

# POSSIBLE SELVES IN MUSIC



**A research partnership between  
Music Generation and  
St Patrick's College Drumcondra**

**POSSIBLE SELVES IN MUSIC: The Transformative Potential for Children and Young People of Performance Music Education Based on Principles of Diversity**

Full report of the outcomes of a research project on the founding principles, diverse contexts and structures of Music Generation, the purpose of which is to develop the understanding and thinking needed to secure a future direction for Music Generation that supports transformative experiences in music for children and young people.

**A research partnership between Music Generation and St Patrick's College Drumcondra**

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# Foreword

This research entitled Possible Selves in Music was commissioned by Music Generation, Ireland's National Performance Music Education Programme initiated by Music Network, co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds, the Department of Education and Skills and Local Music Education Partnerships. It was carried out by Thomas Johnston and Patricia Flynn in a research partnership between St Patrick's College Drumcondra (now Dublin City University) and Music Generation. It resulted in a model to guide the future directions of Music Generation. This model encompasses the breadth of Music Generation's vision for an inclusive music education, draws on in-depth research on what is currently happening in each area where Music Generation is currently established, and is based on a contemporary understanding of music and its role in individuals' lives, in building communities and in engaging those on the margins.

Music Generation was founded in 2010 in order to establish high-quality, accessible and inclusive performance music education that is locally-provided and part of a national infrastructure. Far-reaching from its inception, it sought to go beyond an older approach to the provision of music training. Its vision for the children and young people involved in its programmes is that *through access to high-quality vocal and instrumental music education, Music Generation will empower and enrich the lives of children and young people by enabling them to develop their creativity, reach their full potential, achieve self-growth and contribute to their personal development within a vibrant local music community* (Music Generation, Policy and Priorities 2010-2015).

This is a ground-breaking initiative. As a country Ireland had been trying to put in place such an infrastructure since the amendment of the 1930 Vocational Education Act to include tuition on instruments and formation of orchestras. The catalyst for finally setting up such an infrastructure was a philanthropic donation of €7 million from U2 and The Ireland Funds. The donors were responding to a need long identified in reports spanning the last 30 years, including *Deaf Ears?* (Heron, 1985), The PIANO Report (PIANO Review Group, 1996), The MEND Report (Heneghan, 2001) and in particular a feasibility report on *A National System of Local Music Education Services*, completed by Music Network in 2003 and piloted in two areas of the country, Donegal and Dublin City.

The involvement of philanthropy brought new ways of thinking about establishing this infrastructure. The focus was on children and young people under 18 and on using funding to provide what was missing i.e. performance music education, rather than to fund what is or should already be provided for i.e. curriculum music in mainstream education. Two further aspects of Music Generation are the partnerships which are fundamental to its way of working and the matched funding model which results in the provision of performance music education which is both locally and nationally co-funded.

Partnership is fundamental to Music Generation's work and brings together partners who may be used to a more autonomous way of working. These include national and local partnerships between the education sector, arts sector and local authorities among other organisations. Local Music Education Partnerships (MEPs) were established and these are part of a national infrastructure led by the Music Generation National Development Office. These MEPs, usually led by either the Local Authority (LA) or the local Education and Training Board (ETB), work intensively with a wide range of other partners to facilitate locally-based performance music education and to source 50% matched funding, a proportion of which may be 'in-kind'. Prior to their donation, the donors gained a commitment by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) that they would continue this model after the set-up phase, with the DES replacing the donors' funding and with local MEPs continuing to source matched funding.

Music Generation is currently established in 12 areas of the country – Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Laois, Limerick City, Louth, Mayo, Offaly/Westmeath, Sligo, South Dublin and Wicklow, as well as working closely with Donegal Music Education Partnership. Its programmes cross many music genres including Rock and Pop, Traditional Irish Music, Classical, Jazz, Hip-hop and many more. It includes individual music-making and many types of vocal and instrumental ensembles. It accommodates within itself a range of approaches to music education and intentions for learning, often drawing on understandings from community music practice, early years music practice and both formal and

informal music learning. The contexts within which it works include educational, community and arts settings, as well as within probation services, direct provision centres, festivals and innovative venues such as Limerick City's Music Generation Bus, among many others.

Music Generation is not one system but could be more properly described as an ecosystem, accommodating within it diverse music traditions and approaches to musical growth and learning. The myriad of people it brings together to achieve a shared goal can have different ideas of what is important in music education. There is potential for a clash of values or for a misunderstanding of music learning intentions and priorities across music traditions and contexts. The people involved need a way of talking about Music Generation that is based on a shared understanding and that affirms the role of each of these music traditions and practices in achieving Music Generation's vision for children and young people.

It is important that Music Generation is not owned by any one set of music values but is able to articulate an overarching approach that accommodates the values of different traditions and practices. This should also help each part of Music Generation to understand the shared endeavour that each tradition is contributing to, while maintaining its own integrity.

This research proposes a model to guide the future direction of Music Generation and ensure that the breadth and innovative nature of the set-up phase is not lost or overly narrowed in its future development. What has developed is a highly-diverse and complex organisation that is dependent on the diversity and flexibility it currently has in order to achieve its aims. Any attempt to simplify this into a more homogenous system will limit this. The model developed in this research articulates the overarching concepts that Music Generation needs to be aware of, in order to ensure that what has been gained in the new approach to performance music education is carried forward into the future. The model includes four components that capture essential aspects of Music Generation.

1. **The partnerships** that support and facilitate Music Generation's work
2. A **spectrum of performance music education modes** that provide an overarching way of understanding the learning intentions from the diverse music traditions and practices that are part of Music Generation. It provides a way of talking about and understanding performance music education that includes a breadth of music genres but is not tied to one genre
3. The ways in which children and young people experience **meaningful music-making**
4. The multiple **possible selves** in music which children and young people can develop and achieve through having these meaningful music experiences in diverse music approaches supported by strong partnerships.

The model brings together Music Generation's founding principles with strong in-the-field research in each MEP on how this is being realised. It examines this through a contemporary understanding of performance music education informed by a strong theoretical base drawn from current literature.

The concept of 'possible selves', first introduced by Markus and Nurius (1986), is a useful one for Music Generation. It is congruent with the aspirations of the donors and the aims of Music Generation. That is, that performance music education will have a strong transformational impact on the lives of children and young people, musically, personally and socially within vibrant communities which have music as part of their fabric. Its plural nature recognises the different pathways and possible destinations. Children and young people engage with music learning to enrich their lives in a range of ways. Possible selves encompass the many musical self-identities children and young people develop as a consequence of their experiences with music and other musicians. They include the 'peak' moments of intense musical experience but also the small routine or everyday experiences that accumulate to shape their sense of their musical capabilities. When positive, both inspire and motivate children and young people to work to develop the skills and expertise needed to realise their possible self in music. It also serves as an anchoring concept and Music Generation is at its best when all part of this ecosystem are focused on supporting children and young people's possible selves in music.



The model not only has relevance to Music Generation in Ireland, but could potentially change the ways the music sector in this and other countries thinks about the provision of high-quality, inclusive, accessible, diverse, creative and sustainable performance music education.

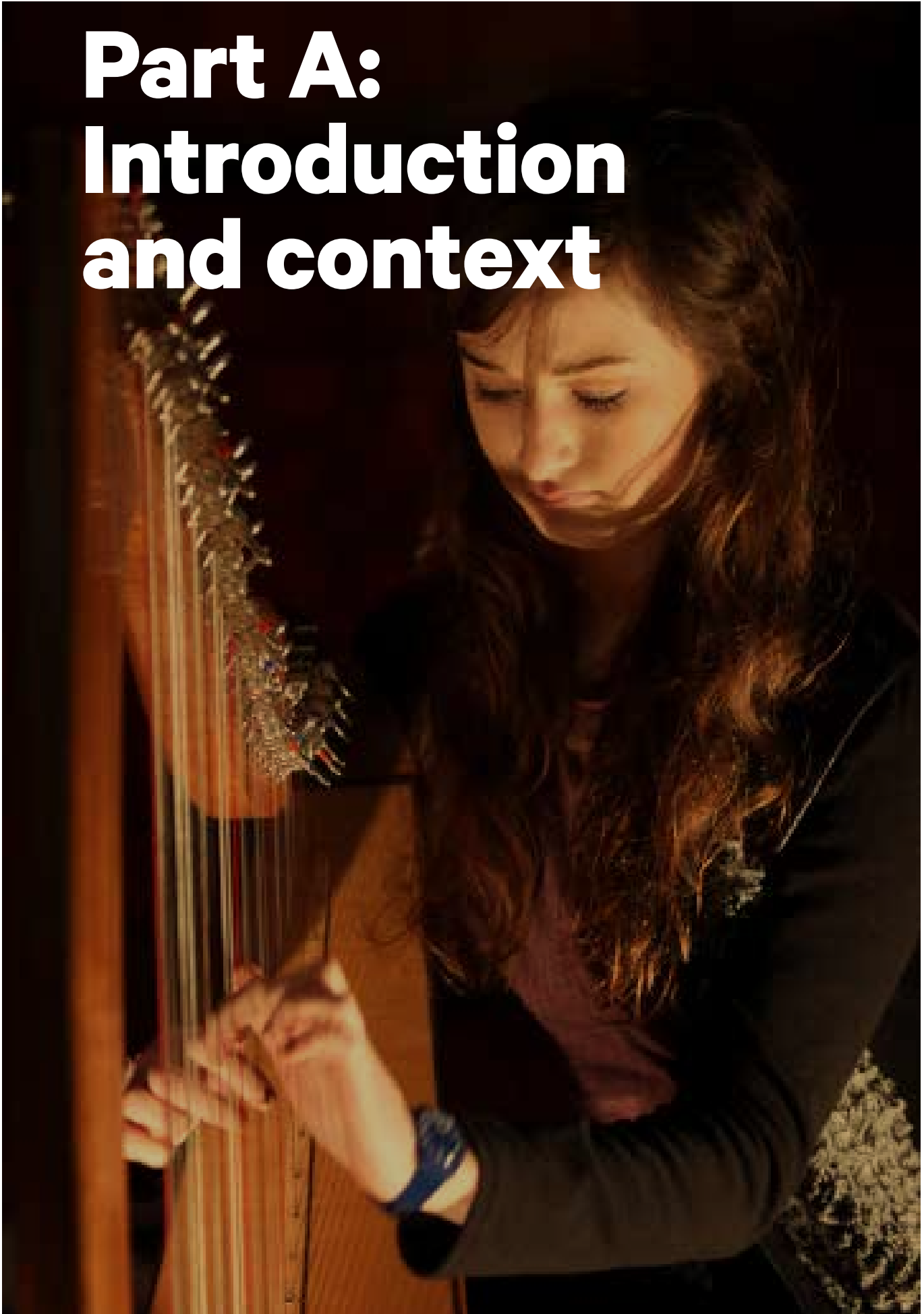
### **Acknowledgements**

The research would not have been possible without the co-operation and engagement of local Music Education Partnerships, in particular the coordinators of each MEP who gave their time in interviews and facilitated access to their music programmes, including the musicians, children and young people, parents, members of the MEP, school principals and other venue and programme partners. The researchers gratefully acknowledge their contribution and the contribution of those partners in each MEP. The research was overseen by a Research Board including Prof Stephanie Pitts (University of Sheffield), Prof Emer Smyth (ESRI) and Rosaleen Molloy (Music Generation). Their advice and guidance throughout the research was invaluable and significantly influenced the research approach. Prior to its final publication, the research was discussed with a group representing the Department of Education and Skills, Music Network, The Ireland Funds and the Board of Music Generation. The publication of this report and the associated summary was supported by the staff of Music Generation National Development Office, in particular Aoife Lucey. The researchers would like to express their appreciation for her detailed and knowledgeable work in overseeing this publication.





# Part A: Introduction and context



# Chapter 1.

## A conceptual model of transformative experience for Music Generation.

### 1.1. Background to the research

There were moments in past decades in Ireland that, in hindsight, we can now see as significant and pivotal in the spheres of music, the arts and education. These were moments when positive disruption and lasting change occurred in our ways of thinking about supporting, valuing and enriching our musical and artistic lives. This change was sometimes subtle and at other times profound and it occurred for different reasons and in different ways. It was brought about through the pioneering work of passionate, motivated, visionary and committed individuals and also through the collective endeavours of communities effecting change from within. The policies developed and implemented by government departments, statutory bodies and third sector organisations were often factors in these changes. The impetus for change was driven in several ways: by the evolving needs of local communities; by some perceived injustice; by the realisation that a way of working or organising a particular aspect of society could be improved; or by the awareness that something different needed to happen to improve people's lives.

*In its genesis and continuing development, Music Generation, Ireland's national performance music education service, finds a resonance with each of these dynamics of change. Those who originally spearheaded the setting up of Music Generation recognised that long-standing and diverse barriers had prevented children and young people from accessing meaningful music-making in Ireland. They understood that setting up anything that resembled a homogenous 'system' of music-making would be repeating the mistakes of the past and would have limited impact. They also acknowledged that the most effective way to address these barriers was to bring together individuals, groups and organisations at local levels to work together to address local needs. In this way, communities could be empowered to effect positive change from the ground up. Most crucially, the experiences of children and young people were placed at the heart of what Music Generation set out to achieve:*

*Mission Statement: Through access to high-quality vocal and instrumental music education, empower and enrich the lives of children and young people by enabling them to develop their creativity, reach their full potential, achieve self-growth and contribute to their personal development, within a vibrant local music community.  
(Music Generation, Policy and Priorities 2010-2015, p.2).*

From its beginnings, Music Generation has worked towards achieving its vision by embedding itself as an open structure within and beyond already existing local and national systems. Attempts had been made since the amendment to the Vocational Education Act of the 1930s to bring about a country-wide system of performance music education. However, these initiatives failed to thrive, most often because they fell between the competing interests of various government departments or were subject to changing priorities at local or national levels. Influenced by the principles of philanthropy and strengthened by the reputational leverage of the donors, Music Generation occupies a space that is both separate and connected. For this reason, it has the potential to connect the various concerns and stakeholders. This space has facilitated existing agencies to work in ways that have not previously been sustained. From this, new ways of providing performance music education for children and young people

– that is sustainable beyond an initial project phase – are emerging. This is unprecedented within the arts and cultural spheres in Ireland. Music Generation’s approach can be said to be both pioneering and disruptive in a positive way.

A number of years into Music Generation’s journey, its Board recognised that there was a growing need to capture, understand and articulate: a) the ways in which the organisation’s infrastructure was developing; b) the ways in which children and young people were experiencing music-making within this new and evolving infrastructure, and c) the implications of any developments on Music Generation’s future directions. Embarking on and supporting a research initiative offered the best method of investigating these areas. Underpinned by a rigorous theoretical base, a research project would contribute not only to Music Generation’s development but would also advance a wider understanding of music education. It would explore Music Generation’s programme in a robust and interrogatory process in order to create new knowledge around developments in non-mainstream music education in Ireland.

The fact that it was a research project rather than an evaluation project meant that its findings would not just be applicable to the present moment but would go on being relevant as Music Generation developed. It would provide outcomes beyond specific contexts, and programmes which could be generalised to other initiatives, programmes, populations, etc. However, while these kinds of research outcomes are important, the primary and hoped-for value of the research for Music Generation was contained in more future-orientated outcomes. The research was seen as having the potential to frame a conversation where all those participating within its infrastructure – musicians, parents/guardians, classroom teachers, community leaders, local partners, donors, and other funders – could a) reflect on the impact of what they do in terms of supporting the music-making experiences of children and young people, and b) understand their potential role in shaping Music Generation’s development into the future.

### 1.2. Research aims

The research undertook:

- » to capture and to convey the texture and depth of the diversity of meaningful music-making which children and young people encounter across Music Generation’s infrastructure;
- » to reveal a) the barriers to meaningful music-making for children and young people, and b) the diverse conditions which are put in place at each level of Music Generation’s infrastructure to confront and challenge these barriers;
- » to acknowledge and understand the involvement of all those individuals, organisations, bodies, etc. who were ultimately enabling children and young people to engage in meaningful music-making;
- » to investigate the characteristics, implications, and outcomes of the public-private partnership model which stimulated and nurtured open partnership structures at local and national levels;
- » to act as a tool to awaken, probe, advance, and transform thinking across the landscape of non-mainstream music education in Ireland;
- » to inspire a sense of what was possible into the future among all those involved in Music Generation, including children and young people.

### 1.3. Music Generation

The following is a brief overview of the various facets of Music Generation, including its organisational structures, how it works, the people involved, etc. It is included here as a reference point for the reader to understand labels and terminology that are used and described in depth throughout this report.

Music Generation is described as Ireland’s national music education programme. Initially set up in 2010, it is, at the time of writing, in the 5th year of its first phase of establishing country-wide access to performance music education. It was seed funded by U2 and The Ireland Funds based on the recommendations of Music Network’s feasibility report, *A national system of local music education services* (2003), together with an evaluation of two pilot projects carried out in Dublin and Donegal

respectively. Given the particular funding available, the wishes of the donors, and the changed landscape in which its programme is finally happening, Music Generation has, of necessity, further developed and significantly adjusted this initial blueprint.

Music Generation is a subsidiary company of Music Network and has its own Board of Directors which represents the donors and oversees the work of the Music Generation National Development Office. During its first year it published a strategic plan and a Policy and Priorities 2010-2015 document, which set out its thinking and strategic goals. These documents outlined Music Generation's intention to seed fund up to 12 locally-based Music Education Partnerships (MEPs) throughout Ireland for a period of three years, based on matched funding by the MEP of up to €200,000. These would be funded on a phased basis with a commitment from the Department of Education and Skills to continue this funding after the initial set up phase.

MEPs are local or regional groups that work together to create a plan for a high quality music education service in their locality, guided by a steering committee and lead partner. The lead partner must be a statutory agency, often the ETB (previously the VEC) or a local authority Arts Office. Each MEP also includes diverse local partners providing a range of expertise and interests. These include private providers, festival organisers, musicians, representatives from primary, post-primary and higher education, among other stakeholders.

Four funding rounds have been held to date. To apply for funding, an area or region is required to establish and register a Music Education Partnership, bringing together local stakeholders and interested parties. They then work with local partners to respond to Music Generation's Policies and Priorities (2010) and to develop a detailed plan for vocal and instrumental music education in their area, prioritising consideration of the locality's particular needs and resources. Within this, they identify how 50% matched funding will be achieved, including in-kind and monetary sources. Funding calls are competitive and, in order to establish music services on a rolling basis, approximately three MEPs are awarded funding in each round.

FIGURE 1: MUSIC GENERATION'S MUSIC EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS (MEPs)



There are currently eleven MEPs funded through this mechanism. The following MEPs currently comprise Music Generation's national infrastructure (FIGURE 1), across four funding phases:

**1st phase**

Music Generation Louth, Music Generation Mayo, Music Generation Sligo

**2nd phase**

Music Generation Cork City, Music Generation Wicklow, Music Generation Laois

**3rd phase**

Music Generation Carlow, Music Generation Limerick City, Music Generation Offaly/Westmeath;

**4th phase**

Music Generation Clare and Music Generation South Dublin.

At the time of writing of this report, all the MEPs initially seed funded through the philanthropic funding are now co-funded by the Department of Education and Skills. One of the two pilot areas is also part of the DES co-funding mechanism bringing the current MEPs to 12.

Once funding is awarded, an MEP coordinator (variously titled Programme Director, Music Development Manager, Manager, Development Officer or Music Education Officer) is appointed to put into action the plan that acquired funding. The coordinator works with the MEP steering committee and a range of partners to set up, rollout, manage and further develop music services for their area. One of the strengths of this structure is the autonomy that is possible locally to shape services in ways that are particularly appropriate to that locality. They also have the benefit of being part of a national infrastructure.

Financial, activity, and progress reports are made to the National Development Office (NDO) and support is provided to MEP coordinators through staff development opportunities and through a national network that meets regularly. The development of this infrastructure is overseen at a national level by the National Development Office (NDO). The NDO, through Music Generation's National Director, liaises with Music Generation's Board of Directors and maintains a close relationship with critical stakeholders (U2, The Ireland Funds, Music Network, the Department of Education and Skills (DES), and local Music Education Partnerships), to build and sustain strategic national alliances (e.g., with the Arts Council). During the initial stages of Music Generation, an understanding of MEPs as co-funders, with equal significance to the philanthropic and public service funders, was developed. Music Generation's website includes the following description:

*Ireland's National Music Education Programme. A Music Network initiative, Music Generation is co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds, the Department of Education and Skills, and local Music Education Partnerships.<sup>1</sup>*

#### 1.4. Methodological design

The research employed three types of methodological approach: the first focused on three individual Music Education Partnerships (MEPs) as individual case studies, and observed individual programmes in each MEP over one and a half years (see Appendix 1). The second approach involved gathering data from across all MEPs through interviews and focus groups, in particular from the coordinators/directors of MEPs, representative musicians, parents/guardians, school principals, classroom teachers, and members of each Music Education Partnership. The third was an embedded approach in which the researcher examined reports and other records and was part of the MEP network meetings and other events. In this way, the researcher gained an insider understanding of Music Generation, observing and recording events as well as conducting interviews, focus groups, workshop meetings, and informal discussions. Other approaches included photo elicitation, and children's drawings and mapping exercises. Through this process, an extensive and rich body of data was gathered. Additionally, a research board comprising Prof. Stephanie Pitts (University of Sheffield), Prof. Emer Smyth (Economic and Social Research Institute), Dr Patricia Flynn (Principal Investigator, St Patrick's College Drumcondra), and Rosaleen Molloy (National Director, Music Generation), met quarterly to inform and guide the research. The rich triangulated data that resulted was analysed from a strong theoretical base which included diverse perspectives over the last five decades (e.g., Freire, 1970; Markus and Nurius, 1986; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Oyserman et al., 2004; Marshall, Young and Domene, 2006; Green, 2008; Turino, 2008; Hallam, 2011; Varvarigou, Creech and Hallam, 2014). This resulted in the development of a model to guide the future directions of Music Generation. This is presented throughout this document, representing each part of Music Generation in its support of the ultimate goal of transformative experiences for children and young people through music.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.musicgeneration.ie/> (accessed 29/05/2016).





## Chapter 2. From diversity to developing a conceptual model of transformative experience.

During the initial stages of the research, there was a focus on the many types of diversities that characterised Music Generation and that distinguished it from other initiatives. These included: diversity in music genres and practices; diversity in participants' locations and contexts; diversity in the structural makeup of the organisation (both financial and organisational); and very diverse partnerships forged nationally and in each locality as they responded to local needs and strengths. In its set up, Music Generation strongly exemplified the maxim that 'One size does not fit all'. In its resistance to homogeneity, its valuing of local autonomy (which also includes local responsibility), its aspiration to avoid blunt stereotypical approaches to age groupings and music genres, and its determination not to set up a 'system' as the heart of its provision, it is close to the thinking of critical diversity (Dworkin, 2013; Herring and Henderson, 2011; O'Connell, 2013; Walcott, 2011).

While examining these areas, the question quickly arose – 'diversity for what?' Diversity is not a good in itself, only in what it can achieve. Consequently, the strong focus of the research on transformation emerged, i.e., the transformative potential for children and young people of a music education service grounded in principles of diversity. This was essentially the aim of the donors and very clearly the aim of all parts of the developing Music Generation – to have a powerful, positive impact on the lives of children and young people in Ireland through access to a vibrant and diverse performance music education. All other parts, such as the development of structures, the work with and of musicians, the partnership-building and consultations with communities, the strategic alliances and initiatives of the National Development Office, were only important insofar as they also focused on achieving this aim.

