diversity, equity, equality, gender equality, inclusion, society, toolkit


**PRihME - Stakeholder Assembly on Power Relations in Higher Music Education** (2020-2023) is a strategic partnership project coordinated by AEC, funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission, and composed of nine HME institutions who have been assigned the task of examining the issue of power relations in the sector. A 50-person Stakeholder Assembly, inspired by the citizen's assembly model, including students, teachers and administrative staff from these institutions has met regularly and addressed the following themes, for which inclusive recommendations and conclusions have been issued for a larger group (PRihME standards):



 Name: Stakeholder Assembly 1: Understanding Power Relations and Music

 Authors: Anna Bull, PRIhME Editorial Board


 Link: <https://aec-music.eu/media/2023/02/PRIhME-1st-Assembly-Brief.pdf>

 Tags: adaptable pedagogy, critical pedagogy, curriculum, power relations, recommendations, society, steps for change, student's voice, systems

 Name: Stakeholder Assembly 2: Sexual Orientation and Gender

 Authors: Cecilia Ferm Almqvist, Ann Werner, PRIhME Editorial Board


 Link: <https://aec-music.eu/media/2023/02/2nd-Assembly-Brief.pdf>

 Tags: adaptable pedagogy, critical pedagogy, curriculum, equality, gender, LGBTI+, power relations, queer, recommendations, society, steps for change, student's voice, systems

 Name: Stakeholder Assembly 3: Socio-economic background and disability

 Authors: Cecilia Ferm Almqvist, Ann Werner, PRIhME Editorial Board


 Link: <https://aec-music.eu/media/2023/02/Assembly-3-Brief.pdf>

 Tags: curriculum, critical pedagogy, adaptable pedagogy, society, student's voice, systems, recommendations, steps for change, inclusion, neuro-diversity, inclusive curriculum, disability, social justice, SEN, legislative framework

 Name: Stakeholder Assembly 3: Socio-economic background and disability

 Authors: Sam de Boise, PRIhME Editorial Board

 Link: <https://aec-music.eu/media/2023/02/Assembly-3-Brief.pdf>


 Tags: adaptable pedagogy, critical pedagogy, curriculum, disability, inclusion, inclusive curriculum, legislative framework, neuro-diversity, power relations, recommendations, SEN, social justice, society, steps for change, student's voice, systems



 Name: Stakeholder Assembly 4: Artistic Standards

 Authors: Alexandra Kertz-Welzel, Antje Kirschning, PRIhME Editorial Board

 Link: [https://aec-music.eu/media/2023/02/Assembly-4\\_Brief.pdf](https://aec-music.eu/media/2023/02/Assembly-4_Brief.pdf)

 Tags: adaptable pedagogy, creative diversity, critical pedagogy, cultural diversity, curriculum, impact, neuro-diversity, power relations, recommendations, society, steps for change, student's voice, systems, visions

**AEC – Empowering Artists as Makers in Society** (ARTEMIS, 2022-2025) is a project coordinated by the AEC and co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission, in support of European networks. The project is building on the results of previous projects carried out by the AEC, in particular the work and outputs of the Creative Europe co-funded project **AEC – Strengthening Music in Society** (AEC-SMS, 2017-2021).

Within ARTEMIS, the Diversity, Inclusion and Gender Equality (DIGE) Working Group, together with the Gender Equality and Non-discrimination Mainstreaming Task Force, has been building on the work completed in the AEC-SMS project by the Diversity, Identity, Inclusiveness Working Group and, as a result, has developed this resource package entitled ***Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Music Education: An Invitation for Action.***

Currently, the group is active in providing workshops to specific institutions in order to assist them further in implementing the policies, strategies and recommendations included in this publication, and is responsible for promoting diversity, inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination practices within the AEC activities at large.





The Diversity, Inclusion and Gender Equality Working Group is composed of:

- Katja Thomson, Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland
- Karolien Dons, Prince Claus Conservatoire, Groningen, The Netherlands
- Monica Vejgaard, Danish National Academy of Music, Odense, Denmark
- Francesca Innocenti, Conservatorio Statale di Musica Arcangelo Corelli di Messina, Italy
- Karine Hahn, Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon, France
- Lin Xiangning, Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Singapore
- Ronald C. McCurdy, USC Thornton School of Music, Los Angeles, USA
- Alfonso Guerra, AEC Membership and Finance Coordinator, Brussels

The Gender Equality and Non-discrimination Mainstreaming Task Force is composed of:

- Steven Faber, ArtEZ University of the Arts, Zwolle, The Netherlands
- Ankna Arockiam, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow, UK
- Alfonso Guerra, AEC Membership and Finance Coordinator, Brussels
- Barbara Lalić, AEC Office and Project Coordinator, Brussels

---

AEC would like to express its most sincere gratitude to all contributors to this publication, including participants at the different workshops and sessions delivered in the frame of AEC events, as well as the colleagues from all around Europe and beyond who have taken part in the interviews under chapter 3. Furthermore, AEC would like to thank the [Royal Academy of Music](#) in London and the [Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance](#), who have kindly accepted to meet the members of our group in London and online, and have greatly inspired and contributed with some of the resources contained in the present publication.



## IMPRINT

Editor: Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)  
Avenue des Celtes / Kelteenlaan 20, 1040 Etterbeek, Brussels (Belgium)  
tel.: +32 (0) 2 73 71 670,  
email: [info@aec-music.eu](mailto:info@aec-music.eu),  
web: [aec-music.eu](http://aec-music.eu)

- DIGE Working Group Chair: Katja Thomson
- DIGE Working Group Coordinator: Alfonso Guerra

Authors: Alfonso Guerra, Ankna Arockiam, Francesca Innocenti, Karine Hahn, Karolien Dons, Katja Thomson, Lin Xiangning, Monica Vejgaard, Ronald C. McCurdy, Steven Faber

Layout and illustrations: María Fornieles & Rafael Díaz Gaztelu

© Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen. All rights reserved.

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Linkedin](#)

*Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EACEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.*