Based on the gathered data and associated findings, the research then developed a model that reflected this ambition (FIGURE 2), a model to be used as a guide and 'thinking tool' by Music Generation to ensure that it retains this focus. From the philanthropic genesis of Music Generation, through the various types of partnerships (high level national, regional, local and individual), and on to the range and types of sustained music-making opportunities in diverse contexts, there was a strong line that anchored and connected these constituents of Music Generation to their ultimate goal – transforming the lives of children and young people through music.

In Music Generation's Strategic Plan (2010-2015), three core target groups are identified. As would be expected, children and young people feature first, but the core groups also include musicians and communities. This research suggests that musicians and communities are not independent of the consideration of children and young people. Music Generation supports and strongly advocates for musicians' professional practice. It also acknowledges the important role that community plays and recognises the potential for the cultural enrichment of local communities; but these groups are not the *raison d'être* of Music Generation. They are an outcome of functioning and working to transform the lives of children and young people through music.

The model that was developed throughout this research is illustrated in full below (FIGURE 2). It has four interlinked components (a-d) representing the different parts and activities of Music Generation. From left to right it shows the a) partnerships, ignited and influenced by a philanthropic model, that b) support children and young people engaging across the three modes of Performance Music Education in ways c) that are musically meaningful and d) that realise their possible selves.

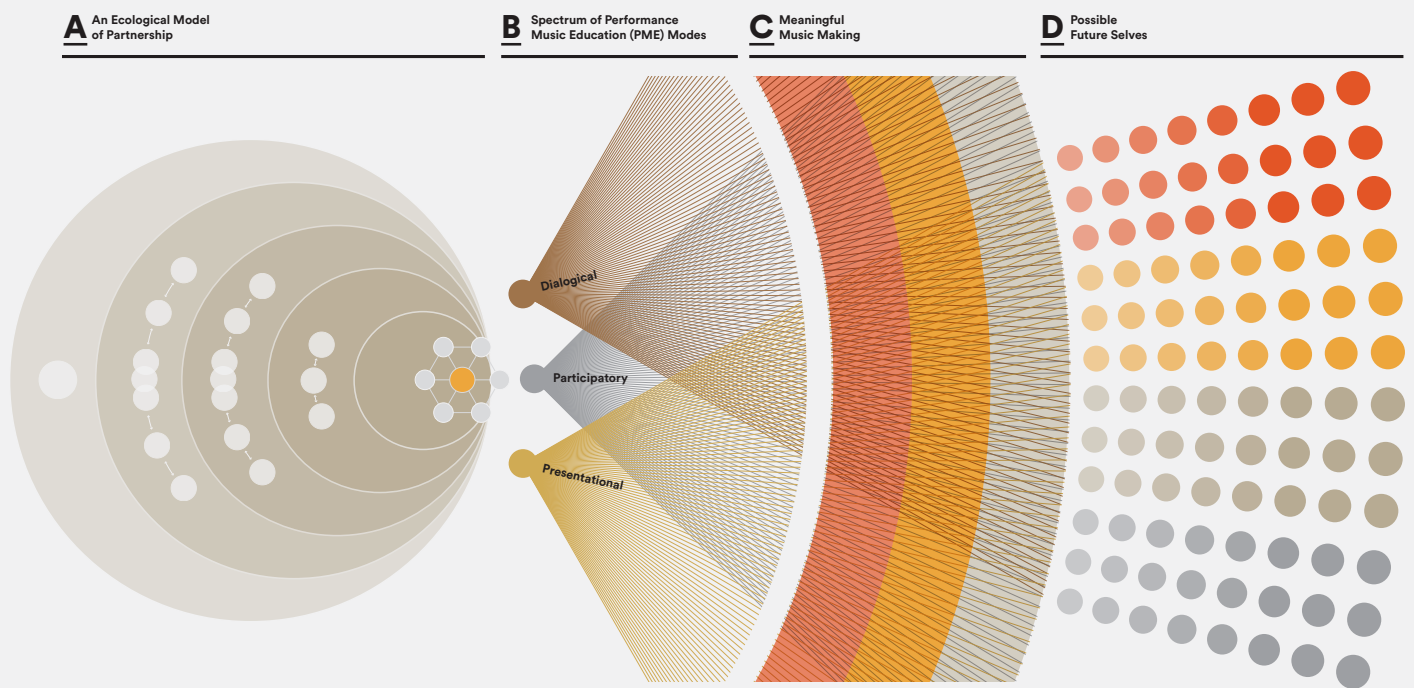


FIGURE 2: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE FOR MUSIC GENERATION

This overall model is outlined in detail in the remainder of this section. In each subsequent section a component of the model is dissected and pertinent issues are discussed and presented in more detail, so that those working in the area can fully understand how learnings can be accommodated in their own work and practice. The model draws together and illustrates each component based on examples from the research. Each component is underpinned by what is known in relevant literature. Additionally, the model examines what it might take for Music Generation to align more optimally in this way and also what it might take to sustain this alignment into the future.

The model also responds to the types of questions that the research addressed, such as: What does it mean to have possible selves in and through musical doing? What are the many ways music is significant and meaningful for children and young people? What are the ways in which children and young people engage in performance music education, given the variety of contexts, genres, practices and functions of music? What is the nature of the partnerships that can support meaningful engagement in a range of performance music education modes and nurture the development of children and young people's possible selves, in and through music?

This model is illustrative of the entirety of the findings presented in the research and it illuminates the visionary ecosystem that Music Generation should be. The model was shaped by the diverse meaningful music-making experiences of children and young people across Music Generation's MEPs: for example, in programmes which focused on song-writing, classical strings, early-years music-making, hip hop, traditional music, and other musical genres and practices. It was informed by the intentions and ambitions of children and young people who expressed their hopes and dreams of future lives that would be imbued in some way by meaningful musical doing. It was also informed by those partnerships, systems and structures at philanthropic, national, and local levels which strived to nurture and support children and young people's music-making. The conceptual model is therefore a 'thinking tool' through which we can directly connect the vision and intentions of Music Generation to the lived experiences of children and young people. To illustrate this idea, the model spins and weaves a 'golden thread' from the overarching vision of philanthropy that has made Music Generation possible, through each layer of partnership and approach to provision, to that layer where music-making is directly impactful in the lives of children and young people. It takes the contribution, expertise, and resources of many to ensure that this can happen, but by ensuring that every child and young person across Music Generation's MEPs can follow their own 'golden thread', Music Generation has the potential to be truly transformative.

Music Generation is also a fledgling and shifting world, and there are many diverse and ever-moving components and characteristics of this new world. The conceptual model of transformative experience acknowledges and brings together this world of diverse intentions and actions for children and young people's music-making. By imagining Music Generation through this lens, the musician, the classroom teacher, the coordinator, or the local music education partner, can reflect on and interpret the interconnectedness of what they do in this diverse ecosystem with the implications of what they do in terms of children and young people's meaningful music-making experiences. Engaging with the model in this way could encourage all partners across Music Generation to become more critically reflective participants, and their intentions – diverse as they may be – could become even more strongly aligned with the meaningful music-making experiences of children and young people. Perhaps most importantly, this conceptual model of transformative experience may well help to guide Music Generation's thinking, plans and actions into a future in which informed change and improvements can continue to be made for all those involved in this evolving joint enterprise.

Each component of this conceptual model of transformative experience for Music Generation is introduced below, and its respective position within the model's illustration (from left to right) is highlighted.

## Part A

The research identified characteristics of diverse partnership-working across Music Generation's infrastructure and subsequently developed a six-level ecological model of partnership for Music Generation. The **ecological model of partnership** component of the conceptual model of transformative experience (FIGURE 3) incorporates the crucial role that effective partnership-working at each level of Music Generation's infrastructure played in putting in place diverse conditions which supported children and young people's meaningful music-making in the 'present' and their striving towards their possible selves in the future.

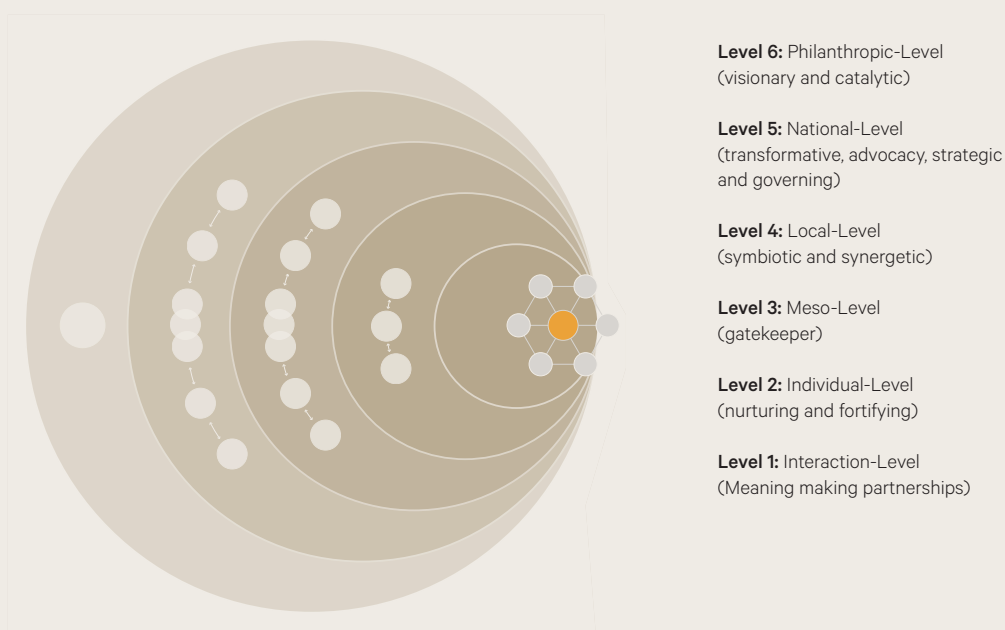


FIGURE 3: AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP FOR MUSIC GENERATION

When it was observed to function at its best, Music Generation's partnership infrastructure was fluid, open, multipurpose, and non-hierarchical. The characteristics and qualities of partnership-working from one level to another were also diverse. In effective partnership-working, all those within a child's or young person's immediate to more remote environments (from musicians to parents/guardians to school principals to local music education providers to national organisations, etc.) strived to connect their actions to the ultimate impact of those actions on the experience of children and young people. These partnerships 'wrapped around' and 'cocooned' children and young people, and the partners' diverse intentions aligned with those of Music Generation, i.e., for children and young people to encounter music-making in meaningful ways. These research findings are encapsulated and developed in this document within a six-level ecological model of partnership for Music Generation. To understand the interconnectedness of each level, it might be useful to think of the aforementioned 'golden thread' connecting the first level interaction partnerships (where relationships between musicians and children/young people directly enable and facilitate meaningful music-making experiences), to the 6th-level philanthropic-partnerships (where the visionary and capacity-building power of Music Generation lies).

The six levels of partnership developed for Music Generation in this research are: interaction-level (meaning-making partnerships), individual-level (nurturing and fortifying partnerships), meso-level (gatekeeper partnerships), local-level (symbiotic and synergetic partnerships), national-level (transformative, advocacy, and governing partnerships), and philanthropic-level (visionary and catalytic partnerships).

## PART B

The **performance music education** component of the conceptual model of transformative experience (FIGURE 4) incorporates the breadth and diversity of ways that children and young people were observed to encounter meaningful music-making across Music Generation's infrastructure.

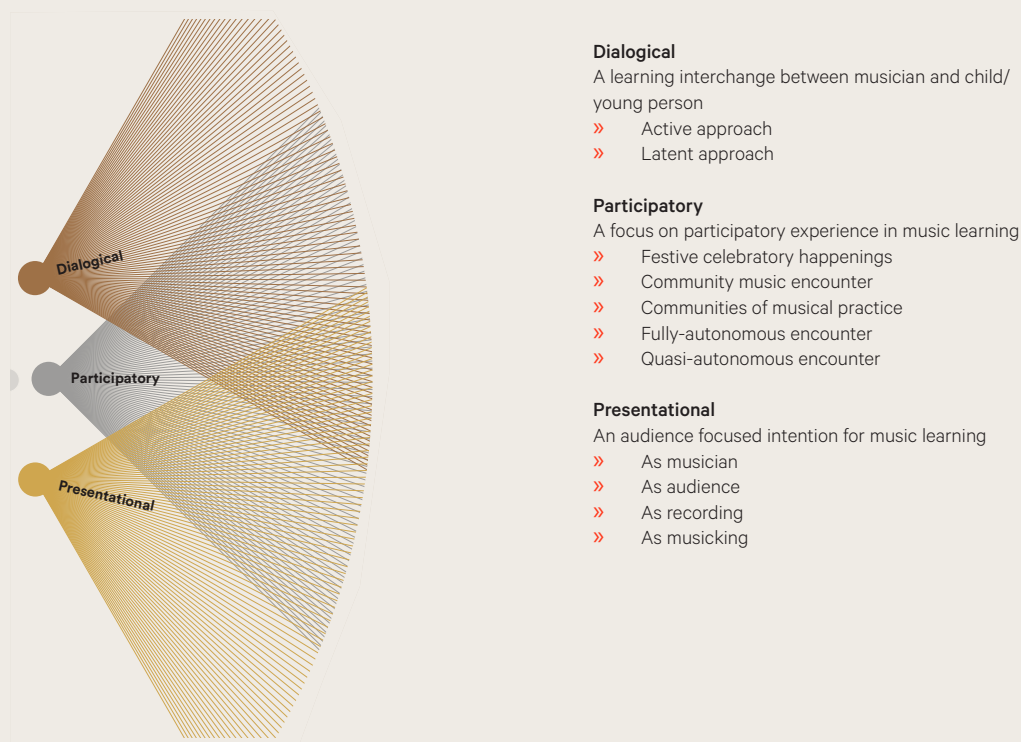


FIGURE 4: PERFORMANCE MUSIC EDUCATION ACROSS THREE MODES AND INHERENT SPECTRA

The range and diversity of children and young people's music-making encounters are conceptualised across three performance music education (PME) modes identified in the research: dialogical PME (think of an excellent individual or group instrumental/vocal lesson), participatory PME (think of all those music-making encounters which place significant value on participation and inclusion, such as community music initiatives, traditional music sessions, or celebratory events), and presentational PME (think about those encounters such as concerts, gigs, and showcases where children and young people present their music to audiences, and listen-as-audience to the music-making of others).

Each of the three modes (dialogical PME, participatory PME, and presentational PME) has an inherent spectrum comprised of a number of spectrum areas. Each spectrum area has an associated theoretical underpinning and each area is also distinct in terms of the different types of meaning that children and young people experience as they encounter music-making from one area to another.

## PART C

The **meaning-making** component of the conceptual model of transformative experience (FIGURE 5) reflects the widest range of ways in which children and young people were found to construct and experience meaning in and through music-making across a three-mode PME spectrum (see FIGURE 4).



**Musical Meaning** includes meaning-making constructed and experienced through a relationship with the music itself

**Personal Meaning** includes music-making which is inherent to the individual child or young person's wellbeing

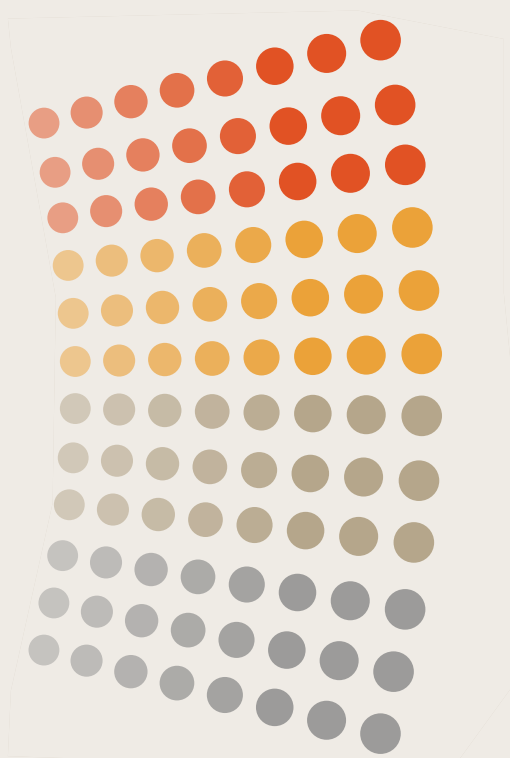
**Relational Meaning** includes music-making that is inherent to the relationships forged between children, young people and others.

FIGURE 5: TYPES OF MEANING-MAKING ACROSS THE THREE PME MODES

The three types of meaning that children and young people were discovered to construct and experience across each sub-case programme are described as: musical meaning, which includes components of meaning-making inherent to the music itself; personal meaning, which includes components of meaning-making through music-making which are inherent to the individual child's/young person's personal wellbeing; and relational meaning, which includes components of meaning-making through music-making which are inherent to the relationships forged between children/young people and others.

## PART D

The **possible selves** component of the conceptual model of transformative experience (FIGURE 6) incorporates a forward-looking future-orientated dimension of experience for children and young people, where they (and others) can imagine a diverse constellation of possible future selves, enabled and supported by their experiences in music. Reflecting the types of meaning-making, the four types of possible selves are: musical possible selves, personal possible selves, relational possible selves, and additionally, unforeseen possible selves. It is this vision of what children and young people can become, and what they can achieve in their lives through musical doing, that permeates all levels of the ecological model of partnership developed for Music Generation in this research.



### Musical possible selves

- » Musically capable, confident, skilled, determined and persevering
- » Musically creative, innovative and inventive
- » Musically knowing, expressive
- » Musically leading

### Personal possible selves

- » Personally growing, having purpose, feeling confident, feeling happy and achieving

### Relational possible selves

- » Socially connected and belonging through music. Recognised musically by peers and others

### Unforeseen possible selves

- » Unlimited, unintended, unplanned and unimagined outcomes

FIGURE 6: A CONSTELLATION OF POSSIBLE SELVES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



## 2.1. Barriers to performance music education

The gaps that have persistently existed in Ireland in the public provision of non-mainstream music education have long been acknowledged. In the 1980s, the *Deaf Ears?* report stated that if a line were drawn from Ennis to Dublin, no publicly funded music school would be found above that line (Herron, 1985). Over a decade ago, the Music Network report, *A national system of local music education services: Report of a feasibility study* (2003), revealed that children and young people were 'unable to develop their potential in music making', as a result of the gaps in public provision (p.4). Nevertheless, we must not overlook the pockets of rich music-making that have developed and that exist across the Irish landscape as a result of the commitment of many individuals, community groups, and other organisations who have focused considerable energy, time and resources in this area for many years.

This environment, while enriching the landscape, did not often, however, support long-term thinking. Music Generation – as it strives to become a sustainable, national non-mainstream music education infrastructure, capable of responding to diverse local contexts to provide children and young people with equitable access to a range of music-making experiences – is, therefore, a ground-breaking and ambitious initiative.

Music Generation was set up and is being developed over a phased basis in response to complex and deeply embedded barriers which have long prevented many children and young people from accessing high quality instrumental/vocal tuition in their local areas. It identified these as not only socio-economic but also geographic, cultural, available expertise, and special needs. Through its work, it responds to a recommendation within the Music Network *Report of a feasibility study* (2003) which stated that:

*in order to ensure that children are given equitable access to opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument, it is necessary to design and implement a model of publicly-supported provision.*

*(Music Network Report of a feasibility study 2003, p.4)*

The barriers that Music Generation is attempting to address are diverse, complex, intertwined, shifting, and local-context specific.

**Geographic barriers:** Consider a group of teenagers in a geographically disadvantaged rural community who want to set up a rock band but there is no access to expertise or instruments in their preferred genre or to a rehearsal space. Or think about a parent/guardian in this community who understands the benefit of group music-making for their three-year-old but there is no musician within two hours drive of them who has previously worked with this age group. Think of the child who has begun the cello in her locality and shows strong potential over her first five years, but in order to progress to a high level must take the train to Dublin every Saturday to study with teachers in the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM). In these local contexts, geography – or the geographic inequalities associated with where someone lives – has dictated the extent and quality of access to instrumental/vocal tuition. Where the sound of a cello inspires you, a tin whistle will not suffice, and if you seek to master the skill of playing a slow air on the uilleann pipes, guitar lessons will not be an adequate substitute.

**Financial barriers:** Parents/guardians may value music and wish for their children to be involved, but the financial means to allow this to happen might be the deciding factor in enabling their children's access to music-making. What happens when music is seen as a luxury by a child's parents/guardians because of their financial circumstances, where they simply cannot afford to bring their child to instrumental/singing lessons or afford an instrument?

**Value:** In a child's/young person's family or community context, music-making may not be particularly valued – or valued at all – with emphasis perhaps being placed instead on sport, technology (coding, etc.), dance, academic progress, theatre, or other interests. While these are,

of course, worthy pursuits, there is a role for Music Generation to embed itself in these areas and confront this particular challenge.

In the majority of cases however the barriers are rarely, if ever, as straightforward as these examples. Children and young people who live in an area that is recognised as disadvantaged – socially, economically, and/or culturally – could face a myriad of barriers to accessing music-making in their lives and in their local areas. One school principal interviewed recognised that a low literacy level amongst adults was contributing to a lack of confidence in pursuing music-making opportunities for their children. The range and complexity of potential barriers was also highlighted in an interview conducted with the manager of a community hub:

*If you were born just loving music you'll keep coming back no matter what happens, but if you love music and there's no value placed on that in your home, or people don't know where to go with the fact that you love music, or your parents say 'she's really musical but I don't know where to bring her and I've no money for music lessons' and 'I presume that they'll just do that at school'. You know, a lot of parents would just be very insecure or very unaware or insecure of what opportunities might be available to their kids as well [...] they don't know where to go to find out.*  
(Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)

In other local areas, a vibrant culture of music-making may not have previously existed. This can then directly impact on the value that parents/guardians and others place on music-making and also on the availability of expertise in that area. In some contexts, young teenagers may not have access to the particular type of music-making that they connect with or are interested in – whether this is jazz, popular, traditional, rock music, etc., – and as a result become demotivated, disinterested or indifferent to a musician's efforts.

Barriers which might be overlooked include those that coordinators can face when working within local systems and structures; different ways of working were observed to, at times, resist one another and collide. It could also be the case that the musicians themselves are barriers to children and young people's meaningful music-making; for example, where they have not developed the appropriate pedagogical skills to engage a group of children/young people, or they underestimate the ability of children and young people and limit their expectations of what children and young people are capable of, or they approach music-making in a way that stifles creativity and *meaningful* music-making.

The range of barriers which Music Generation strives to address across its infrastructure are often diverse, complex and entangled, and the boundaries between each blurred and difficult to discern. To address all too familiar situations such as these, Music Generation was established to reveal and acknowledge rather than ignore diversity, and to go beyond conventional models of instrumental/vocal tuition. From another perspective, this means that diverse solutions, approaches, and ways of working are required to address these barriers. Barriers, as Katherine Zeserson noted at a Music Generation coordinators' meeting, are things 'we can go over, we can go around, we can remove, or we can tunnel under'. Music Generation seeks not to accept them.

These barriers are considered directly and indirectly throughout this document in the context of each component of the conceptual model of transformative experience. A precursor to these discussions, however, is an explication of one of the core values of Music Generation which can effectively be perceived as a countermeasure to these barriers – diversity. Reimagined for this research as 'critical diversity', it is the major underpinning concept of the conceptual model of transformative experience for Music Generation.

## 2.2. Introducing critical diversity

Critical diversity is a powerful concept for this research. It responds to the ‘Diversity, to what end?’ question for Music Generation, and describes the ways in which Music Generation is working to put in place diverse conditions which address a) the barriers to instrumental/vocal tuition provision, b) the lack of an effectively embedded infrastructure, and c) the diverse needs of children and young people within each MEP. The concept of critical diversity brings together both the diverse landscape within which Music Generation operates and Music Generation’s particular approach to working within this landscape. Reimagined as ‘critical diversity’ within this research, it is quite distinct from its more straightforward ‘diversity’ foundation. This journey from ‘diversity’ to ‘critical diversity’, and the potential of critical diversity to act as an operating principle for Music Generation, is explained below. Finally, the broad implications for Music Generation, as the organisation develops into the future, are outlined.

## 2.3. The problematisation of diversity

Diversity within and between our communities is something that already exists – we don’t have to manufacture it, we just have to include it. O’Connell (2013), at ‘Sphinx Con: Empowering Ideas for Diversity in the Arts’, describes this in a complicated way as ‘always already’, where ‘always’ describes an ongoing state and where ‘already’ describes a state of being independent and previous to any of our efforts to work on its behalf.<sup>2</sup> Our societies, communities, workplaces, schools, homes, and every gathering of people that we can think of and engage with, are already made of diverse groups and individuals. Children and young people have diverse cultural backgrounds, and of course there are other matters which can be considered including language, age, gender, socio-economic background, physical abilities, geographical location, ethnicity, race – and this continues to include the individual personalities, aspirations, and ambitions of individuals within groups of children and young people. Diversity has therefore always existed – it is not a new phenomenon – and there has always been a need for the arts, educational, and other spheres to acknowledge and address diversity within our communities. The fact that this did not previously happen in any meaningful or sustainable way in the case of non-mainstream music education in Ireland has ultimately led to the formation of Music Generation.

The rhetoric around embracing diversity in our communities, schools, community organisations, or national institutions often suggests however that engaging diversity is something that has to a large extent been problematised; or at least, diversity is something that has been perceived of as being a challenge to surmount. In Ireland, failures to engage effectively with our communities’ inherent diversities have, arguably, led to many of the issues and injustices that we grapple with in society today. Within the non-mainstream music education arena, the evidence suggests that the ‘one size fits all’ approach to provision has not worked, and that previous homogeneous approaches to provision have led to many of those gaps that Music Generation has been setup to address. Walcott (2011) references this challenge in the context of the arts – broadly speaking – where he says that:

*This broad claim that figuring out how to live with human difference is the urgent matter of our time, brings its own unique circumstances to the arts and culture sector, because this sector is intimately connected to all the ways in which people can and do come together, or come to encounter each other across and within difference [...] Thus how the arts and culture tackles the question of how to live together in difference has enormous consequences for the entire society.*  
(Walcott 2011, pp.1-2)

This research argues that music-making, as it is conceptualised across the three-mode PME spectrum areas, has a unique ability to respect difference and to weave within and across the diversity inherent in children and young people’s lives and contexts.

<sup>2</sup> Sphinx Con: Empowering Ideas for Diversity in the Arts <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ATQA9UmwQQ#t=2796> (accessed 29/05/2016)

#### 2.4. A re-imagined concept of critical diversity for Music Generation

Borrowed from Henderson and Herring's (2011) work which is grounded in the rhetoric about inclusion and racial discrimination in the United States, this reimagined concept of diversity for Music Generation is termed 'critical diversity'. Henderson and Herring's (2011) concept of critical diversity is a particularly powerful one for Music Generation as it views critical diversity as embracing differences between groups and appreciating those differences; but critical diversity also includes 'examining issues of parity, equity, and inequality in all its forms' and it 'confronts issues of oppression and stratification that revolve around issues of diversity' (p.632). Henderson and Herring argue that the discourse on diversity has moved from one of 'affirmative action' (positive discrimination) to a broader rhetoric of 'diversity', which they argue that neoliberal elites have used 'to expand the politics and conversation about inclusion beyond concerns about race and inequality' (p.630). In other words, 'the discourse on diversity has been turned on its head so that it now means just about anything and everything' (p.640). Such a broad and general concept of diversity is, in their opinion, slippery, elusive, and 'meaningless because it cannot have boundaries and it can be used for any purpose that anyone wants to use it for' (p.636). Instead, they propose a concept of 'critical diversity' which is different because it has to be tethered to other concepts such as equity, parity, inequality, and opportunity. Similarly, Walcott (2011) argues that:

*Critical diversity does not only work at the level of representational inclusion, rather critical diversity asks some difficult questions about inclusion and what inclusion signals and or means in each context. Critical diversity is about both the texture and depth of diversity. And by taking into account the texture and depth of diversity, its critical balance and calculation comes into play.*

*(Walcott, 2011, p.3)*

Therefore, the 'Diversity, So What?' question for this research embraces diversity, but not as an end in itself where the breadth of music genres, pedagogical approaches, means of leadership, governance, management, and experiences are included without any reference to the power and purpose of such diversity. Instead, critical diversity in this research, in the words of Walcott (2011) 'asks some difficult questions about inclusion and what inclusion signals and or means in each context'. As a concept, it resonates with Aaron Dworkin's (2013) interpretation of diversity for the arts, where he speaks of 'Diversity to meet the needs of a community – the needs defined by that community'.<sup>3</sup> He continues that, 'We, the arts, believe we must talk about diversity and learn about what is important, what is not, what can we do, what should we do, what must we do for our art form, for our society, for our communities'. The concept of 'critical diversity' for Music Generation tethers diversity to the concept of meaningful music-making and the construction of possible selves through music. This approach to 'critical diversity' rather than 'diversity' then includes examining what Jorgensen (2003) describes as societal, cultural, institutional, and psychological barriers to learning music for those who have the physical capacities to learn music and are interested in it – or to take it further, examining barriers to children and young people's meaningful music-making and the construction of future possible selves through musical doing. An infrastructure which embraces the concept of critical diversity can reveal and support that which 'already is' – this, O'Connell believes, is what is going to be transformative.

With the concept of critical diversity underpinning the research, this research will ask how Music Generation and its partnership infrastructure can embrace the concept of critical diversity to ensure the sustained transformative potential of its service for children and young people. Aligning itself with the concept of critical diversity has broad and far-reaching implications for the development of Music Generation into the future. These implications are contained within a number of thematic areas which are explained throughout this report. These are:

3 Dworkin, (2003) available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ATQA9UmwQQ> (accessed 29/05/2016).

#### **2.4.1. Critical diversity and the needs of children and young people**

A critical diversity perspective encourages all those involved across Music Generation's infrastructure to a) look to and reveal the needs of individual children and young people and b) put in place those critically diverse conditions which can effectively address their needs. This means that national and local systems and structures should purposefully respond to the needs of children and young people in local contexts in ways that are impactful and ultimately transformative. This could involve individuals and organisations reflecting on and adjusting the ways in which they work to ensure that their intentions and actions are resolute and resonate strongly with the meaningful music-making experiences of children and young people 'on the ground'.

#### **2.4.2. Critical diversity and the role of the musician**

Musicians are the crucial partners with whom Music Generation works to achieve its vision. Musician, in the context of Music Generation, is used as an encompassing term to include all those individuals who practice across the widest range of musical genres, practices, and contexts. Importantly, the term musician is inclusive and recognises the diverse practices, identities, and intentions of all those musicians who engage children and young people in meaningful music-making across Music Generation's infrastructure.

Through the research it is clear that musicians, in eliciting rich and meaningful music-making experiences for children and young people, occupied multifaceted and evolving roles. These roles can be described in terms of two broad qualities. The first quality is that the musician-as-educator had the pedagogical expertise required to facilitate educative music-making encounters with children and young people across a range of contexts. The second quality is that the musician was observed to 'lean' into their own world of musician-as-artist, where they could communicate this world and instil an awareness and sense of their musical lives beyond the workshop/lesson space. These worlds of musician-as-educator and musician-as-artist are harmonious and complementary. As musicians engaged with each – to different degrees, depending on their intentions and motivations – they supported children and young people in envisaging and constructing future possible selves in and through music-making.

Therefore, musicians are envisioned by Music Generation as 'musicians' insofar as they should experience, know, and understand the 'real world' of musical doing within their own particular musical genre or practice, and also, be able to imbue their music-making encounters with children and young people with this 'real world' experience. Crucially, musicians are also envisioned as 'educators' in that they should be able to lead, facilitate, mentor, and be appropriately equipped with the expertise and pedagogical skill-sets required in order to: a) effectively meet the diverse needs of children and young people in diverse music-making contexts, b) create and nurture the conditions for meaningful music-making to occur, and c) support children and young people as they construct and strive towards their constellation of future possible selves.

In engaging with Music Generation, musicians from diverse practices and genres bring with them their own diverse belief systems and values. They are tasked with making connections between their own often deeply embedded perceptions of meaningful music-making and the values of the MEP in which they engage with children and young people. Concurrently, there was also a requirement for MEPs (MEP coordinators, in particular) to reveal, acknowledge, and come to understand the motivations and ambitions of musicians working across their MEP. Failing to engage meaningfully with this

process often led to tensions, whether creative or professional and strained partnership-working. Forging a bi-directional relationship between a musician and his/her MEP is therefore an important aspect of an MEP which embraces and draws from the concept of critical diversity.<sup>4</sup>

To support and sustain the musician-educator 'workforce' in their music-making endeavours with children and young people, they need to be continually resourced and supported in a myriad of ways to ensure that each facet of their musical lives can be nourished and can thrive. Furthermore, relationships should be built and strengthened with musicians so that they become and remain valued and 'listened to' partners within their local infrastructure. A critical diversity perspective would also ensure that any barriers which limit or devalue the musical and pedagogical practices of musicians are addressed, dismantled and removed.

#### **2.4.3. Critical diversity and the design of responsive PME programmes**

Coordinators across Music Generation's MEPs design, implement, and oversee a range of PME programmes for children and young people.<sup>5</sup> This research, with its critical diversity perspective, interprets these programmes as responsive programmes, where through such responsive programmes, children and young people should have the opportunity to encounter a range of music-making experiences across the three-mode PME spectrum areas, through which they can experience meaning-making and construct future possible selves. These responsive programmes are not 'fly in' programmes – rather, they should be designed in close consultation with relevant local partners and include the input and perspectives of children and young people. Responsive programmes are programmes which constantly challenge the barriers to meaningful music-making in local contexts, and programmes which strive to ensure that Music Generation does not settle into anything that resembles a 'safe' homogenous system of music-making. The following description by a school principal participating in the research describes his interpretation of this type of programme as one which a) has experienced musicians facilitating programmes, b) can be set up and intervene at the right time, and c) is sustained over a long period of time:

*[Music Generation] can't... it can't just be another cog. It has to do something different. And I think that it can do something different by engaging the calibre of people that it has on staff, but engaging them in programmes that intervene at the appropriate time and at the appropriate age where they can actually make a meaningful difference. And, that they're sustained programmes, that they're not just 'one hit wonders'*  
(Nathan, school principal, CS3SC1).

#### **2.4.4. Critical diversity and partnership-working**

Music Generation strives to achieve its vision through engaging in effective partnership-working at each level of its infrastructure (conceptualised in this research as philanthropic, national, local, meso, individual, and interaction levels. See Section 6). A critical diversity perspective challenges partners at each level of the ecological model of partnership to work together in ways which are conducive to and have the ultimate impact of imbuing the lives of children and young people with meaningful music-making. Therefore, it is never a case of 'partnership for partnership's sake' or 'systems for system's sake' but it is a case of collaborating and negotiating in critically diverse ways which enable children and young people to access such music-making experiences.

4 These issues related to partnership-working are discussed in greater detail in Section 6

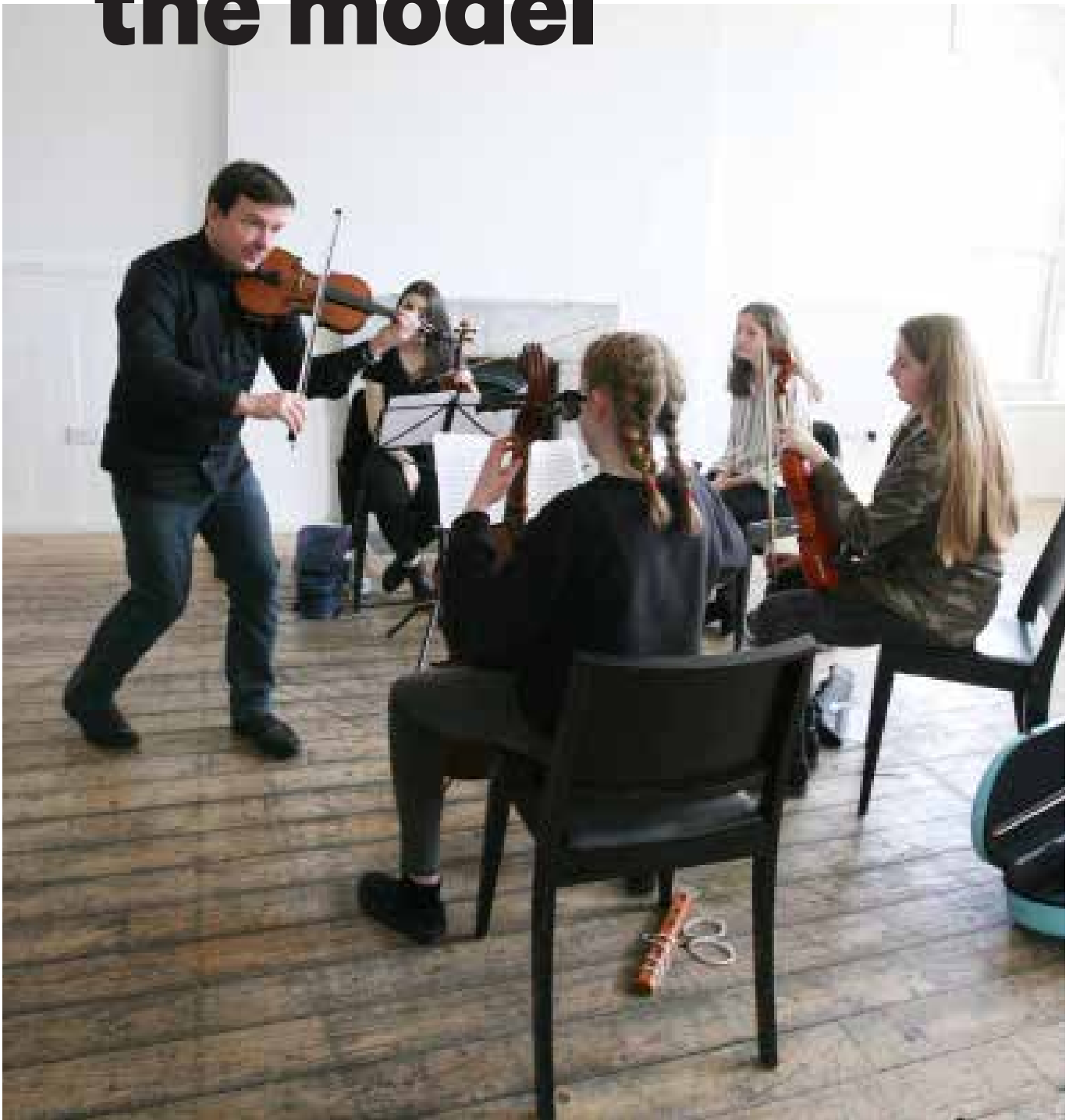
5 Examples of these programmes are discussed, in detail, in the context of those subcases chosen for inclusion in this research.

### ***2.5. Navigating the research: one model component to the next***

Throughout this document, the reader is guided through each component of the conceptual model of transformative experience. The reader, in effect, is brought along the 'golden thread' to explore each facet of the world of Music Generation and witness the challenges and achievements revealed over the course of the research. Beginning with that powerful component of the model which was informed by children and young people's impressions of what they might become and what they would like to become in and through music-making (possible selves), the final component of the model considers the supportive partnership network (ecological model of partnership) which can enable children and young people to strive towards their music-making imbued hopes and dreams.



# Part B: Exploring each component of the model



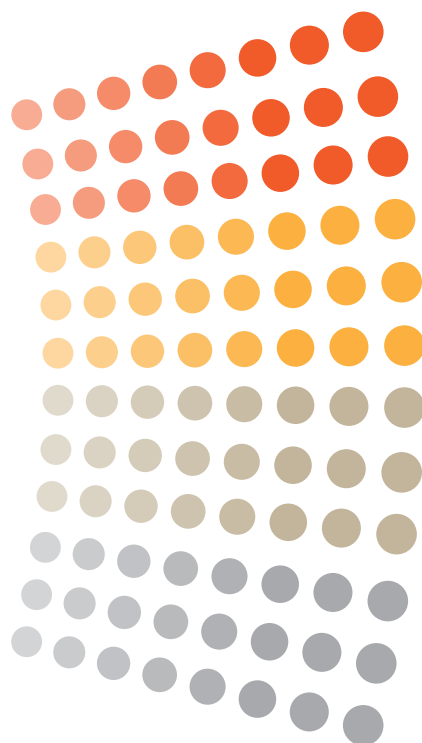


## Chapter 3. A constellation of possible selves.

### 3.1. Introduction: musical, personal, relational, and unforeseen possible selves

Music Generation is working at its best when every part of it is focused on children and young people striving towards and achieving their possible selves. Imagine potentially thousands of children and young people across Music Generation’s infrastructure having dreams, desires, and ambitions related to who they want to become in the future – in and through meaningful music-making. This is a potent and powerful thought, and one that shapes the breadth and focus of this chapter. The music-making imbued dreams, desires, and future ambitions of and for children and young people were captured across each research subcase, and they have informed perhaps the most important component of the conceptual model of transformative experience: a constellation of possible selves (FIGURE 7).

#### D Possible Future Selves



#### Musical possible selves

- » Musically capable, confident, skilled, determined and persevering
- » Musically creative, innovative and inventive
- » Musically knowing, expressive
- » Musically leading

#### Personal possible selves

- » Personally growing, having purpose, feeling confident, feeling happy and achieving

#### Relational possible selves

- » Socially connected and belonging through music. Recognised musically by peers and others

#### Unforeseen possible selves

- » Unlimited, unintended, unplanned and unimagined outcomes

FIGURE 7: A CONSTELLATION OF POSSIBLE SELVES

This research process began by looking at diversity and it was soon realised that the more important aspect of diversity was what diversity could achieve for children and young people. This idea is conceptualised throughout this chapter as children and young people's *possible selves*. These are the possible selves that children and young people hoped, wanted, and/or expected to become in and through music-making. They are the possible selves towards which children and young people strived – in weekly workshops, in sessions, in instrumental lessons, at concerts and festivals, in recitals, when listening to music with friends, when writing tunes or songs, or when practising alone or with others at home. Within the constellation of children and young people's possible selves were wide-ranging, rich, and diverse goals – both in the immediate and more distant future. Short-term goals revealed by children and young people included being able confidently to perform a certain song or tune in their next workshop or simply looking forward to feeling happy, content, and calm through musical doing. Children and young people also revealed longer-term goals such as becoming a proficient musician/singer, being in a band, *belonging* to a musical community, becoming a successful touring musician, or simply having a life that had music as a part of it, as one young teenager expressed it. Children and young people's possible selves were also often vulnerable, and required layers of support in order firstly to explore and ultimately work towards achieving them.

Crucially, the possible selves component of the conceptual model also includes those possible selves that those individuals across Music Generation's infrastructure envisaged for children and young people. These include parents/guardians, youth workers, funders, musicians, school principals, childcare centre managers, coordinators, and government body representatives. When Music Generation was optimally functioning, the energy, focus, and intentions of individuals and partners at each level of its ecological model of partnership<sup>6</sup> were focused towards supporting children and young people in their respective journeys towards their diverse possible selves. A vision of what children and young people can become and what they can achieve in their lives through musical doing was therefore one that permeated all levels of Music Generation's infrastructure. In fact, it could be argued that the sole purpose of Music Generation – and by default the involvement of all those at each level of Music Generation's infrastructure – is ultimately to put in place those conditions which support children and young people in striving towards their possible future selves with music-making as an integral part of this journey. The future experiences of children and young people – be they immediate or more long term goals – are therefore at the core of everything that Music Generation sets out to achieve. For this research, these future-orientated experiences are balanced against experiences in the 'here and now' (e.g., current musical meaning-making), with *current* meaning-making being perceived as a predictor of what will happen in terms of future possible selves.<sup>7</sup> This forward-looking vision of enriching and empowering the lives of children and young people by way of access to high quality vocal and instrumental music education is of central importance to this research. Although the concept of possible selves may initially conjure something of an abstract, removed-from-the-present, intangible, or conjectural nature, it is very much entwined in the everyday and, importantly, in each component of the conceptual model for Music Generation developed in this research. That is, follow the 'golden thread' continuum and one should be able to observe: how children and young people's possible selves are explored and constructed during *meaningful music-making encounters across the three PME modes*, and how they are nurtured and supported by those at each level of the *ecological model of partnership*, from children's/young people's interactions with musicians to that layer of philanthropy which acts as a catalyst for awakening children and young people's possible selves in the first place.

In many ways, performance music education for children and young people is about possibility. For many of those individuals and groups interviewed and observed across the various levels of Music Generation's infrastructure, facilitating active engagement in music-making was about meaning-making happening in the moment – but it was also about imagining the potential experiences that lay ahead in the lives of children and young people as a result of them having had the opportunity to engage in meaningful music-making activities. For many of the children and young people who were interviewed and observed, their engagement in performance music education allowed them

6 See Section 6

7 The 'here and now' of meaningful music-making is discussed in the context of Section 4.

to *imagine* a diverse constellation of possible selves, enabled and supported by their experiences in music. They were developing a sense of what they hoped and expected to become in the future through engagement in music-making. In short, children and young people are primed to transform, develop, and grow, and meaningful involvement in musical doing was found to be particularly suited to this transformative endeavour.

Personal growth, musical understanding, musical enjoyment, advanced musical skill, career and professional prospects, self-worth, wellbeing, interpersonal relationships, empowerment, agency, and a sense of belonging are among the future-orientated goals for children and young people named by the spectrum of individuals interviewed during the research: by musicians, parents/guardians, classroom teachers, community leaders, school principals, MEP coordinators, and philanthropic donors, among others. Of crucial importance, of course, are the range of goals voiced by children and young people themselves. To gain an initial sense of the range of possible selves held by a group of young children, the following are some possible selves examples which were revealed in the context of a ukulele programme taking place in a primary school setting. When presented with the statement, 'When I think about music, next year I hope to be...;', they responded (TABLE 1):

- ... playing a new instrument (Amy, age 8, CS2SC1)**
- ... good at ukulele (Eve, age 8, CS2SC1)**
- ... piano master because I love piano and the way you can change the sounds and when I am older I want to play the organ (Liam, age 8 CS2SC1)**
- ... in a little band with my friends (Genevieve, age 8, CS2SC1)**
- ... writing all different kinds of songs (Marc, age 8, CS2SC1)**
- ... happy (Mikey, age 8, CS2SC1)**

TABLE 1: WHEN I THINK ABOUT MUSIC, NEXT YEAR I HOPE TO BE... (CHILDREN'S RESPONSES, CS2SC1)

From the responses collected amongst this small cohort of young children, there is a clear sense of the broad range of possible selves which they hoped to strive towards and achieve. Some of these are 'grand' possible selves, and others could be integrated into the musical course of their everyday lives. Particularly noticeable is that the majority of these possible selves are strongly *musical* possible selves, and the children could vividly describe future self-concepts shaped around musical goals.

The possible selves of Amy, Eve, Liam, Marc and those others mentioned are widespread expressions of possibility, hope, dreams, plans, ambitions, and potential. Considered with those possible selves which individuals within the ecological model of partnership envisaged for children and young people, this rich tapestry of hopes, dreams, and aspirations spans four interweaved areas, namely: musical possible selves, personal possible selves, relational possible selves,<sup>8</sup> and unforeseen possible selves. They are the selves which children and young people imagine lie ahead for them, potentially accessible along a trajectory of meaningful music-making experiences. They include the child or young person's future self who makes friends through music, who gains confidence as a performer, who receives praise from the music teacher, who plays a major festival gig, who composes and

8 Relational possible selves include self-concept goals which are related to children and young people's future-orientated music-making relationships with others.

arranges a song with a band, who gets to travel the world performing, who thinks it would be nice to have something interesting to do after school, who would like to be able to play an instrument for friends or family, who achieves peace of mind through song, who gets to attend and participate in a weekly Irish traditional music session, who learns skills on a new instrument, who would like to study music at college, or who, as one child put it, hopes to be 'playing with my friends in one year because if I'm not playing with my friends it won't be as good' (Alex, age 8, CS2SC1). These imagined selves are reflected in Music Generation's *Mission Statement* where through high quality vocal/instrumental music education, Music Generation aims to 'empower and enrich the lives of children and young people, by enabling them to develop their creativity, reach their full potential, achieve self-growth and contribute to their development as a whole person' (Music Generation: Strategic Plan 2010-2015, p.12).

This section uses the concept of possible selves as a useful thinking tool to reveal and examine Music Generation's current approach to facilitating children and young people's exploration and construction of possible selves. It also considers what needs to be put in place to ensure that children and young people can be supported in striving towards and achieving their possible selves in and through music. Possible selves is therefore a potentially powerful framework as it brings with it a forward-looking, aspirational, progressive, open-ended yet strategic dimension to the research, and thus to the future-orientated work of Music Generation. To draw out and illuminate the potential power of the possible selves concept for Music Generation, this section has several aims:

- » to introduce the concept of children and young people's possible selves;
- » to position the ambition that children and young people had for their possible selves in the context of the overall conceptual model. In this respect, this section attempts to provide a perspective on how we can usefully employ the concept of possible selves as a lens to understand what it is that motivates children and young people across Music Generation's infrastructure, to behave in ways which allow them to strive towards their possible selves. Conversely, while we use possible selves as a concept to consider those children and young people who are self-motivated to pursue their future goals, it is also a powerful concept through which we consider those children and young people who disengage and may not be particularly motivated to make music. From this, we can ask what it is we can do to instil and nurture a greater sense of motivation for music-making;
- » to highlight the value of the possible selves concept as a key component of what it is that Music Generation wants to achieve. In this respect, this section seeks to highlight Music Generation's role in ensuring that the appropriate 'critically diverse' conditions – or what the literature describes as a roadmap of 'sufficiently cued strategies' (Oyserman et al. 2004) – are put in place at each level of Music Generation's infrastructure to support children and young people in their endeavours towards their future possible selves. This includes a consideration of the role of musicians and others in modelling possible selves and facilitating the exploration and construction of children and young people's possible selves.

### 3.2. What are possible selves? Who am I now? Who do I want to become? What part could music-making play in this?

Possible selves is quite a recent concept which can help us to understand how people develop and strive towards achieving future identities and projections of themselves. This section considers pertinent aspects of associated literature from the fields of music education and psychology of music which might be useful to Music Generation in using this concept to guide future developments. Firstly, it teases out an understanding of what possible selves are. It then goes on to gather and frame the main themes arising from the literature. These themes can help us to understand some of the key findings which have informed the possible selves component of the conceptual model of transformative experience. While this literature focuses on the future-orientated aspects of children and young people's self-concepts, it usefully resonates through each of the other components of the conceptual model developed in this research.

The concept of possible selves was first introduced in the mid-1980s by Markus and Nurius (1986) who refocused attention on *future* possible selves to further develop understandings of the self-concept. One expression of their concept is that possible selves are 'the selves we imagine ourselves becoming in the future, the selves we hope to become, the selves we are afraid we may become, and the selves we fully expect to become' (Oyserman and Fryberg, 2006, p.19). For this research, there are two components of the concept which can be considered. Firstly, it acknowledges, includes, and values the range of future possible selves that children and young people imagine themselves becoming in and through music. Secondly, it places a responsibility on Music Generation and all those involved in the provision of PME across its infrastructure to become aware of and allow for these possible selves, and when relevant to follow the 'golden thread' continuum and imagine the potential for children and young people's future possible selves in the context of their own thinking and actions. The range of possible selves which were identified in this research include the *personal, musical, relational, and unforeseen* selves that we imagine children and young people becoming in the future, that we hope children and young people become, that we are afraid children and young people may become, and that we fully expect children and young people to become. For children and young people, a consideration of possible selves raises the questions, *Who am I now? Who do I want to become? and What part could music-making play in this?* For Music Generation, the same consideration asks the questions, *Who are they now? Who do they want to become? Who would I/we like them to become? and What part can I/we play in this?*

Markus and Nurius' (1986) conceptualisation of possible selves is revealing in terms of the impact of a child/young person's environment (immediate and more remote contexts) in determining the salience of their possible selves. From the perspective of the research, this brings to mind those barriers (financial, geographic, expertise, etc.) which can – and often do – prevent children and young people from exploring and constructing vivid possible selves in and through music.

*An individual is free to create any variety of possible selves, yet the pool of possible selves derives from the categories made salient by the individual's particular sociocultural and historical context and from the models, images, and symbols provided by the media and by the individual's immediate social experiences.*  
(Markus and Nurius, 1986, p.954)

While possible selves have been described as the future-orientated component of a multifaceted *self-concept* (Oyserman and Fryberg, 2006, p.19),<sup>9</sup> this research was particularly interested in the selves that children and young people wanted to become through musical engagement. These future-orientated selves are not just fantasies, unachievable dreams, or imagined states of being; they are required to be realistic, specific, vivid, and individually significant goals which describe children and young people's hopes and fears of who they could become in the future. The possible selves that children and young people construct emerge from representations of their past selves and they include representations of their future selves. Those selves – both past and future – are

<sup>9</sup> This includes, for children and young people, representations of who they were, who they are, and who they can become.

different to the 'now' selves, yet intimately connected to them. These goals are powerful as they can guide actions and influence what it is that children and young people and others do (or don't do) to achieve these goals. Therefore, the motivational component of children and young people's self-systems plays the most significant role and it is a key consideration in children and young people's striving towards their possible selves.

The children's responses in Table 1 highlight that even the youngest of children can harbour hopes for musical (or musically enhanced) future possible selves. During the research process, all children and young people interviewed had some conceptual idea of what they hoped, expected, and feared for the future. This is a powerful body of knowledge, and included for example the insights of Zoe (age 8, CS2SC1) who hoped to make her 'own music' in the future, to Jacquie (aged 17, CS2SC2) who looked forward to 'starting a band with somebody' and 'learning something new and interesting that's fun to learn that you can use in the future', to Jake (age 14, CS2SC2) who fully expected that playing music would increase his confidence and help him to make new friends, to Shane (age 10, CS1SC2) who didn't want to be nervous for an end-of-term performance and understood that practising his violin was a way of addressing this 'fear', to Lena (CS3SC2) who just wanted to play music for herself and for it to be her 'own thing', to Janine (CS2SC2) whose performance in a school concert led to her believing in herself that she could be a successful performing musician.

### 3.3. A balance of hoped for, expected, and feared possible selves

It is important in terms of nurturing and preserving children and young people's motivation that a balance of both the possible selves that children and young people strive towards and the possible selves that children and young people attempt to avoid are considered in any strategy.

*Youths with balanced possible selves have both a positive self-identifying goal to strive for and are aware of the personally relevant consequences of not meeting that goal.*  
(Oyserman and Fryberg 2006, p.20)

The findings of an investigation conducted by Schnare et al. (2011) also correspond with the view that a balance of possible selves is required to support the motivational components of the self-concept. They found that musicians' musical selves were 'composed of positive hopes counterbalanced by negative fears' (p.108):

*The hoped for selves reflect goal setting for the future musical self and construction of pathways to achieve these goals. The feared selves represent imagined impediments to the accomplishment of these goals. The expected musical self strongly resembles the hoped-for self, but phrased in more realistic terms and balanced with a proportion of negative expectations. The constant dynamic struggle that arises between hopes and fears creates tension within the musical self.*  
(Schnare et al. 2011, p.108)

This aspect of possible selves is relevant to this research and speaks to the ways in which musicians respond to such dynamic struggles that arise between children and young people's hoped-for selves and feared-selves. For example, Clara (aged 15, CS2SC2) recalled how she really hoped to play guitar and sing at the end-of-term concert but that 'the only thing that would've stopped me would've been the spectators'. However, to avoid her arguably nervous future possible self which may have led to her not playing in the concert, Clara – facilitated by the musician – met in the meantime with another young musician to rehearse and perform her songs 'with just a few people' present. Her strategy in this case included a balance in possible selves – both positive and feared – and set in motion a strategically cued process where Clara, motivated by the self and others, managed to realise her possible self as a performing musician in front of parents and classmates. The musician's input in this example was key, as he was aware of both Clara's hoped for and feared possible selves in the first instance, and he liaised with the classroom teacher and others to cue appropriate strategies to ensure that Clara could progress towards her possible future self.

Beyond Clara's story, a wide repertoire of children and young people's possible selves were revealed

across each of the MEP subcases, and in many instances, the positive expectations of children and young people with regard to what they could achieve far outweighed any consideration of the feared consequences of not achieving these possible selves. This has implications for the types of conversations that should occur with children and young people to nurture and support their motivation to learn. An important part of having possible selves is to know what steps need to be taken to achieve those possible selves (i.e., what strategy), and how to go about taking these steps (i.e., self-regulatory behaviour). In one example, a young person (CS3SC3) excitedly explained to the musician that she intended to play three new songs at the end-of-programme concert. However, the musician revealed to me separately that he felt that she did not understand the consequence of not practising or engaging fully in the music lesson on this possible future self. There is perhaps, then, an onus on musicians to discuss and explore with children and young people the range of possible selves, both positive and feared, before attempts to attain a possible self result in negative consequences such as disappointment, frustration, or lack of progression – all of which could mistakenly be perceived of as ‘failure’ by the child/young person. In addition to nurturing and preserving children and young people’s motivation, the revealing of children and young people’s hoped for and feared possible selves through listening and hearing their voices can also inform the development of tailored strategies to support their realisation of their constellation of possible selves.

### **3.4. Origins of, and barriers to, children and young people’s possible selves**

#### **3.4.1. Rooted in experiences, behaviours, accomplishments, and values**

Children and young people’s possible selves are most often rooted in their own experience and past behaviour or accomplishments (Oyserman and Fryberg, 2006, p.19). A young person who has grown up in a particular context where music-making was not present or not particularly valued would more than likely find it difficult to establish a sense of a possible musical self, or a personal or relational self through music. For example, consider the teenager who lives in a remote location where there is no available musical expertise or culture of music-making; the child whose parents place little value on music-making; or the young person growing up in a low socio-economic context where traditionally, there have been major financial barriers to accessing vocal and /or instrumental tuition. Where children and young people’s possible selves have not yet been awakened or where they are somewhat vulnerable, a nurturing and challenging approach is vital to enable their possible selves in and through music.

Possible selves can also be rooted in ‘one’s own values, ideals and aspirations’ (Oyserman and Fryberg, 2006, p.19). Therefore, children and young people who come to believe that they can have a possible future self through music-making – whether that possible self is to play in a band, complete grades, learn a favourite song, become a professional musician, become a well-known or famous performer, or enjoy music in a more participatory context such as a community choir or traditional music session – may be able to explore, create, and sustain possible selves in spite of any obstacles or barriers that get in their way.

#### **3.4.2. Exploring and constructing vivid possible selves**

Irrespective of where children and young people’s possible selves are rooted, it is important that the possible selves that they explore and create are psychologically accessible, personally meaningful, and congruent with important social identities (Rossiter 2007, Oyserman et al., 2004). Creech et al., (2014) explain that the more vivid and salient the possible selves become, ‘the more they motivate individuals to strive towards narrowing the gap between the current self and the ‘possible self’ (p.35). Of course, children and young people need to have the opportunity to explore a range of vague possible selves before vivid and salient possible selves emerge. In the context of Music Generation, this has important implications for musicians (and others) as focusing on vivid yet narrow possible selves could limit what is possible for children and young people in and through music; for instance, the musical possible self of reaching a particular grade or winning a competition, or focusing solely on the relational possible self

of meeting other children/young people. From a parent-child interaction perspective, the exploration of possible selves can purposefully be kept vague as in this account given by Marshall et al.:

*We found that some parent-child dyads purposefully engage in exploration of various possible selves that are not entirely clear or stable because one individual in the dyad is in early adolescence. For these dyads, the exploration of possible future roles is purposely kept vague because the parents and adolescents believe that achieving greater clarity and certainty will result in premature acceptance of a future self that might diminish other opportunities for growth.*

*(Marshall, Young and Domene 2006, p.151)*

This said, while the practice of exploring vague possible selves at appropriate moments of a child's or young person's musical journey had a particular purpose and was valued by musicians and others at particular times, beyond these contexts, vague possible selves only led to vague possibilities of achieving these possible selves. After the exploration stage, it is argued that vague and nebulous possible selves generally lack behavioural strategies and therefore cannot function to guide self-regulation as there is no accompanying roadmap of sufficiently cued strategies (Oyserman et al., 2004).

### 3.5. Partnership and possible selves: a case for 'joint projects'

Possible selves can be rooted in what 'important others believe one should become' (Oyserman and Fryberg, 2006, p.19). This highlights the important role of the musician and those others in a child or young person's immediate interaction and individual-level environments<sup>10</sup> in both modelling and in helping to reveal, explore, and construct possible future selves. The role of partnership in promoting the exploration and construction of possible selves is reflected in the work of Varvarigou et al. (2014). They investigate how a music education partnership project which involved professional musicians, conservatoire students, young pupils, and a number of urban music education services influenced the aspirations and self-concepts of those actively engaged stakeholders. They employ the construct of possible selves as a framework for understanding partnership as a medium through which aspirations and goals of all stakeholders could be formulated. Findings from their study indicate that there was scope for the conservatoire students and young pupils to explore different roles that could 'later help them to develop versions of possible selves' (p.95). They conclude that the partnership approach offered:

*opportunities for all of the participants [musicians/children/young people], encompassing diverse stages of musical development, to re-formulate their 'possible selves', discovering new possibilities for self-fulfilment, personal and professional satisfaction and attaching value to 'possible selves' that had previously been un-recognized or discounted.*

*(Varvarigou et al. 2014, p.85)*

The idea of possible selves being constructed between two or more people has been considered across other scholarly contexts; this idea is enlightening when considering all those individuals who children and young people encounter at an interaction- and individual-level of the ecological model of partnership.<sup>11</sup> For example, Rossiter (2007) investigates what she calls 'educational helping relationships' in adult education contexts and concludes that teachers, mentors, and advisors are in a pivotal role to facilitate learners who are in the process of exploring new possibilities for themselves. Marshall et al. (2006), from whom the term 'joint projects' is borrowed, consider the view that possible selves are social endeavours which involve the intentional coordinated actions of two or more individuals. Their view that possible selves are constructed in proximal social contexts as 'projects between socially connected individuals' (ibid., p.153) and their efforts to describe how the 'adoption, construction, revision, or abandonment of potential roles and characteristics can be studied as joint projects' (ibid., p.142), strongly resonate with this research's interpretation and

<sup>10</sup> For further discussion, see Section 6: An ecological model of partnership for Music Generation.

<sup>11</sup> For further discussion, see Section 6: An ecological model of partnership for Music Generation.



conceptualisation of those relationships at an interaction-level of Music Generation's ecological model of partnership:

*We propose that the shaping of possible selves can be joint actions because individuals are unlikely to engage in the adoption, modification, maintenance, or abandonment of images in social isolation. Potential images are more likely to be co-constructed with other significant individuals such as family members, friends, or peers. (Marshall, Young and Domene 2006, p.145)*

Creech et al. (2014) explore the role of musicians in awakening and activating possible self-goals. They suggest that musicians have a role to play in facilitating 'experimentation with provisional selves and evaluation of new conceptions against internal and external standards' (p.35). Similarly, Rossiter (2007) describes how interactions with teachers and mentors can be the 'point of origin for a possible self' (p.10) as learners become aware of new options for themselves. Children and young people can also awaken possible self-goals for other children and young people; in this respect, Creech et al. (2014) considered the role of peer-feedback and found that musical possible selves could be 'constructed in elaborate detail and evaluated through self and peer feedback and social affirmation' (p.44).

### **3.6. Supporting motivation: self-regulatory behaviour and sufficiently cued strategies**

A key challenge for musicians, across the spectra of Music Generation's music-making contexts, was how to nurture a sense of motivation amongst children and young people to behave in ways which would support their possible self-goals. This type of behaviour can be described as self-regulatory behaviour where children and young people were motivated to take control of and evaluate their own learning and music-making actions. In other words, there was a challenge in guiding children and young people's behaviour in ways that provided a roadmap which connected their present to their future. Oyserman (2008) very succinctly outlines the various reasons why she thinks that self-regulatory action towards achieving possible selves might fail. These are addressed later in this chapter in the context of the research findings:

*Why might it be that possible selves might fail to sustain self-regulatory action and what would a predictive model need to take into account? [...] I argue that sustained self-regulation is less likely when relevant possible selves do not feel congruent with important social identities, when these possible selves are insufficiently cued in context, when possible selves are not linked with strategies, and when effort is undermined by misinterpretation of difficulty in working toward one's possible selves. (Oyserman 2008, p.270)*

In order for children and young people to strive towards and achieve their possible selves beyond the important exploration and formulation stages, possible selves must also contain concrete and sufficiently cued strategies which guide children and young people in how they should behave in order to reach the desired end state (Rossiter 2007; Oyserman et al., 2004). As Oyserman and James (2009) explain:

*Some possible selves include concrete strategies for how to achieve them, whereas others do not. When possible selves do not feel connected to other aspects of self-concept, and are not linked with strategies, they are less likely to trigger self-regulatory action. Failing to work toward a future that one does not see as linked to important self-concept features, a future that one can hardly imagine anyway, is unlikely to feel devastating. Similarly, even a vividly detailed possible self is unlikely to produce self-regulation if the action to be taken to attain it is not clear.*  
(Oyserman and James 2009, p.375)

For Music Generation, sufficiently cued strategies extend beyond those strategies which the musician devises for/with the child/young person to work towards and achieve their goals. Each level of Music Generation's infrastructure is tasked with putting in place sufficiently cued strategies which can ultimately support children and young people's self-regulatory behaviour towards achieving their possible selves. The exploration and construction of vivid possible selves, and a consideration of sufficiently cued strategies to achieve these possible selves is discussed later in this section.

### 3.7. Possible selves across other scholarly fields

While perhaps not framed within a 'possible selves' framework, there is a much broader body of literature in music education and community music research which includes implicit references to what it is particular musicians, programmes, projects, initiatives, or interventions set out to achieve for children and young people. Within this scholarship, the goals for children and young people are often articulated (along similar lines to personal, musical, and relational possible selves identified in this research) and strategies are discussed which were implemented in order to achieve these goals.

From a lifelong learning perspective, Mantie and Tucker (2008) consider practices in music education which 'often exhibit a particular kind of instrumentalism that regards music teaching as a means toward short term goals' (p.217). The inverse of this – and a perspective which resonates with an understanding of possible selves for this research – is what Myers and Bowles et al. (2013) describe as a 'lifespan vision of music learning and music education' (p.134). Also illuminating this area is Pitts' research (2006) which argues that lifelong uses of music deserve more attention in how we think about children as musicians. In considering the long-term effects of music in childhood, Pitts demonstrates how positive formative musical experiences can lead to an opening up of a range of musical opportunities in later life. Conversely, where formative experiences are negative or discouraging, Pitts explains that the lifelong effect could be 'damaging, closing down musical opportunities, and leading to a belief that it is too late to learn as an adult' (p.642). While Pitts understands that provision of resources and opportunities are undoubtedly important considerations – an argument also made in the context of this research – she argues that it is 'the attitudes absorbed in the formative musical years that have the strongest impact, positively or negatively, on young people's future musical ambitions and inclinations' (p.653). Pitts' insights advance the argument made in this research that the attitudes of those in the immediate environments of children and young people (that is, at interaction- and individual-levels of the ecological model of partnership) can profoundly impact on children and young people's engagement with music-making and their striving towards their future possible selves in and through music. Furthermore, Pitts' consideration of the role of the home and school environments on influencing children's lifelong learning is similar to the important role of parents/guardians and others revealed in this research and spoken about in the context of the ecological model of partnership. In this way, her research helps to strengthen the link between the possible selves and the ecological model of partnership components of the conceptual model presented in this research.

The possible selves themes outlined here were recognised across each of the MEP case studies. When the related data began to emerge during programme observations, interviews, and focus group discussions, further investigations highlighted the potency and power of thinking about children and young people's music-making experience in this way. As a theoretical extension of meaning-making, the constellation of possible selves component of the model is conceptualised across four types: musical possible selves, personal possible selves, relational possible selves, and unforeseen

possible selves. The following section highlights examples of the range of future possible selves which were revealed by children and young people during the research process. This then leads into an exploration of how possible selves were understood across Music Generation's infrastructure, and a discussion around those critical issues which have been identified for Music Generation's future development.

### 3.8. Meaning-making and possible selves: pathways and pit stops

It is important at this juncture to distinguish between the closely related concepts of possible selves and meaning-making (discussed in Section 4)<sup>12</sup>. To strive towards their possible selves, children and young people need to encounter and experience meaningful music-making. The concepts of possible selves and meaning-making are therefore interdependent and very much entwined, each distinct yet reliant on the other. Together, they represent a potentially never-ending cycle of meaningful growth and transformation for children and young people. The following comment from a young piano and guitar player expresses meaning-making in the moment of a concert, but also includes a strong sense of this meaning-making leading to future possibilities:

*Do you know when you get up on the stage? And like, you play in front of lots of people and everyone claps. Then... it just makes you feel so good and then you believe that you can do it again! If I did it once I can do it again... and then again and then again ...*  
Triona (age 14, CS2SC2).

Another young singer and guitarist (CS2SC2) described the process of meaning-making in music as akin to climbing a staircase, where the effort of climbing each step represented the learning process, and the slight pause on each step represented a momentary pause on one's musical journey. Another way of looking at this is that the time, energy, and motivation put into achieving a goal is made up of many small yet significant achievements. It's like climbing a mountain. The many pathways that one can choose to ascend the mountain represent the many challenging yet meaning-making processes that children and young people encounter on their musical journey. The pit stops along the way that they strive towards represent their possible selves, where after taking in the view, it motivates them to choose another pathway and continue on their meaningful journey. In other words, meaning-making in music incorporates those processes and encounters and the effortful journey upwards whereby the goal of a child or young person's possible self can ultimately be achieved.

The 'stops along the way' are presented in the following section. These examples of children and young people's possible selves, conceptualised as a constellation of possible selves, are illustrative of the depth and breadth of possible selves which were revealed by children and young people over the course of the research.

### 3.9. Developing a constellation of possible selves: musical, personal, relational, and unforeseen

The research was drawn to the concept of possible selves during initial exploratory fieldtrips, where it was observed that children and young people, as well as the range of adults engaging in Music Generation, were clear, confident, and often passionate in expressing what they thought that engagement in music-making could achieve for those children/young people involved. At the time, this was revelatory, significant, and illuminating, as it addressed the 'Diversity, so what?' question which the research had first grappled with. The purpose and point of diversity began to align with the range of participants' future orientated dreams and goals. To investigate this further, focus group discussions were carried out where children and young people were asked to describe their future-orientated self-concepts (for example, questions such as the following led to an exploration of these ideas: What would you like to be doing by this time next year? What do you look forward to in music when you finish school? Do you think that it is important to have music in your life? What would you like to do when you are older? etc.). Children in early-years contexts were asked to draw a 'happy music moment' and it was in the context of the informal small group discussions which followed that they had the opportunity to articulate their ideas about and hopes for music in the future.

<sup>12</sup> Meaning-making is similar to the concept of possible selves in that it is conceptualised across three areas of personal, musical, and relational meaning-making.

Additionally, all those interviewed across Music Generation's infrastructure (at individual, local, and national levels) were asked to describe their visions for children and young people's possible future selves.

Thinking about possible selves in terms of personal and relational selves is the focus of previous research. For example, Creech et al. (2014) explore how the development of possible selves within the context of active music-making may contribute to sustained well-being in later life. They look at the potential for music-making to support positive health, well-being and quality of life amongst older adults, and they conclude that future-orientated identities can be formulated that 'provide a sense of purpose in later life, some extent of sustained autonomy and control and a strong sense of social affirmation' (pp.45-46). In terms of this research, the aspirations of each cohort are reflected below and while diverse, they can be conceptualised within four distinct areas: musical possible selves, personal possible selves, relational possible selves, and unforeseen possible selves.

### **3.9.1. Musical possible selves**

Musical possible selves include self-concept goals related to children and young people's future musical selves. One young person described how there was 'so much else' that she could learn and be interested in 'because there's always another instrument that you can pick up' (CS2SC2). The responses of participants communicate a wide range of hoped-for musical possible self-qualities that these children and young people strive towards through musical doing. These include, but are not limited to the following: a musically skilled self, a musically talented self, a musically grounded self, a musically capable self, a self who can play in a band, a self who has a career in music, a self who will study music in college, a self that 'has music in one's life', a musically passionate self, a musically expressive self, a musically autonomous self where you can 'musically be who you want to be', a musically engaged self, and a musically creative self.

### **3.9.2. Personal possible selves**

While those possible selves mentioned above were musical possible selves, personal possible selves include self-concept goals related to the future personal selves achieved through meaningful music-making. The responses of participants communicate a range of hoped-for personal possible-self qualities that they strive towards through musical doing. These include, but are not limited to the following: a confident self, an achieving self, a self who 'has purpose', an 'in control' self, a calm self, a focused self, a self-disciplined self, a personally enhanced self, a fun self, a relaxed self, an educated self, a capable self, a 'coping' self, a self-believing self, a self that experiences freedom, a 'cool' self, an interesting self, a happy self, a reflective self, an emotionally intelligent self, and a self where 'you have a good feeling about yourself'.

### **3.9.3. Relational possible selves**

Music is one of the ways through which people engage with one another. Relational possible selves include self-concept goals related to children and young people's future relational selves that are achieved through meaningful music-making with and among other people. The responses of participants communicate a range of hoped-for relational possible self-qualities. These include, but are not limited to the following: a socially engaged self, a 'belonging' self, a communicating self, an included self, a self who can work in a team, a self that is part of the community, a self that is 'part of something', a self where you 'have that link with someone else', a self who belongs to a group, a self who is aware of the needs of others, a self who has friends, a self who has interpersonal skills, a valued-by-others self, a self who is a leader.

### **3.9.4. Unforeseen possible selves**

Given the limitations of this research, there are possible selves which the research cannot fully account for. These are really important as part of a framework for Music Generation

which does not limit possible selves. Several musicians indicated over the course of the research, and in one subcase in particular (CS3SC2), that even if musicians have specific aims for children and young people there are always completely unintended, unplanned and unimagined outcomes. ‘Even if we have aims’ one musician explained, ‘there’ll be lots of other things happening that we couldn’t even have conceived of’. The manager of a community partnership Hub (CS3SC2) reflects this ‘unimagined’ self for children and young people:

*[Music] can only keep [children and young people] imagining a little bit more than they normally do. You know, their imaginations might... they might just open their eyes that little bit wider and say ‘Ok, I just met a different girl from another part of the city that I have never been in, and she seems really nice, and I might go there someday’. You know, it is that basic!*  
 (Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)

### 3.10. Diverse intentions: possible selves across the ecological model of partnership

As discussed in Section 2, the investigation revealed that Music Generation’s activities take place across several levels of partnership, conceptualised in the research as an ecological model of partnership. An important finding is that those individuals at each level – interaction, individual, meso, local, national, and philanthropic – held aspirations and intentions for children and young people’s possible selves. During interviews and focus group conversations, participants indicated either directly or indirectly their strongly held intentions for children and young people – these inevitably included a rich range of musical, personal, and relational possible selves. These sample responses, gathered from the perspectives of participants in Case Study 3, frame an understanding of possible selves across several levels of Music Generation’s ecological model of partnership:

| Interviewee  | Interviewee’s Response   |
|--|--|
| <b>Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2</b>                           | <p>Music is doing something much more powerful than just being a relaxing, fun, creative experience for a child. It’s also aspiration-raising [and] there are so many ways that it will add to their intellectual development as well as their social development.</p> <p><i>Noreen understands music’s creative power but also its value as a means by which children and young people can aspire towards their future personal (intellectual development) and relational (social development) selves.</i></p>  |
| <b>Joseph, Programme Coordinator/Musician at Community Hub, CS3SC2</b> | <p>I think that music is, apart from all things career etc., music is just a great way to enjoy life, even if it means you can have a greater appreciation of what you hear on the radio. Music for me is like learning a language... it’s like learning maths or anything. It’s another prism through which you can appreciate the earth and that for me that’s a start. Where people go with it after that is very much up to them. But the greater the understanding the more fun you can have with music. And I’m not saying that it’s all fun, because there’s a lot of hard work. But, there is a payoff and that payoff is one of those things that just make life more fun. And life is more fun.</p> <p><i>Joseph, a professional musician and guitar teacher, envisions the musical career-orientated possible selves which children and young people can strive towards. Additionally however, he recognises the personal enjoyment that children and young people could experience, and he places value on the unforeseen possible selves which music may lead to for children and young people.</i></p> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Nathan, school principal, CS3SC1</b>     | <p>I think that what you saw today was just a snapshot of how music can transform kids' lives, how it develops self-esteem, how it develops self-confidence. It just... they were eating out of the musicians' hands. The kids were totally engrossed and loving every minute of it and there were no behaviour issues.</p> <p>In terms of concentration, attention, excitement, self-esteem, self-confidence, it's ticking boxes all over the place [...] I was watching the kids there today and there's such a therapeutic element to it as well [...] That says a lot as well about the calibre of person that's rolling out the programme but also what can be achieved through music. Bigger picture... that's something that stood out for me today.</p> <p>I think that it's more than just music; it's actually a form of therapy for them. It's 100%, there's a therapeutic element to all of it. It's a release.</p> <p><i>Nathan's response related to children participating in a song-writing programme in his school encapsulates the range of possible selves, but focusses particularly on children's personal possible selves that can be 'achieved through music'. He views music-making as a way of developing children's self-esteem, self-confidence, concentration, attention, and overall enjoyment. He also believes that children could experience the therapeutic benefits of music-making and that music could be a 'release' in their lives.</i></p> |
| <b>Catherine, Classroom Teacher, CS3SC1</b> | <p>Music to me is an awful lot about enjoyment. To me, music is... oh my god... just pure enjoyment. And there are certain people then who will be talented and go on and play their instrument and be very good at it. I would love every child to get a chance to play some instrument because I just think that it gives you a great appreciation of music and you have an understanding of what it's all about... even a few years of it. It sets seeds for the future and it's all possible. If they're from an area... and everyone has issues and problems... but they do have issues and problems... so music can be a lovely outlet and it can cheer you up.</p> <p><i>For Catherine, the power of music-making lies in its personal possible selves potential – she highlights the enjoyment, release, and sense of happiness that can derive from music-making experiences. She also acknowledges that every child has a musical possible self that they can strive towards, where children can come to appreciate and understand music.</i></p>   |
| <b>Brian, Drummer, CS3SC2</b>               | <p>[Our role is to] even just show them that they can do something if they apply themselves to it, and if they go off and do something else apart from music it doesn't matter, as long as they're getting the self-confidence to actually do something...</p> <p><i>Brian's comments indicate a range of hoped for possible selves for children and young people including musical, unforeseen, and personal possible selves. Firstly, he believes that his role, as musician-educator, is to work with children and young people to show them that they can strive towards and achieve a musical possible self. In the process, the exploration and construction of a range of personal (self-confidence) and unforeseen possible selves are possible. In observing his drumming lessons, it is clear that Brian places immense value on the child's musical meaning-making behaviour (emphasising technique, employing strategic pedagogical approaches, attempting to elicit an 'inside' understanding of the music) – it is through this meaning-making that the child can strive towards their future musical possible selves.</i></p>  |
| <b>Sarah, age 16, CS3SC3</b>                | <p>I really want to learn how to do busking with a few friends and also to earn a few bob for myself when I'm at a young age because it's a nice thing to do when I'm young.</p> <p><i>Sarah talks explicitly about the musical possible self that she strives towards as a busking musician. This is not an immediately achievable possible self for Sarah, but one that is nevertheless vivid and psychologically accessible. Entwined in this is a sense of her personal and relational possible selves.</i></p>   |

There are several interesting observations which can be drawn from this segment of an MEP case-study, from local level to the level of the young person's experience (interaction-level). The first is that the majority of respondents – apart from Sarah (age 16, CS3SC3) – spoke about the young people's possible selves in terms of the confidence, social skills, and self-esteem, etc., which could be potentially developed through music-making. That is, while they undoubtedly valued the potential inherent in a child/young person's musical possible self, the interviews more often than not drew out reflections on those other possible selves which could be realised through music-making. Brian's comment is particularly intriguing. Observations of his drumming lessons strongly emanated the value that he placed on musical proficiency, musical progression, musical technique, and becoming the best possible drummer that the child/young person could become. In other words, Brian valued laying the foundations of the child's possible musical self. However, in discussion, he refers to the transferrable skills dimension of music-making, and the self-confidence which children and young people can potentially gain. The young person (Sarah) on the other hand is clear about what she wants to achieve – with her goals conveying more music-orientated qualities. She is motivated by the ambition to be able to busk, to do this with friends, to make some money in the process, and to enjoy the freedom of youth.

### **3.11. Critical issues to consider**

The following sections address the main issues which emerged for Music Generation in relation to possible selves. These issues are reflected in the literature outlined previously and they inform the possible selves component of the conceptual model of transformative experience. The issues that are discussed include:

- Issue 1:** The process by which children and young people (i) explore and construct vivid possible selves goals, and (ii) make choices and behave in ways which guide their own behaviour towards achieving their possible selves
- Issue 2:** The role of 'joint projects' with (i) musicians, (ii) peers, and (iii) parents/guardians in nurturing and supporting children and young people's possible selves.
- Issue 3:** A consideration of the multiple layers of 'sufficiently cued strategies' which should be in place at each level of Music Generation's infrastructure to support children and young people on their possible selves endeavours.

#### **3.11.1. Issue 1: Achieving vivid possible selves goals through self-regulatory behaviour**

For those children and young people who explored and constructed vivid future-orientated self-goals across diverse musical genres, practices, and contexts, their possible selves constructs acted as motivational tools to support them on their musical endeavours. The findings of the research suggest that for children and young people to work towards and achieve their possible selves goals, there are two essential requirements which must be considered. Fundamentally, children and young people must in the first instance have the opportunity to explore, construct, and clearly envisage vivid personal goals. Secondly, these goals can be achieved through children and young people's self-regulatory behaviour which has motivation as a key component, and which can be shaped by the influence of an effective musician-educator.

##### **(i) Exploring and constructing vivid personal goals**

The exploration and construction of salient and vivid possible selves is a deeply relevant concept for Music Generation as it encapsulates what many musicians set out to accomplish for children and young people. Whether that is to become a confident performer, someone who gains a sense of wellbeing and calm through music, a socially confident person through musical involvement, a Grade 8 musician, an ensemble performer, an improved musician, a musically creative child, a song-writer, a respected rapper, a focused and practising musician, someone who succeeds musically, etc.

Cora (age 16, CS2SC2) who was learning guitar had a clearly defined possible self in mind. She explained that she would 'like to play the bass [...] for college, just in case someone is looking for a bass player and I'll know how to play it'. Cora's guitar programme was supporting and extending her possible selves goals, and she had constructed a range of vivid possible selves which included being a music student at college, being proficient on her instrument, being a confident performer, and being a musician that others wanted to perform with. In another subcase, Ruby (age 5, CS1SC1) expressed a simpler yet no less meaningful desire to 'go on a stage'. Cora and Ruby are two out of potentially thousands of children and young people who had clear – in these examples – musical possible selves goals. Children and young people like Cora and Ruby were observed engaging in programmes across Music Generation's MEPs, and – given that appropriate conditions were put in place – there was potential for these goals to be achieved.

Conversations with both Cora and Ruby indicated that their vivid possible selves had likely been formulated and defined through meaningful engagement with their respective music-making programmes as well as through previous life experiences. Ruby (age 5, CS1SC1), for example, expressed a presentational performance-aligned desire to sing 'on stage' – and she sang at every opportunity during the programme, even during the focus group discussion session. Ruby explained that she 'sings very much' because she 'will be on the X Factor because the X Factor is on every night'. Ruby's mother also spoke about how she 'performs around the house' and she fondly recalled that they 'actually go into the kitchen when Riverdance is on and 'try to do it'. Once revealed, psychologically accessible and personally meaningful self-relevant goals such as Ruby's goals matter, insofar as they can (and should) shape strategies that allow young children ultimately to achieve their goals. Beyond highlighting Ruby's vivid and personally-held desire to 'perform', her story also emphasises the important role that all those at an interaction-level of partnership can play in exploring, supporting, and clarifying children and young people's vivid possible selves – including musicians, classroom teachers, parents/guardians, etc.<sup>13</sup>

It is vital that musicians attempt to reveal and engage – to some degree – with children and young people's possible selves formations; whether these have been formulated within the programme or previously in another context. Essentially, they are clear goals which motivate children and young people, they are valuable to them, and children and young people are often likely to be willing to work towards those goals. In one subcase focus group discussion, Cólín (CS2SC1, age 8) enthusiastically spoke about his rock band that he wrote and performed songs with at weekends, and that he looked forward to playing with in the park during the summer. However, the musician in this context had not discovered Cólín's possible musical self over the course of the music lessons, and instead Cólín and a small number of others in the large group felt – according to the classroom teacher – under-challenged and lacking motivation. Effectively, Cólín's 'now' self during the programme was not particularly congruent with the vivid possible 'future' musical self which he had constructed, and there was a sense that this was an opportunity missed for his musical growth and expansion. The following questions should be asked then: a) do musicians have the opportunity to listen to children and young people and their possible selves? b) are musicians' goals for children and young people vivid and salient in the minds of children and young people themselves? c) is there any disconnect between the musician's possible selves for the child/young person and the possible selves which the child/young person envisage? If so, how is this disconnect navigated? d) how do musicians achieve the possible selves goals which they envisage for children and young people while acknowledging and valuing children and young people's own possible selves goals? e) What barriers are there to engaging with children and young people in this way? For the possible selves goals mentioned at the beginning of this section to become 'vivid



and salient' for children and young people, they must be both psychologically accessible and personally meaningful to their lived experience. This is not to say that musicians should refrain from encouraging children and young people to engage with the possible selves that they have in mind for them – they certainly should. It also raises challenging and important questions around how to engage those children and young people: whose context (Healthcare setting, Garda Diversion, etc.) may create barriers to pursuing their possible selves goals; who may have grown up in contexts where there is no culture of music-making, where music-making is not valued but viewed as a luxury or waste of time; and who face a range of barriers to psychologically accessing and constructing any vivid possible selves goals – beyond even music-making.

Conversely, it is also important to acknowledge those observations where the exploration of vague possible selves by children and young people with musicians was highly valued. Exploring a range of possible selves is important, across all the PME-spectrum areas, as it ensures that children and young people's possible selves experience autonomy and agency in eventually defining their own possible selves – that is, they are not trying to achieve the possible selves that someone else had in mind for them. Having the opportunity to explore and choose multiple possible selves pathways also resists the potential narrowing or limiting of their potential possible selves. Such exploration was often observed where musicians whose practice was observed to be underpinned by an active dialogical approach<sup>14</sup> would meet with a small group or in a one-to-one context (for example, CS3SC2). Conversations with participants indicated that this was an important opportunity for a child or young person to explore a range of possible selves with the musician in a dialogical PME context, before clarity of possible selves was gained. It is not surprising that the research indicates that smaller group/one-to-one teaching contexts are arguably more conducive to the exploration of a wide constellation of possible selves. The following hip-hop tutor highlighted the transient nature of short-term goals for children and young people in terms of attuning possible selves goals to the needs of the group:

*And the short term goals... I mean... you'll reach past those sometimes and you won't reach them sometimes... and it all depends on the group and the kinds of kids that you have and you could throw your plan out the window after week one to be honest.  
(Alex, scratch musician/hip-hop tutor, CS3SC2)*

The value of this exploratory approach to constructing possible selves goals was recognised by several musicians consulted for the research, in particular, those who designed and facilitated workshops for very young children in early childcare settings.

#### *(ii) Engaging in self-regulatory behaviour*

Achieving one's possible selves goals through self-regulatory behaviour, for the purposes of this research, entailed the interplay between children and young people's cognitive, motivational, and emotional processes which were involved in attaining and maintaining their possible selves goals. The musicians and children/young people observed and interviewed over the course of the research highlighted widespread disparities in respect of these processes. This is to be expected, given the broad diversity of children and young people (from early-years to older children, to teenagers) participating in programmes in diverse contexts. This disparity was particularly evident where the self-motivation of children and young people was concerned. One musician (CS3SC2) described how some young people in his setting were more motivated than others, and explained an approach which he employed with one young musician to encourage 'self-regulatory' behaviour in the context of a quasi-autonomous participatory PME encounter:

*I think that in a certain [child or young person's] character it is a motivation and they're driven. And, I always think that if [a child or young person is] driven in some ways, when that person walks through the door, they're already doing half the work for you. It's for all those kids in the middle who are kind of like, you know, 'I'd like to maybe do it but everyone else is so much better than me'. I'd say, 'But you can get better, you really can get better, but you also learn at your own pace you know'. I have seen this development in young people. I'm not saying that everyone 'evens out', because some people have a greater facility in certain things than others. And you know, you will find that we all have strengths and weaknesses... but, there is a sense where [you have to communicate to children and young people that] you can learn at your own pace and that pace can be accelerated with a bit of encouragement, but you're still going to learn at your own pace, you know.*

*Look, there's always a risk that [a young person is] just of the opinion that 'aw I just got back from the café and there's this kid there and he's brilliant and he started after me and he's way better'. But, there's also that thing where I'd say... you know... and this is something that I have encountered... you talk to them and you say, 'look, you know, I happen to know that that child is practising every day for 15-20 minutes, and they're doing it every day, and you're doing it for just 10-15 minutes. That's a problem that you can overcome by... if you're only doing 10-15 minutes a week, and they're doing 10-15 minutes every day, that's why they're getting better'. So, I think that with a lot of young people there's a need for instant gratification. It's always been there. It's not a just phenomenon of our century, I don't think. But, I do think that particularly young people can get disheartened very quickly [...] I mean I'll always say when they're coming in... 'You're starting younger than I was!'*

*(Joseph, Programme Coordinator/Musician at Community Hub, CS3SC2)*

Joseph's approach in this instance highlights an important finding for Music Generation, and for those children/young people and musicians involved in its programmes. That is, some children and young people are prone to over-interpreting difficulty as failure, and they immediately perceive music-making as something that is not or should not be part of their possible selves constellation. Music-focused possible selves are difficult to attain – learning an instrument<sup>15</sup> is difficult, challenging, and it takes time, persistence, and grit (as discussed in the following Section). Musicians and others could play a valuable role in helping children and young people through this process. Rather than interpreting difficulty as failure, they could communicate – as Joseph did – that difficulty is a normal part of the music learning process, that it is evidence of musical progression, and that it is critical to eventual musical success.

Martin (jazz guitarist/guitar tutor, CS2SC2) was particularly effective in this regard, and also in terms of facilitating strategies for those young people in the programme which guided their self-regulatory behaviour. For Cora (age 16, CS2SC2), her possible selves as a multi-instrumental (guitar and bass) musician studying music at college were explored, strengthened, and evaluated through her dynamic interactions with Martin and the carefully curated conditions which Martin helped to put in place – for example, encouraging Cora to perform 'solo' at the end-of-term concert and audition at the Conservatoire that she hoped to attend. Martin's strategy for Cora was one which helped her to achieve her goal, and so it seems reasonable to suppose that such strategies for children and young people 'play a motivational and self-regulatory role in shaping future behaviour' (Oyserman 2008, p.269). Additionally, Cora's possible self was arguably one that was both psychologically accessible, given her relationship with the musician and her desire to achieve, and it was also personally meaningful to her. Having such a vivid goal encouraged Cora to self-regulate her behaviour (turn up for each lesson, practise at home and during break-time, apply for and attend auditions, etc.) but it also functioned

to facilitate her optimism and her belief that change was in fact possible – in Cora’s case, she believed and fully expected that she would pass her audition and study music in college.

While these examples focus on young teenagers, it is clear that psychologically accessible and personally meaningful possible selves goals are vital in empowering children and young people of all ages and backgrounds to make choices and behave in ways which guide their own behaviour towards achieving their possible selves.

### **3.11.2. Issue 2: Possible selves as ‘joint projects’: awakening and activating possible selves**

*“All it takes is the right people around them to make it happen.”  
(Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)*

We have heard how guitarist Martin facilitated Cora in exploring, constructing, and striving towards her constellation of possible selves, musical and otherwise. Across each of the research subcases, individuals in the immediate worlds of children and young people were observed engaging in similar roles. These individuals – musicians, parents/guardians, other children/young people, and others – provided strong webs of support. Focus group discussions and interviews conducted across the subcases often alluded to the ‘joint’ nature of children and young people’s pursuit of their possible selves.

#### *(i) Joint-projects with musicians*

Musicians at the ‘interface’ of what Music Generation is striving to achieve were observed to be primary facilitators of new possible selves for children and young people. Whether it was a group of young children learning cello for the first time and travelling to their first public performance (CS1SC2); a young child volunteering to lead a rhythm game during an early-years music workshop (CS1SC1); a group of young teenagers building close friendships through rap and hip hop (CS3SC3); or a group of children learning their ukulele parts for an end-of-term cross-school concert extravaganza – the constant across each context was the role of the musician in helping children and young people to visualise and create new possible selves.

The children and young people in each subcase, with the guidance and support of the musician(s), became aware of new options for themselves as musical beings, arguably across each of the possible selves areas. As an example of musicians being the ‘point of origin’ of children and young people’s possible selves, in two separate subcases (CS2SC2 and CS3SC3), young musicians described how their music tutors ‘tuned in’ to the fact that they were not particularly interested in or enjoying their original choice of instrument. The musicians listened to the young people. In each case, a love of the bass guitar was awoken for each young musician, and the musician created the strategically cued conditions which allowed each young person gain access to the instrument. One musician lent his own bass guitar to the young people, while the other musician sought one from the MEP coordinator. Subsequently, each young person demonstrated highly self-motivated behaviour as regards practising, progressing on their instruments, looking for performance opportunities, and generally striving towards ‘becoming’ proficient bass players. The young people had not before considered the bass as an instrumental opportunity, but the tutors’ enthusiasm, musical knowledge, and encouragement motivated them to investigate the instrument as a potential option. The positive and effective feedback from each musician during subsequent lessons also imbued and strengthened that sense of efficacy – an ‘I can do it’ attitude – for each young person.

From the research observations, it is suggested that there are potentially effective ways for musicians to support the exploration of children and young people’s possible selves

– an effective starting point could be to ask children and young people to generate and voice expectations and concerns for a workshop/programme. Also, musicians (and others) could ask children and young people to describe any strategies that they have for working towards their ‘hoped for’ and away from their ‘feared’ possible selves.<sup>16</sup> This approach resonates strongly with the Freirean-imbued active approach to dialogical PME which was identified in the research.<sup>17</sup> If we recall Ruby’s story, an effective strategy could include firstly ensuring that her voice is listened to, and secondly ensuring that opportunities are put in place to allow her to experiment with a range of possible selves across all PME modes. Where musicians were observed approaching music programmes with a particularly rigid or predetermined structure in terms of what was to be achieved, children and young people’s possible selves goals were somewhat limited or narrowly defined to the musician’s own framework-reference. It is suggested that there is then an onus on musicians to link strategies for children and young people to their personally valued possible selves goals, as previously discussed. Once explored and revealed, children and young people’s newly-found possible selves goals can harness their intrinsic motivation and direct their action toward musical progression and self-improvement.

A powerful and important means by which musicians awaken possible selves goals for children and young people is also through modelling their own repertoire of possible selves. Children and young people were observed responding to musicians’ diverse ‘real world’ musical possible selves repertoires – as educators and as musicians. For example, young people in one setting (CS2SC2) spoke at length on their guitar teacher’s pedagogical approach, and described him as ‘not a teacher’ but ‘some in-between thing’ (between musician and educator) who has ‘his own experience on guitar and like he can bring it out and show other people how to do it’. While valuing his pedagogical expertise, describing him as ‘personal’, ‘patient’ ‘friendly’, ‘encouraging’, and ‘a great teacher who doesn’t get frustrated if you have a problem... that’s fine and he’ll work on it [with you]’, they also recognised and valued the fact that the musician was a highly skilled and experienced performer who ‘has his own ways’. As they explained, he ‘can show you what he can do’, and ‘can show you experiences’. Other musicians seemed to model possible selves for children and young people which were reflections of their own experiences. Joseph, a guitar/singing tutor (CS3SC2), explained that his motivation for setting up a café-style informal space with a ‘living room vibe’ where young people could hang out and ‘jam’ came partly from his own meaningful experiences as a child playing music at home, in the living room, with his siblings and parents.

The ability of musicians to model multiple musical possible selves can have an impact on the constellation of possible selves which children and young people subsequently develop. This has implications for the ways in which musicians interact with children and young people to communicate their own possible selves; additionally, it points to a need for Music Generation to invest in and support musicians (through CPD opportunities, peer learning, etc.) so that they have continued opportunities to grow as musicians, and develop an expanding repertoire of possible selves.

#### *(ii) Joint-projects with peers*

It is impossible to sufficiently capture the richness of how children and young people inspire, encourage, and urge one another to strive, to improve, to grow, and to become their future possible selves. The influence of peers on possible selves exploration and formation is profound, and was observed across each subcase. In particular, it was noted that children and young people who had the opportunity to engage with one another through music-making were influential in their peers’ musical possible selves. That is, children and young people wanted to be able to play the song that everyone else could

<sup>16</sup> Of course, any such interventions would need to be tailored to the needs of particular groups, taking into consideration the context, age-range, etc.

<sup>17</sup> See Section 5 for further discussion.

play, they wanted to ‘polish’ their band performance to play for their peers, they wanted to lead the song in an early-years session that their friend had led in the previous workshop, they wanted to learn the awkward guitar chords so that they wouldn’t make a mistake when accompanying their friend in the end-of-term concert, they wanted to practise so that they could record an EP with their friends, they wanted to be able to jam with their friends after school. These future orientated hopes and intentions were closely entwined in their relationships with their peers. The value of such peer interactions on impacting future behaviour was observed across the subcases; one coordinator spoke explicitly about the impact that motivated young people can have on their less-motivated peers in terms of influencing future behaviour. In this MEP, an initiative was being devised to create subtle opportunities for young people who had ‘a more laissez faire attitude’ to meet with other more motivated young people who could potentially help to instil a sense of ‘oh, well, look what they can do... I want to be able to do that’.

As argued elsewhere in this research, Music Generation needs to be aware of creating spaces and opportunities for children and young people’s autonomous music-making, away from the watchful eye of the adult musician-educator to support this co-construction of possible selves amongst peers.

### *(iii) Joint-projects with parents/guardians*

The benefit of parents/guardians and the community in exploring and supporting children and young people’s possible selves goals cannot be underestimated. This was evident throughout the research process, from interviews with parents/guardians of very young children, to focus group discussions with young teenagers. Two young teenagers, who happened to become friends during their programme, rather light-heartedly yet insightfully explained the important role that their mothers had played in their early musical lives:

*Niamh: When I was growing up and learning music I’d have to be bribed to go to lessons but now I’m taking up guitar and I want to take up the cello or the violin next year and I want to do all these musical instruments just because I stuck with it...*

*Ellen: When you’re a kid you don’t really want to learn it...*

*Niamh: And your mam forces you... and you think that this is so unfair...*

*Ellen: She’d bribe me to go... like she did when I was younger... to go to these guitar lessons... I hated it when I was younger... I just couldn’t do it because my fingers were too small... I couldn’t reach the guitar...*

*Niamh: But now that you have the basic knowledge or something you can use all the stuff you know in different parts...*

*(Niamh and Ellen, aged 15 and 17, CS2SC2)*

Niamh and Ellen’s story highlights the important role of caring adults in being external motivators for children and young people’s possible selves, particularly for early-years, young children, and young teenagers. Building relationships with parents/guardians is discussed in depth in the context of establishing meaningful partnerships at individual level. However their role in nurturing possible selves also emerged during the research. In an early-years music subcase programme (CS1SC1), parents indicated a range of possible selves which they aspired to for their young children. They believed that music could benefit their children’s futures in the following ways: in increasing confidence, in bringing them ‘out in themselves’, in ‘building them up’, as a ‘release’ from something during the day that might annoy them, in building a sense of ‘achievement in using instruments’, in bringing out their talent to sing, and in giving children choices. One child’s mother – who happened to play button accordion and tin-whistle – demonstrated the power of modelling possible selves for children and young people, explaining that her young daughter ‘is always around music at home anyway and already interested’ and ‘would already like to learn the tin-whistle’.

The parents who attended this focus group (CS1SC1) placed considerable value on the role of music-making for their young children. However, several other interviews across subcases indicated that other children and young people may not have the supportive home environments where possible selves in music (or indeed in other areas) are promoted. This presents an additional challenge for MEPs who strive to ‘fill that gap’ and create partnerships which can raise the aspiration levels of a child or young person’s immediate family or community. The Director of one MEP partner organisation explained this challenge from her organisation’s perspective:

*[Parents can] feel so crappy about their own educational experience and the education experience of everyone around them. If everybody around you is failing within the mainstream system, or 50 – 60% of everyone around you are failing, maybe they’re doing Leaving Certificate Applied as the highest level of educational achievement... well... your standards are pretty low. And, the big challenge for us here is to ‘up’ the aspiration levels of the community, and the family, and their grandparents around their children. [Children are] coming in here at 5 and initially it was 10-plus, but now it’s 5-plus because we realised that we’re going to have to start way back because 5, 6, 7 is when the parents are still engaging with us and interested in what the child is doing, and we see the parents switch-off around 13 or 14 [years of age]. It’s really tough... when kids actually need the exact same amount of nurturing and attention in a much more sophisticated way.*  
(Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)

The interviewee continues by making poignant observations around the essential role of the ‘right kinds of’ partnership in nurturing children and young people’s possible selves, particularly in areas of low socio-economic status:

*I think that the possible self thing really does connect in with the idea of aspiration because a child has a possible self that isn’t realised. At four or five they have an unconscious kind-of energy and maybe talent and joie de vivre... whatever it is... and enthusiasm. All it takes is for the right people around them to allow that to happen, you know, the environment. If you don’t have nurture around you, if you don’t have touch, if you don’t have routine, if you don’t have all those things happening to you from you’re a baby onwards, and even as your brain is developing at 3, 4, 5, 6, and then you get into the teenage phase when it’s going into the next big rush... when you are missing those support networks you’re at such a disadvantage. And, I do firmly believe that if kids who are living in very disadvantaged communities like this one get the extra two or three hours per week [...] it can only keep them healthier a little bit longer...*  
(Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)

Beyond the essential role that parents/guardians can play in supporting children and young people’s exploration and construction of vivid possible selves, there are other issues which can be considered. These are discussed in the context of acknowledging and valuing parents/guardians as partners in children and young people’s musical journeys.<sup>18</sup> The implications drawn out in terms of parents/guardians roles as partners are equally relevant in the context of their role in ‘joint-projects’ which support children and young people towards achieving their possible selves.

### **3.11.3. Issue 3: Multiple layers of sufficiently cued strategies and responsive programme duration**

Beyond shaping strategies at an interaction-level to support children and young people’s possible selves, there are important learnings for what can occur at both local and national levels. If we ‘follow the golden thread’ from what is happening at the more proximally intimate interaction-level context – where musicians and others are striving in

partnership with children and young people towards their possible selves – it follows that ‘sufficiently cued strategies’ should be in place at those other levels of Music Generation’s infrastructure which support, nurture, and advocate for interaction-level partners in their endeavours.<sup>19</sup> This is a complex undertaking for Music Generation, and it includes: investing in musicians so that they continue to develop the necessary expertise, skills and insight which are required to support them in working with and motivating children and young people in dynamic, relevant, and meaningful ways, devising long-term strategies which can meaningfully underpin children and young people’s long-term possible selves goals, and ensuring that programmes are sustainable and fully responsive in addressing the diverse needs and barriers of local contexts. Many of these issues regarding the critically diverse conditions which should be put in place at each level of Music Generation’s partnership infrastructure to support children and young people’s possible selves are discussed in-depth in the context of Section 6.

This latter point has been previously discussed in the context of critical diversity and designing responsive programmes. It is also relevant to our discussion of possible selves with respect to the duration of responsive programmes. Put simply, if children and young people are working towards possible selves goals, this implies a long term engagement with music. This need is recognised ‘on the ground’ with one school principal commenting that:

*With Music Generation... you’d love to see the focus on the early-years... I think that once you get in there with the early-years you’d love to see it continue with a particular group... just to see that the progress that kids make [...] If you look at Music Generation and its role in terms of, shall we say, systemic change, there’s huge scope there.*  
(Nathan, school principal, CS3SC1)

While there are several longitudinal or ‘rolling’ programmes across Music Generation’s MEPs, there are many programmes which are short-term in nature. The reasons for this are manifold and include logistical, cultural, and budgetary barriers to longitudinal programmes; these are arguably beyond the ‘control’ of musicians and/or coordinators. They include: being constrained by the duration of school terms where programmes take place in primary and post-primary settings; choosing to pursue a ‘quantity’ agenda for greater ‘reach’ = shorter programmes with more children and young people participating; a hesitation or reluctance in taking risks with longer programmes; the availability of experienced musicians for longitudinal programmes; a culture of shorter term ‘arts programming’ influencing programme design; the implications of matched-funding on what can be designed; an expectation on MEPs to produce and communicate high impact results, which can lead to coordinators designing programmes with a narrow ‘presentational performance’ end-focus, rather than more longitudinal programmes which could potentially nurture a wider repertoire of possible selves for those children and young people involved.

Several of the programmes which were observed over the course of the research were between six and ten weeks in duration, and this was a concern for a number of parents interviewed in one of the subcases:

*Six weeks is just way too short. Even like when I watch her doing dancing at the moment, and it would take like nearly three months before she would actually totally get into it, or know herself if she likes it or not. But, six-weeks? I know that it’s an introduction... but I know at that age it’s just a building block. I think that it needs to be a lot longer.*  
(Parent/Guardian, CS1SC1)

<sup>19</sup> The six levels of Music Generation’s ecological model of partnership are called the interaction-, individual-, meso-, local-, national-, and philanthropic-levels. For discussion, see Section 6.

*If you are only doing it for six-weeks, it is a short timeframe, because they are quite young in being introduced to school. And then with music on top of it... if they're not doing music at home... think that it has to be a longer programme.*  
(Parent/Guardian, CS1SC1)

In another subcase (CS3SC1), the primary school principal stressed the need for 'sustained programmes' which were not just 'one hit wonders'. Drawing on his experience of working in particularly challenging educational contexts, he also presented his informed vision of an effective and meaningful five-year plan which would support the longitudinal engagement of children in music programmes. As he explains, this would involve establishing meaningful partnerships between each of Music Generation's levels (national, local, and individual) to create 'buy in' from the school, community ownership, and ultimately, lead a young child through musical doing from early to teenage years:

*Strategic plans are great! They're big fluffy statements and they look really good when they go up to your Board. But, drill down and what... like... are you talking about [putting in] your five-year plan... that in our school... that you're going to start with the Senior Infants who are engaged in a preschool programme... 'We're going to engage them in this, that, and whatever' [...] 'and then we'll work with them in 1st Class and then we'll work with them all the way up to 6th Class... and then, when they get to 6th Class we'll actually work on a Transition Programme from Primary School into Secondary School'. That's where you make a huge difference! That's a Strategic Plan! That's a five-Year plan! Not broad fluffy statements. I'm not saying that that's what happening, but I think that that's where you need to almost... and we're all very busy... but why not come back to the schools and say 'right ok, we could possibly be in here for the next five years... what do you want from this?' Put the onus back on the schools as well... and we'll take ownership... and even as part of a staff meeting we'll say 'we've got access to Music Generation for the next five years [so] what do we want from this? What do you think we can actually achieve?' That's where the school and the community ownership come from. And... there'll be some schools that buy into it and there'll be some schools that won't. But, the schools that do buy into it, you know you're going to get schools that actually are going to embrace this and take it on.*  
(Nathan, school principal, CS3SC1)



### 3.12. Possible selves conclusion

This research has revealed the richness of children and young people's possible selves constellations across the MEP case studies, and it has illustrated the immense potential for children and young people's musical, personal, relational, and unforeseen growth that exists in and through music-making. Without a consideration of children and young people's possible selves, Music Generation's entire endeavour loses meaning. If it is agreed upon that thinking about children and young people's possible selves in this way is important – and this research would argue that it is vital – this then has implications which resonate and reverberate through each facet of Music Generation's evolving infrastructure. The ambitions children and young people have for their possible selves in music were often vulnerable and therefore dependant on each of the four components of the conceptual model of transformative experience, functioning optimally and aligning with these ambitions. That is, where children and young people had opportunities to encounter meaningful music-making in diverse ways (see Section 4) across the three-mode PME-spectrum (see Section 5), and where they were part of an ecological model of partnership (see Section 6) which supported this music-making, their exploration and construction of vivid and salient possible selves often followed.

What this means is that, every part of Music Generation needs to be thinking about enabling children and young people's possible selves; the conversation must be about revealing, confronting, and removing those barriers to possible selves. The full range of possible selves should be valued, and while there are personal, relational, and unforeseen possible selves, it should be celebrated that children and young people want to be musically challenged, musically creative, musically innovative, progress musically, and strive towards their future musical possible selves. Musicians have a particularly important role in modelling possible selves and communicating a strong belief to children and young people that they can strive, that they can achieve, that they can succeed, that they can overcome difficulties, and that they can reach their possible selves constellations. For possible selves to even emerge on the horizon however, children and young people need to firstly have meaningful music-making experiences 'in the moment'. The following chapter focuses on this aspect of the conceptual model of transformative experience.

## Chapter 4. A multifarious world of meanings.

'Meaning-making' is a concept which interweaves through and connects the findings and ideas presented throughout the entirety of this document. It is through meaningful and meaning-making experiences with music that children and young people strive towards their possible selves. All types of engagement with music can be meaningful, but they can also be meaningless. Children and young people can and do experience layers of musical meaning in sessions, jams, or other participatory contexts, by performing on stage in youth clubs or in concert halls, by listening to their favourite bands live or on Spotify, YouTube etc., through experiencing music with their tutor in a music workshop or instrumental/vocal lesson, and through their own individual and sometimes private engagement with music. But they can as easily disengage, lose interest, get frustrated, become bored, and essentially not experience meaning through the music encounter. Music is therefore an inert entity and in its many forms it can also be harmful or simply inconsequential – merely playing notes or learning theory in isolation from music-making itself is unlikely to be imbued with a great deal of meaning. Meaning-making in music is a complex phenomenon, and the process of revealing and capturing it in this research did not eschew this complexity – one only has to remember that any encounter with music can be experienced differently at the same time, by different people, and by the same people, at different times.

This chapter is a descriptive chapter which conceptualises the multifarious nature of meaning-making in/through music, and the many ways that children and young people were found to construct and experience meaning in/through music across Music Generation's infrastructure. It attempts to situate meaning-making in music as part of a continuum from national partnership structures on the one end of the model, to children and young people's construction of a constellation of future possible selves on the other. Moreover, and where relevant, a number of implications are articulated which may be used to inform the future development of Music Generation so that the organisation can be purposeful in supporting and sustaining children and young people's access to the deepest layers of meaning-making in music.

#### 4.1. Three meaning types: a multidirectional process

Three different types of meaning-making were evident in the many ways children engaged in meaningful music-making: a) musical meaning, which is meaningful because of the music itself, b) personal meaning, which is concerned with the meaningful impact of music-making on children and young people's personal wellbeing and c) relational meaning, which is musical meaning-making inherent to the relationships forged between children/young people and others.

These ways of experiencing meaning through musical doing were evidenced across all research subcases. Children and young people could move fluidly between one meaning-making type and another, and it was also possible to experience each type of meaning simultaneously. For instance, sometimes a child/young person was completely focused on constructing musical meaning in the moment which led to a sense of personal meaning, other times strong relational meaning led to musical meaning, and so on. The multidirectional nature of meaning-making was unmistakable when observing young musicians in a rock band performing one of their first gigs at a band showcase event. Their gig experience is used here as a lens to illustrate how the three types of meaning can be experienced by children and young people simultaneously and multi-directionally:

##### 4.1.1. Musical meaning illustrated

The heightened sense of musical communication between the young band members was palpable during their performance of an original song which they had composed and worked hard on for several weeks before the gig. The drummer and bass player seemed completely aware of and in tune with one another on stage, while also absorbed in their own performance. This was musical meaning-making 'in the moment', and it likely followed several weeks of musical meaning-making during the young musicians' composition process. Afterwards, the singer commented that it was her first time singing with the band and that she was depending on them to 'play the music and you're watching them to know when to come in... it's completely different with live music'. The drummer also commented that 'you kind of realise how consistent or inconsistent your timing is and whether you speed up or slow down because the rest of the band and you have to work off each other... you have to communicate... you have to be focused and on point and really know your stuff when you're up there'. The guitar player agreed but added that there is a moment when it just takes off and everything works together. A young audience member remarked that she loved how all the different instruments came together and blended and made it all sound 'really cool'. In other words, the young musicians were experiencing meaning-making which was directly connected to their relationship with the writing and performance of the music/song.

##### 4.1.2. Relational meaning illustrated

The band members also spoke about the teamwork that was involved in bringing their songs together and how they got to know one another in a different way through making music together. They needed to learn how to work collaboratively and, through this, friendships and bonds had been forged. At the interval and after the gig, there was a strong sense of camaraderie, the band members socialising with their peers and meeting new people, new friendships forming, and particularly notable was the open, kind, and genuine interactions between the facilitating musicians and the young people. One of the facilitating musicians commented that 'all of the bands seem unified and they're all talking to each other and it seems like a really supportive event where everyone is willing everyone else to do well... as soon as someone finishes their sound-check the whole room erupts into applause'. In this instance, it could be said that the young people were experiencing meaning through interpersonal relationships which were instigated and facilitated by music-making.

### 4.1.3. Personal meaning illustrated

While somewhat challenging to capture in this instance, it was very clear that each young person was having an enjoyable, fun, significant, and liberating music-making experience. They had written and arranged all of the songs; it was their gig, they were proud of themselves, and emotions were often high as songs were introduced. The young musicians were shaping their identity through music, expressing ideas such as: this is our music, this is who we are, these are the people and the type of sounds we identify with, and these are the thoughts and issues that are important to us. In the many heartfelt thanks offered to organisers and facilitating bands in the introduction to songs, the significance and value of this event to the young participants was very clear. There was also a deep sense of the young people's agency which had emerged over the course of the musical experience. The facilitating musicians spoke about the young people's 'raw teenage confidence' which they had seen developing in the weeks prior to the gig. This band showcase event illustrated the three types of meaning which were experienced fluidly and multi-directionally by the young musicians. Throughout the following sections, each type of meaning is described and illustrated further.

## 4.2. Musical meaning

Quite simply, meaning is always about something, and in the context of this research, musical meaning is about meaning constructed and intrinsically experienced through an inherent relationship with the music itself. It is about the experiences of children and young people as they progressively develop their musical skills and abilities; as they explore the musically unfamiliar and grow familiar with and become passionate about a particular musical genre or style; as they explore and become creative in music; as they begin to make a connection with and love their instruments and/or voice; as they become intrigued and entranced by the peculiar sonic properties of a chord, tone, ornament, or entire country's folk music tradition; as they eagerly put a CD track on repeat to figure out and learn the melody of a favourite tune; as they completely focus and zone in during their performance; as they become inspired and motivated to perform by listening to the music of others; as they listen to a tune, song, or piece of music and they get excited and their heart quickens; as they begin to imagine and think in music; as they work on developing and fine-tuning the particular skills needed to engage with a song or piece of music; as they poetically craft the lyrics and melody of a song; as they immerse themselves in solitary performance; as music stirs their emotional responses; and as they watch a live music performance where the music awakens a deep ache to perform. For instance, musical meaning includes the 'happy music memories' of young children (CS2SC1) who recalled the musical significance of 'playing my gtor [guitar] on the grass' (FIGURE 8); 'playing the whistle' (FIGURE 9); listening to lots of songs from other countries 'when we were in France' (FIGURE 10); their 'first day' at piano (FIGURE 11); singing 'I am gummy [gummy] bear' (FIGURE 12); and getting a piano on Christmas day (FIGURE 13). These musical meaning experiences were observed and were described by children and young people over the course of the research, and they have since been conceptualised as musical meaning-making.

A number of useful perspectives helped to inform a conceptualisation of musical meaning for this research: a) inherent meaning (Green 1988, 1997, 2005), which arises from the sounds and patterns of the music itself, b) delineated meaning, which is meaning connected to the context beyond the music such as music's social context (ibid.), and c) the concept of flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1990) which is akin to being 'in the zone' and is a mental state where the child/young person is fully immersed, fully focused, and experiencing full involvement and enjoyment in the music-making experience. These perspectives helped to interrogate the musical meaning which was revealed across each subcase; other perspectives are drawn from where useful and relevant.

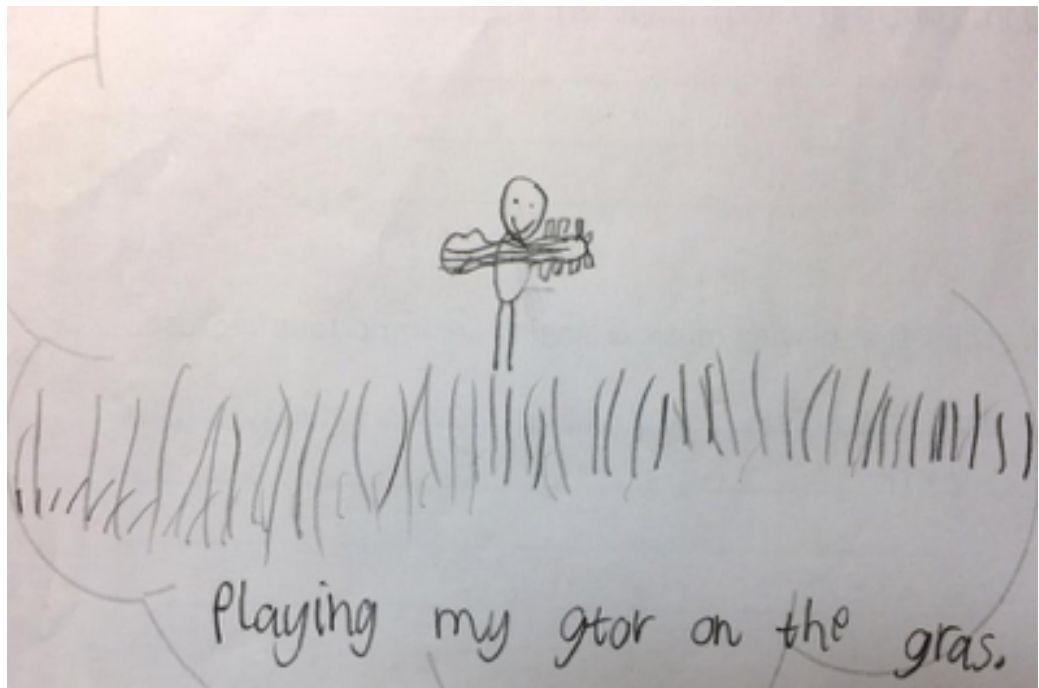


FIGURE 8: 'PLAYING MY GTOR [GUITAR] ON THE GRASS' (AGE 8, CS2SC1)



FIGURE 9: PLAYING THE WHISTLE (AGE 8, CS2SC1)

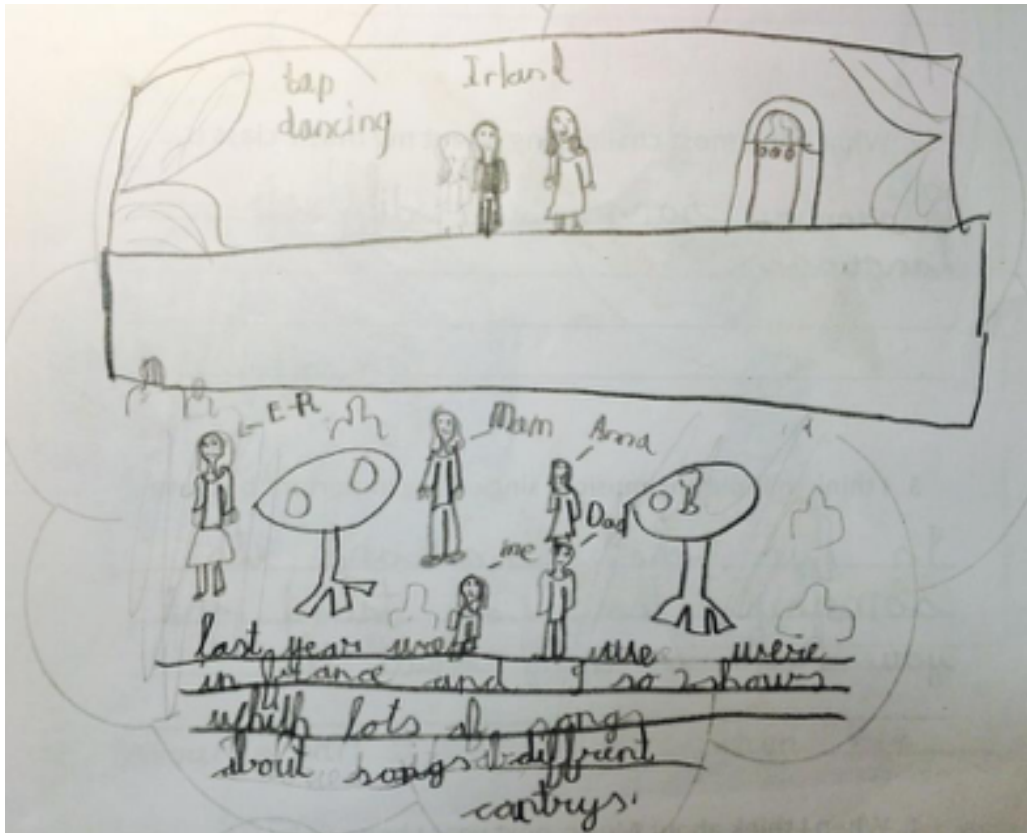


FIGURE 10: 'WHEN WE WERE IN FRANCE' (AGE 8, CS1SC1)



FIGURE 11: 'FIRST DAY' AT PIANO (AGE 8, CS2SC1)



FIGURE 12: SINGING 'I AM GUMMY BEAR' (AGE 8, CS2SC1)



FIGURE 13: ON CHRISTMAS DAY WHEN I GOT A PIANO' (AGE 8, CS2SC1)

#### 4.2.1. Features of musical meaning: inherent meaning, delineated meaning, and flow

##### *An interrelationship between inherent and delineated meaning*

Inherent meaning describes the type of musical meaning a young concertina player experiences when playing a set of jigs with a flute player at a session; the young musician enjoys the melodic flow of the tune, she connects in with the flute player's strong rhythm, the musicians interweave and unite, and the concertina player makes the tune her own with subtle ornamentation and variations. Delineated meaning describes the young musicians' connections to the session space, their understanding of the conventions of the traditional music session and the informal nature of how the session unfolds, and the social fabric of the evening. It is the relationship between inherent and delineated meaning that gives rise to a multiplicity of musical meanings for children and young people. In an early-years music-making context, the young children described how they loved the sound of the egg shakers shaking in time with the music, and they equally loved how colourful the music workshop became once everyone was shaking their respective eggs. Their responses to music-making, while simplified here, further demonstrate Greens' two types of musical meaning-making: meaning connected to the music itself (inherent) and meaning connected to context beyond the music itself (delineated). In terms of inherent meaning, the young children visibly expressed their enjoyment in experiencing the sound of twelve egg shakers shaking along in sync (inherent meaning). It could probably be said then that the children – who spoke so fondly about the vibrant colours of the egg shakers and in the process illustrated each type of musical meaning-making so well – would not have enjoyed their music workshop just as much had all of the eggs been white, beige, or all of another similar colour (delineated meaning).

Green (1988, 1997, 2005) refers to the relationship between those aspects of meaning she calls 'inherent' and 'delineated', and the meaningful musical connections that are forged through this relationship.<sup>20</sup> Inherent meanings, she explains, arise from the sounds and patterns of the music object/materials itself – such as chords, notes, phrases. From the examples above, inherent meaning describes the blend of concertina and flute, and the timbre of an egg shaker shaking to a beat! According to Green, the process of organising the sonic materials into relationships to construct inherent meaning is dependent on the listeners' acquired familiarity with the stylistic norms of the music in question:

*If the listener does not have familiarity, relatively few meanings will be conceived. Therefore a piece of music which is highly meaningful or very rewarding to one individual might be relatively meaningless or lacking in interest to another. Any one piece of music can give rise to a multiplicity of possible meanings.*  
(Green, 2005, p.77)

##### *Feature 1: Inherent meaning*

During the research, it was observed that the process of children/young people growing in familiarity with and nurturing inherent musical meaning often took time, patience, motivation, and hard work. In dialogical contexts, which were essential sites where this type of inherent musical meaning was experienced, nurturing inherent meaning required an educative process of increasing the child/young person's skill-level (which is connected to achieving flow) and a continuing expansion of the child/young person's musical experiences; for example, an uilleann piper who was observed explaining and demonstrating the sonic joys of a 'tight cran' to a young piper who could play with competence, would perhaps not have attempted to communicate the inherent meaning of the cran to a less experienced ear.

20

In later publications, such as *Music, informal learning and the school: a new classroom pedagogy* (2008), Green refers to 'inherent' meaning as 'inter-sonic' meaning.



Green's interpretation of inherent meaning is consistent across the majority of – if not all – observations made during the research. It would not be an overstatement to say that the intention of musicians in all of the PME areas was for children and young people to connect with and enjoy intrinsic properties of the music; this includes Caoimhe (aged 5, CS2SC1) whose favourite part of the music class was when they played 'the big maracas', and a group of young teenagers and music tutor (CS3SC3) who patiently and determinedly figured out the 'right sounding' chords to accompany their chosen song, and groups of children and young people across each subcase who were observed connecting with and enjoying the inherent properties of their particular musical genres (rock, pop, traditional, classical, rap, etc.), as well as Cora (aged 16, CS2SC2) and Dean (aged 17 CS3SC3) who were already learning acoustic guitar, but became determined to learn the bass guitar on hearing it, because they 'preferred the sound'.

### *Children and young people's responses to inherent meaning*

In terms of children and young people responding to inherent meaning across the subcases, two distinct observations were made. The first was that responsive programmes were designed where musicians would engage children/young people in a musical genre/style which they were *already familiar* with and which they already enjoyed – for example rap workshops (CS3SC2), folk and pop music on guitar (CS3SC3), and traditional music lessons. The second was that some musicians attempted to 'shape' the *unfamiliar* music which children/young people encountered in the lesson to better connect with what they perceived the children/young people's musical interests to be – for example fun songs for young children in early-years settings (CS1SC1), familiar children's songs on classical violin (CS1SC1) and ukulele (CS2SC1). Thereafter, unfamiliar repertoires and sound explorations were introduced. Green (2005), however, cautions that responses to inherent meanings are not always positive. From Green's perspective, it follows that on the one hand, children and young people can have a highly affirmative or positive response when they are familiar with a particular musical style and understand its nuances, and on the other hand they can have a negative response when they are unfamiliar with the musical style. According to Green (2005), 'we are less than likely to understand the music, and may have difficulty making sense of it or responding to its internal similarities and continuities, differences and changes' (p.81). In such circumstances, she says, 'the capacity of a piece of music to engage our interest is relatively limited' (ibid.).

Musicians should therefore reflect on and question the musical materials/repertoires/ approaches with which they work to ensure the greatest possible potential of meaningfully connecting with the experiences of children and young people. This may be through working with familiar musical genres, through shaping the unfamiliar in engaging ways, or through creative composing activities where children and young people construct their own inherent meanings. Musicians should strive to nurture inherent meaning through music-making experiences which are psychologically accessible to the child/young person, personally meaningful, and congruent with the child/young person's social identity (this connects with the findings related to children and young people's musical possible selves). Observations were also made where the musical material (and, therefore, inherent meanings) seemed removed from young children's lived experience (e.g., songs such as *I'm a Choo Choo Train* and *Tick Tock Cuckoo Clock*) or were determined largely by a musician's pedagogical approach rather than the children's rich, diverse, and creative interests and insights (e.g., relying solely on repertoires of songs associated with particular pedagogical approaches to music education).

It must be remembered, however, that for children music repertoire can also have musical meanings signifying skill and progress. Although a rather hackneyed standard repertoire for piano, a young piano player can relish the point where they have the skill and technique to play Scott Joplin's *The Entertainer* or Beethoven's *Fur Elise*, or a young

traditional flute player can determinedly practice until they have mastered *The Gold Ring*. In one sense they have ‘arrived’ as part of their music community, and they are communicating this and want it recognised when they announce ‘look at what I can play!’

### *Designing responsive programmes for inherent meaning*

The findings around inherent meaning seem to suggest that coordinators designed two main types of responsive programmes to elicit inherent meaning.

- (1) Those which they anticipated would immediately interest children and young people and quickly generate their capacity for inherent meaning-making.
- (2) Those where children/young people were unfamiliar with a particular musical genre with attempts sometimes made to bridge the inherent qualities of the music with the perceived interests of the children/young people.

An example of a subcase which is not included in this categorisation was a responsive programme where each week, children had the opportunity to listen to the musicians play songs in a range of styles (rock, pop, hip hop, folk) – thereby showcasing to the children a range of potential inherent meanings. Afterwards, the children had an opportunity to choose their preferred style and collaboratively compose a song in that style with their classmates and the musicians. This was quite a unique subcase in terms of inherent meaning as the musicians laid out a spectrum of potential genre choices (or inherent meanings) for the children, followed by a co-construction of inherent meanings with the children through song-writing. Importantly, this highlights the valuable and perhaps underused potential of song-writing and music composition in allowing children and young people to construct their own inherent meanings, and there were a number of examples of such programmes across Music Generation’s infrastructure (including a number of creative early-years programmes, Music Generation Carlow’s *Speranza*, Music Generation Sligo’s *Big Bang* young composer programme, a range of compositions projects in Music Generation Wicklow, various rap/hip-hop/technology/electronic music programmes across MEPs, the John Lennon Bus programme, and Music Generation Mayo’s *The Kaleidoscope Big Band*, musician-in-residence programme).

### *Feature 2: Delineated meaning*

The meaning that a child in an early-years programme ascribed to the colours of the eggs, or in fact, the meaning that her friend expressed when she recalled ‘playing king of the egg’ is replicable across Music Generation’s infrastructure, across all PME-spectrum areas. This type of meaning-making can be described as delineated meaning. Green posits that musical experience, according to her model, cannot happen unless inherent meaning coexists and is in operation with delineated meaning. Delineated meaning arises from extra-musical factors such as music’s social context and it reverberates across the entire PME spectrum; for example, it closely resonates with the Communities of Musical Practice area of the participatory PME mode<sup>21</sup> and the meaning-making potential of this for children and young people as they attempt to join ‘real life’ existing musical communities.

Observations over the course of the research include the delineated meanings which children and young people gave to:

- » listening to rock music in an appropriate venue,
- » the unspoken rules of playing traditional music in a session,
- » socially accepted ways of performing in a classical music concert,
- » the professional world of music and how to operate in this world,
- » activities of practising and rehearsing,

- » inhabiting a musical world as a professional musician rather than solely as a music learner,
- » the more informal nature of jamming in participatory contexts.

Unsurprisingly, there was a multiplicity of responses to musical delineations across each subcase. In one case-study (CS3), I attended and observed an eclectic band showcase which took place in a live music venue in the middle of the city – the music delineations in this context were vibrant and multi-layered; there was a sense that the young people had not only inhabited this space with their music-making, but there was a tapestry of musical delineations from the clothes and the hairstyles of the young musicians, to the ways in which various bands thought it appropriate to engage with the audience, to the ‘attitude’ and ‘tone’ of the evening, to the mood which they created in the venue through lighting, to the innovative layout of the *Later... with Jools Holland*-style staging, to the informal tone to the evening’s wrap-up. The delineated meanings were clearly important to the children and young people present, as they worked to affirm their developing musical identities, what they musically valued, what they found musically interesting, what they wanted to be a part of, and what they musically identified with. This was different to the regular teaching/learning space, and for Music Generation to support children/young people in ways that have such meaning, diverse music-making experiences should be facilitated. Spaces should be created where children/young people can be autonomous and have agency in their music-making, and musicians should strive to introduce children/young people to the real world of music-making beyond the teaching space.

#### *Children and young people’s responses to delineated meaning*

Children and young people, across many contexts, attributed social and cultural meanings to the music genres and practices that they engaged in, and they responded to the delineated meanings already encoded in these genres/practices. This includes the ‘open mic relaxed vibe’ that young people valued when performing songs at their local youth club; it includes the way that a child in another context understood and described the world of classical music performance that he was venturing into; and it includes the young rock/trad/electronic musicians’ understanding of their social audiences, and the fact that they would likely want to move/connect/dance/engage/participate in ways connected to their particular musical practice. Whether children and young people experienced musical doing through communities of rock, classical, traditional, folk, jazz, or other musical genres/practices, opportunities were often created by and for the children/young people to construct meaning beyond those inherent meanings. This was a vital aspect of their musical experience.

Like inherent meanings, children and young people’s responses to delineated meanings can either be positive or negative. One PME context where the children’s response to delineated meanings was certainly not negative, but did raise some concern from the point of view that positive delineated meanings were arguably limited, was that of a whole-class tuition context in a primary school setting.<sup>22</sup> The concern was drawn from the responses of a number of classroom teachers involved in one particular programme who commented that children perceived the programme to be a school subject; it could be assumed from their comments that those aforementioned delineated meanings that we would hope for children and young people to begin ascribing to music-making would in this case be limited. Assessing the reasons for the children’s perception of the programme in this way, I concluded that the musical delineations of the children were limited to those of a school subject as the programme was a) timetabled within school hours, b) often involved the oversight and input of the classroom teacher, c) for the most part, was defined by a dialogical PME approach akin to traditional teaching, d) associated

22 The children’s response to inherent meanings in this subcase was overwhelmingly positive, which illustrates Green’s point that we can have highly affirmative or positive responses to inherent meanings but negative responses to delineated meanings, and vice versa (Green 2005, p.80).

with the physical four-walled classroom, and perhaps most alarmingly, e) was seen by the classroom teacher as 'covering' the music component of the Arts Education curriculum.

Therefore, while primary school contexts are potentially rich sites for meaningful music-making to occur – and were in most cases – it could be argued that those positive delineated meanings which children and young people should develop, could be somewhat (or profoundly) limited within the parameters of a classroom setting. Children's negative responses to delineated meaning – that is, if they felt that they didn't connect with anything 'extra musical' that the music had to offer and subsequently lost interest – could therefore potentially lead to little or no continuity in terms of musical progression. Musicians should then be clear of their purpose and seek to provide a range of ways for children and young people to engage with music-making beyond the school – which of course several did! This would mean that children and young people then have access to a wide range of music-making sites wherein positive responses to new delineated meanings could occur. Of course, this is difficult, and from my observations, would require some degree of innovation and resolve on the part of the musician, and resources and support from their MEP, but it could be achieved. Classroom teachers should also be encouraged to 'come to know' the vision and purpose of the musician(s), and to see the programme as something which can complement their work. With the support of classroom teachers in partnership with musicians,<sup>23</sup> I observed many examples of how children and young people can come to experience what Green describes as 'celebration', where a positive experience of inherent meanings is accompanied by positive inclinations towards delineated meanings.

### Feature 3: Flow

When children and young people lose themselves in the music, perhaps in a performance that 'lifts off', and where performers momentarily lose awareness of anything outside the music, we describe this as being in flow. This was a concept first introduced by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). It strongly informs an understanding of musical meaning for this research, in particular, the processes required for such meaningful musical experience to occur. The concept of flow is akin to optimal musical meaning-making. It helps to describe those moments (and accompanying processes) during a workshop, performance, jamming session, or music lesson - in other words, during any music-making encounter – where young musicians achieved a state of being where they were 'in the zone'; were experiencing completely focused motivation; were fully involved and absorbed in an enjoyable music-making process; were paradoxically in a state of effortless attention despite the musical challenge at hand; and were wholly primed to experience deep musical meaning.

The concept of flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, 1991, 1994) describes a heightened physiological state of being 'in the zone', of being completely absorbed and immersed in a challenging yet enjoyable activity, where attention and motivation is completely focused on engaging with the task at hand. The optimal experience of flow is not unique to musical experience, and it has been used to describe high performance in the fields of teaching, learning, artistic creativity, and in particular, in sports. Across the subcases, children and young people described their music-making experiences in ways which strongly resonated with the qualities of flow. One young pianist described how she was so focused that she lost the sense of anyone else being in the room during her performance, while a young drummer described how his 45-minute lesson seemed to pass by in minutes, such as his completely focused interaction with the musician during his lesson. Csikszentmihalyi's interpretation of flow activity (1991, p.74) suggests that achieving musical flow can provide children and young people with a sense of musical discovery, a creative feeling of transporting children and young people into new musical realities, pushing them to higher levels of musical performance, and leading them to previously

undreamed-of states of musical consciousness.

Flow has gained increasing attention in music education scholarship (Custodero 2002, 2005, 2010; Sheridan and Byrne 2002; St. John 2006), and more specifically in the area of musical experience and musical meaning (Dillon 2007). One of the reasons that Csikszentmihalyi's flow paradigm is considered an attractive theoretical perspective to underpin musical meaning for Music Generation is that it 'honors the individual nature of musical experience unfolding in the moment' (St. John 2006, p. 1651). As a perspective therefore, flow urges us to consider the individual child/young person's experience in the context of an infrastructure comprised largely of group music-making contexts. Internally realised, flow is deeply connected to and contingent upon the concept of intrinsic motivation or the attitude of desire to go on learning. It can help us to better understand some of the reasons why children and young people are motivated to learn music and continue engaging in music towards achieving their possible musical selves. It helps to reveal the nature of musical engagement and progression, where children and young people perceive musical challenges and meet these challenges by increasing musical skills; and it provides a window into an intimate, internally realised process which leads children and young people to experience musical meaning, and to potentially expand their constellation of possible musical selves. Arising from these understandings, several implications for Music Generation are threaded throughout the remainder of this section so that Music Generation can strengthen those conditions which support children and young people's musical meaning-making experiences across its infrastructure.

#### *Flow informing a concept of musical meaning*

Csikszentmihalyi suggests that optimal flow experience has a number of major common characteristics:

*A challenging activity that requires skills; Concentration on the task at hand; The loss of self-consciousness; Clear goals and feedback; Merging of action and awareness; Paradox of control; The transformation of time*  
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, pp.48-59)

These characteristics were strongly evidenced in fieldwork observations as well as in the responses of children, young people, and musicians across the research contexts. They shaped my understanding of children and young people's musical meaning-making processes across Music Generation's infrastructure, and they led to several implications for musicians if they are to effectively support children and young people's optimal musical meaning-making. The four most pertinent characteristics for Music Generation are discussed below:

#### *1. Balancing the difficulty of a challenging music-making activity with skills proficiency*

Csikszentmihalyi identified that people who are challenged and have the capacity to meet that challenge feel flow, and suggested that people who experience flow - often through arts and sporting activities - find it significant, valuable and meaningful. To experience musical meaning in music-making across each PME mode, children and young people needed to have acquired a certain level of skill through which they could confront and complete musical tasks (for example, to perform for/with their tutor during a lesson, to sing with other children in an early-years workshop, to lead a set of tunes in a session, or even to attentively listen to, connect with, and understand a piece of music). That is, musically meaningful flow activities were challenging activities that required effort towards developing corresponding skills. In this regard Csikszentmihalyi represents a flow activity as existing along two dimensions of experience namely 'challenges' and 'skills', where the individual evaluates challenge and skill based on personal perception in-the-moment. To sustain this optimal experience, 'skills must improve to meet new challenges, and in turn, challenges must improve to continue attracting enhanced skills'

(Custodero 2002, p.4). The graph below (Figure 14) adapted from Dillon (2007, p.47) and Csikszentmihalyi (1991, p.74) represents Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow. According to this graph, if a certain task (such as learning a song or composing a piece of music) is too challenging then the result is anxiety, while if it is not challenging enough the result is boredom. The flow channel represents the point where the challenge and the ability to meet the challenge (skills) intersect, and this results in a feeling of the task flowing from our bodies and mind effortlessly (Dillon 2007, p.47); in short, transforming the self by making it more complex (Csikszentmihalyi 1991, p.74). Children and young people were observed music-making along this flow channel; for example, during composition workshops where young people engaged with and were completely absorbed in the challenging composition processes, but had acquired the necessary skills to meet these challenges, and during a wind band performance, where each young member harnessed their previously acquired musical skills to perform a complex piece.

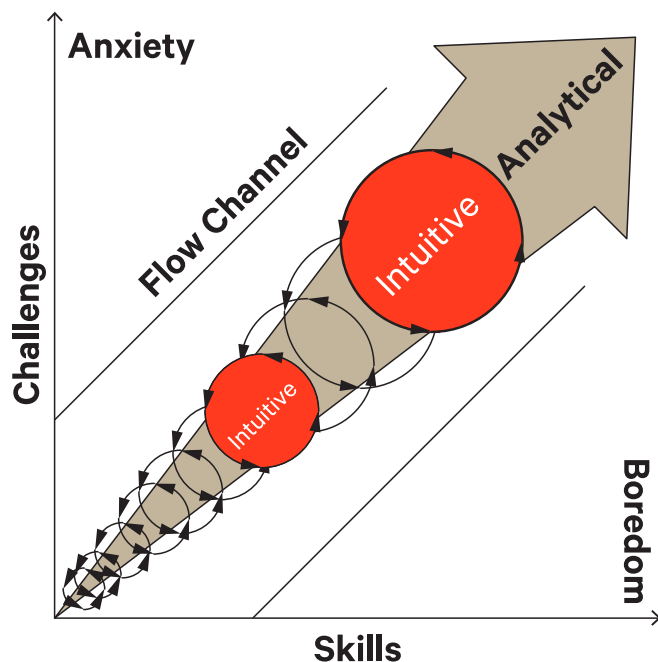


FIGURE 14: 'FLOW' ADAPTED FROM CSIKSZENTMIHALYI (1991) AND DILLON (2007)

Across all subcases, the musician(s) played an initial primary and fundamental role in guiding children and young people on a journey where at various points and with the accompanying expertise of the musician, the children and young people had the capacity to meet and complete musical challenges. Subcase 2 (CS2) was a superb example where from one moment of a lesson to the next, one week to the next, the musician incrementally challenged each young person (with more complex and intricate chords, rhythms, and melodies, etc.), and ensured through effective feedback and his active dialogical approach<sup>24</sup> that each young person had the necessary skills to 'complete' the musical tasks which he presented. In another subcase (CS1SC2), individual children within a group context were challenged each week by the violin teacher who introduced 'new' strings, notes, fingerings, and more challenging pieces. I observed as she rotated around the group to ensure that each child was gaining the requisite skills to address the musical challenges that she was presenting to them (playing along with a track, playing in time with one another, etc.). In some subcases I observed children and young people being asked (or challenged) to work outside their skill level, and the young learners seemed either frustrated (if the task was too difficult), or bored (if the task was too easy).

Ellen (age 17, CS2SC2) explained how she ‘used to get so frustrated with all the different technicalities of the piano’ but she ‘just really, really stuck with it’ until she began to enjoy the process – some children and young people may not be so self-motivated. In another subcase, a classroom teacher revealed that she did not think that the musician was challenging the children enough in a whole-class context, and that the material was being delivered at a level that she would have been quite comfortable delivering herself; as a result she felt that some of the children were ‘feeling a bit bored’ and not progressing musically. A musician’s solution to this issue was to split a large group in terms of musical ability so that each group could be appropriately challenged – however, this action also brings with it its own issues and challenges.

This characteristic of musical meaning-imbued flow was not just confined to dialogical contexts. Children and young people also confronted and were equipped to meet challenging music-making activity in presentational and participatory contexts. In the process, they acquired the necessary skills and tools to construct and experience musical meaning in diverse encounters such as leading a traditional music session, performing at a band showcase, writing and arranging a song, playing in a large-scale brass ensemble, playing/singing at a school concert, and performing in a orchestral percussion section.

Emerging from these findings, the task for musicians across Music Generation’s infrastructure is to ensure that children and young people are appropriately challenged. Setting musical challenges for children and young people which encourages them to strive just a bit beyond their skill level can lead to an enjoyable pursuit of musical goals. Only then are children and young people fully equipped to attain musical flow – musical meaning. Musicians therefore need to be constantly cognisant of the skill level of individual children/young people in dialogical contexts and design strategies to appropriately challenge all children and young people in group music-making contexts. Upon encountering and addressing appropriate musical challenges in dialogical contexts, children and young people can then bring these new-found skills to other music-making encounters along the PME spectrum, where they challenge themselves further and continue developing musical skills - and so the cycle of musical progression and meaning-making continues.

### *2. Concentration is deep and the person’s attention is completely absorbed by the activity*

Across a range of scenarios, where it was perceived that children and young people were engaged in musically meaningful flow activity, deep concentration indicated a complete focusing on the inherent musical meanings of the music being experienced. This was likely because children and young people were fully prepared with the skills required to meet that challenge. It was evident as children completely focused on the task at hand during violin lessons (CS1SC2), as young singers focused on their harmony line during choir rehearsal, as young traditional musicians got lost in the musical textures of a session, and as young children were enthralled and listened intently as the musician played her cello in an early-years’ context (CS1SC1). Again, it was through musicians’ awareness of individual children/young people’s musical skill-levels, and through their careful guidance that such experiences were possible. Amelie’s (CS2SC2) insight into her ‘presentational’ performance at the end-of-programme concert illustrates how this characteristic of musical meaning-making via flow crosses PME contexts; in this instance, from dialogical PME to presentational PME. Here, Amelie describes her deep concentration where she ‘just [forgot] about everything else’:

*Yeah I have to concentrate more... and you just forget about everything else... and just do what you’re doing and just leave it and keep going...  
(Amelie, age 16, CS2SC2)*

### 3. A loss of self-consciousness occurs

*“And I remember thinking, ‘that is what music does’. It allows you to live in the moment.”*

The musical meaning associated with this characteristic of flow suggests that the child or young person is so focused and engrossed on the music’s inherent meanings that there is not enough attention left over to focus on the past, the future, or their own self. In this space, it is proposed that self-scrutiny is absent and deep musical meaning can occur. The following account paints a vibrant picture of a young child who during a performance seemed ‘lost’ in his music-making:

*When you see them getting up to perform... I mean, there’s one little boy outside here... and he has been a divil [laughs] since he was very small... since he was 4 or 5 years of age... he’s 7 now. When he was 5 or 6... I just happened to be in [names local venue] and there was a concert on and he was in it. And I went, ‘oh my god there’s your man’. And he was like a different person on stage and I remember thinking ‘why... this... is.’ It blew my mind that how different he was on stage. He lost himself... he didn’t know who he was... he forgot who he was... he lost himself... he was in the moment... he was in character... he was singing with total gusto... his face was lit up... and this boy is really difficult at school. But, on stage, singing a song that he really obviously loved... he was ‘in the zone’. He was totally there... and he was moving so genuinely that you had to move with him... you couldn’t but fall in love with him and he was just adorable. And I remember thinking, ‘that is what music does’. It allows you to live in the moment and it allows you a break from everything else that’s going on in your head.*

*(Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)*

Afterwards, when the experience is over and self-consciousness returns, the child or young person’s self that they reflect upon is not the same self that existed before the musical flow experience occurred – it is now expanded and enriched by new musical skills and achievements. In other words, the child/young person has moved towards their possible self through meaningful flow experience, and their current or ‘now’ self has changed through experiencing flow. One young person insightfully described how it feels like ‘your subconscious is watching’ (Celine, age 16, CS2SC2) while another said that it’s like ‘you’re showing yourself what you can do’ (Paul, age 15, CS2SC2). It can also lead to a feeling of musical pride, wanting to ‘get up and do it again’ as another young person explained (Triona, age 14, CS2SC2).

### 4. The musical task undertaken has clear goals and immediate feedback

Musical meaning-making encounters across the PME modes offered opportunities for children and young people to strive towards achieving specific music-making-related goals and receive feedback on their music-making. While ‘goals’ are discussed in this research in the context of those future-orientated possible selves goals which children and young people envisaged for themselves, ‘goals’ in the context of musical meaning-making refer to those more immediate ‘here and now’ goals which children and young people worked towards achieving in a performance, lesson, or other music-making context. In dialogical contexts, constructive feedback was received from the facilitating musician(s),<sup>25</sup> in participatory contexts feedback was offered in diverse ways from other children and young people (as well as musicians), and in presentational contexts, feedback from audiences was certainly immediate (clapping, praise, etc.) and something which children and young people across subcases expressed that they were particularly aware of. As Thomas explained, it’s important to get feedback from the audience ‘to know that you’ve done well’ (age 10, CS1SC2).



It is important that children and young people are encouraged to set clear and immediate musical goals to pursue across a diversity of PME areas, and to seek a range of ways of receiving immediate feedback on their musical progression. Broadly speaking, children and young people should be involved in negotiating their own immediate musical goals rather than solely those of others – this would encourage a sense of agency and ownership in the musical meaning-making process. In dialogical contexts, and while acknowledging the diversity of pedagogical approaches across genres and contexts, children and young people should receive timely and relevant feedback from musicians related to the goal that they negotiated and that they have been focusing on. ‘Praise’ has its place (children and young people, like anyone, like to know how well they are doing), but immediate constructive and honest feedback can support children and young people in remaining focused on striving to achieve meaningful musical flow. Having opportunities to perform across participatory contexts can also invite immediate feedback from children and young people’s peers as well as musicians – and peers could be encouraged to provide immediate peer-to-peer constructive feedback. Presentational performance is another means by which children and young people can harness and nurture musical meaning through setting clearly defined goals (e.g., to play a 20-minute set, to remember the words of a song, to play in time with the group) and receive immediate feedback from peers and audience.

#### **4.2.2. Musical meaning conclusion**

Children and young people are primed and highly motivated to experience musical meaning, and their interview and focus group discussion responses attest to this. However, there are ways that we can think about strongly supporting and enhancing their motivation. For instance, the concept of flow provides useful ways of thinking about supporting the processes underpinning children and young people’s optimal musical meaning experience.

Musical meaning, this research argues, is meaning-making experienced through children and young people’s relationship in and with the music itself. It is a powerful form of meaning which was experienced by children and young people in this research across the full diversity of music genres/practices and contexts; from rock, jazz, hip-hop, pop, scratch, folk, and traditional music; experienced in live venues, festivals, private homes, schools, and community settings. Musical meaning was often a collective and unifying experience but it was entirely subjective, and it arose from the rich connections that individual children and young people made between two types of musical meaning, inherent and delineated. To ensure that these connections can be made, there are several underlying issues which Music Generation can consider. These have been highlighted throughout this section. They include designing responsive programmes where the music is psychologically accessible to the child/young person, where it is personally meaningful, and where it provides children and young people with diverse opportunities to construct their own inherent and delineated meanings.

### 4.3. Personal Meaning

*Music... it's just giving them confidence in something [...] definitely... because you can see after a few weeks what it does to kids... it's amazing... they walk in first to some projects and they're too shy to even say hello and then after a couple of weeks it's like... 'who is this kid??' It's amazing what it does for them like!*

*(Alex, scratch musician/hip-hop tutor, CS3SC2)*

The previous section described one of three types of meaning which music-making was found to elicit in the lives of children and young people across each research context. What are the other types of meaning which are entwined with the musical meaning which children and young people experience? As Alex (scratch musician/hip-hop tutor, CS3SC2) exclaimed, it is amazing what music does for children and young people. We need to consider why music-making is important, and what other impacts can it have in children and young people's lives? These questions were put to the majority of research participants across each subcase, including a group of musicians who were facilitating a multi-instrumental/vocal programme in an urban community setting (CS3SC2). Their assured responses covered a wide range of perceived benefits and included the following words and phrases: it builds young people's confidence, gives them self-esteem, the therapeutic benefits, it's just a relaxed thing, picks them up when they're down, positive emotions, shows them that their voices matter and they matter, having a purpose, self-belief, and having a 'buzz'.

These participants' responses were repeated in various forms and formats across each subcase, during interviews with other musicians, classroom teachers, parents/guardians, school principals, community leaders, MEP coordinators, Steering Committee members, and with children and young people themselves. This type of meaning-making which is inherent to individual children and young people is personal meaning.

#### 4.3.1. Personal meaning through musical doing: drawing from the literature

Research which explicitly explores the ways in which music-making impacts on children and young people's personal experience and development beyond musical meaning has been undertaken across a number of fields and disciplines including music education and community music. The findings of this literature is particularly significant to our understanding of personal meaning for children and young people in Music Generation. It resonates with the ways in which personal meaning was expressed in fieldwork observations across each subcase. For example, Hallam (2010) helpfully reviews the empirical evidence related to the effects of active engagement with music on the intellectual, social, and personal development of children and young people. From a range of studies, Hallam found that children and young people participating in active music-making experienced a wide range of personal development outcomes including increased motivation, self-esteem, self-efficacy, positive self-perception, positive self-image and self-awareness, self-confidence, positive attitudes, therapeutic benefits, a sense of achievement, feeling appreciated, fun, feeling proud, and a developing sense of identity. In later research Hallam (2015) states that 'there is some evidence for the development of increased empathy in children through musical participation' (p.89). Furthermore, she highlights the benefits of active engagement in music in relation to enhancing psychological and physical health, working through difficult emotions, and promoting a sense of well-being. Hallam's impressive synthesis of research from the fields of neuroscience, psychology, education, and music echoed the sentiments of many of those interviewed for the purposes of this research. A short summary of her findings includes the following:

*Musical activities can lead to a sense of accomplishment, enhanced determination and persistence, and of children being better able to cope with anger and express their emotions more effectively. There are also reported benefits in terms of discipline [...] relaxation, [and] coping with difficulties...*

*Active engagement with music can support the development of musical and other identities and impact on self-beliefs [...] Most of the evidence supports the positive impact of music on self-esteem and self-confidence. Opportunities to perform and receive positive feedback are important in this process.*

*Music has a particular role in the reduction of stress and anxiety and related to this the strengthening of the immune system.*

*Music in hospitals has been used effectively to promote the well-being of young patients enhancing relaxation, providing distraction and helping them to cope with their hospital experiences.  
(Hallam 2015, pp.16-18)*

In other research, Pestano (2013) explores the link between music-making and developing a sense of agency with young people contemplating issues of sexual orientation and gender identity; she concluded that ‘finding your voice in a music project can translate outwards into being able to stand your ground and find a voice in the wider world (p.123). Mullen (2013) gives an account of how ‘music can have a very great power over children’s emotions’ – for children, he says, ‘music gives them a space to be at their best, creative, in control and respected by those around them’. Lonie (2013) also emphasises that music-making, by providing a way for children and young people to express themselves, can develop emotional intelligence and well-being, and he references research which shows how the physical act of singing can improve mood, increase relaxation and reduce physical and emotional stress. In a study which explored the psychological and physiological stress-reducing effects of music performance, Toyoshima et al. (2011) suggest that active participation in creative activities such as music (in the case of their research, playing piano) can ‘regulate psychological and physiological states and have a vital function in enhancing mental fitness (p.261). In a community music project which sought to develop young teenagers’ musical skills ‘in order to divert them from joining gangs’, it was anticipated that the participants’ ‘self-confidence and self-worth would rise through their musical achievements’ (Woodward and Pestano 2013, p.187). Another piece of research (Valerio et al. 2011, p.259) which tells the story of three co-researchers who spent four years engaging in a reciprocal, communication-based music approach with Anthony, a ten-year-old boy who had severe autism, found that music-play experiences provided a place for him to express himself through music, and experience peace and comfort, respite, moments to cherish, joy, triumph, and an opportunity to relax and to be himself.

International music education partnership projects also look to potential personal outcomes for children and young people to underpin their work. For example, in Youth Music’s projects they support and encourage young people to ‘develop their creative and social skills, make positive contributions to their community and improve their well-being’.<sup>26</sup> Youth Music’s Outcomes Framework describes personal outcomes as ‘those relating to any aspect of personal development’ (2014, p.19). It continues:

*Personal outcomes relate to how people feel about themselves, how they might be able to do things they weren’t able to before, or how they have developed their understanding of the world. This includes educational development and emotional development. Personal development is also strongly linked to social development and both are strongly linked to musical development.  
(Youth Music 2014, p.19).*

Closer to home, the Irish Chamber Orchestra’s Sing Out with Strings programme also refers to the benefits of the programme for children at individual level in terms of ‘creating

vehicles for expression' and 'stimulating emotional responses'.<sup>27</sup> An evaluation of Sing Out with Strings conducted in 2011 had as a conclusion that 'personal development is evident with increased self-esteem and confidence, pride, and self-discipline in the children'.<sup>28</sup>

In summary then, it would seem that there is a great deal of research which supports the personal meaning-making benefits of music-making in the lives of children and young people – additionally, the intentions of a range of other organisations centrally position the personal benefits of music-making in the lives of children and young people in defining what they are 'about'. The brief snapshot of research presented here includes a wide range of contexts such as community music projects, private instrumental lessons, early-years contexts, national partnership programmes, orchestral programmes – in other words, contexts which are situated across the PME-spectrum presented in this research; this demonstrates the potential for personal meaning-making across all PME contexts. Additionally, the literature examples presented here deal with those research projects which explicitly discussed the personal outcomes of music-making – of course, there is also a depth of research which implicitly points to the personal impact of music-making in the lives of children and young people.

#### 4.3.2. Features of personal meaning

Personal meaning is as it says – personal – and in terms of children and young people's responses, it was almost always the unspoken or hidden component of meaning-making (compared to musical meaning and to a lesser extent, relational meaning) which was captured during the research process. Therefore, as the research began to reveal this aspect of meaning-making which children and young people constructed and experienced through engagement with music-making, it was found that those best positioned to inform this component of meaning-making were those who engaged with children and young people at interaction and individual levels.<sup>29</sup> That is, those partners (classroom teachers, parents/guardians, musicians) who had a familiarity with the children and young people and who could gauge the personal impact of music-making on them since a programme had begun, and from one week of a programme to the next. Of course, there were also several rich examples of personal meaning-making which emerged from conversations with children and young people themselves. To begin, I would like to draw on the short but poignant response of a young girl (Katelynn, 2nd class, CS3SC1):

*Music is healthy for me and it makes me feel all strong... it makes you grow bigger than you are... and it makes you feel happy... it makes me a little bit taller when I sing more... it makes me stronger on the inside.*  
(Katelynn, 2nd class, CS3SC1)

Katelynn's response in many ways encompasses this research's interpretation of personal meaning-making. Katelynn's comment emerged during a discussion with a large group (approx. 30 children from 1st, 2nd, 3rd class) who had spent three workshops writing and performing their own songs with a group of musicians. During this focus group conversation, the children were asked to visualise a world without music, which ultimately led to questions about the music programme and the place that music-making held in the children's lives. Amongst the many interesting responses, Katelynn's comment was particularly striking as it subtly touched on ways that we can think about the personal meaning-making power of music-making. For instance, meaningful music-making can a) nurture psychological well-being ('It makes me feel all strong'), b) build a sense of self-confidence ('It makes you grow bigger than you are'), and c) promote resilience ('It makes me stronger on the inside'). Katelynn's personal experience of music-making in

27 <http://www.irishchamberorchestra.com/community-engagement/sing-out-with-strings/> (accessed 02/08/2015)

28 <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/Utilising-Arts-to-Fight-Disadvantage-190614.pdf> (accessed 03/08/2015)

29 See Section 6: An ecological model of partnership for Music Generation for discussion on partnership levels.

her programme is also demonstrative of the entwined nature of musical meaning and personal meaning. Her categorisation of personal meaning-making also resonates with the reflections of those musicians who facilitated this and other programmes across the research subcases. A number of personal musical-meaning features which surfaced over the course of the research are illustrated below.

#### *Feature 1: A transforming self-confidence*

The power of music-making in eliciting and supporting a sense of 'confidence' for children and young people was amongst the most prevalent components of personal meaning-making referred to by all research participants. As a component of the meaning-making process, developing self-confidence was associated with each PME-mode but in particular with children/young people's experiences in presentational performance encounters. This included singing in front of other people, performing on stage and so on. In conversations with audience members in the moments after presentational performances had occurred across a range of subcase contexts – primary school gymnasiums, preschools, concert halls, showcase events, festival stages, etc. – parents/guardians, musicians, classroom teachers and others would often comment on the perceived 'confidence' of children and young people in terms of performing in an unfamiliar context, being able to perform in a 'pressurised' environment, getting up in front of strangers to play their piece of music/song etc. A cello tutor who facilitated one of the subcase programmes spoke of the role of presentational performance encounters in terms of developing her own confidence:

*Music would have given me a huge huge confidence! When I was a child I couldn't stand up in front of the classroom to say my times tables without nearly crying, whereas now... I think when I started to play at the Feis Ceoil on the cello my confidence just grew so much.*  
(Siobhán, cellist/cello tutor, CS1SC2)

Alex, a hip-hop tutor who participated in a cross-MEP focus group conversation, felt that the confidence of children and young people was often quite fragile, and that musicians and others needed to be aware of and sensitive to the confidence-levels of children and young people in such high-pressured environments. He illustrated the reality of those children and young people who may not yet have developed the confidence to get 'on a stage':

*I agree with [...] saying 'If you want to [perform]' because there are some kids there that we have in our MEP and if you literally put them on a stage they would melt into a million pieces because they're not there yet but you know that they will get there because I think that it's just that knowing if they're ready to do it or not.*  
(Alex, electronic music artist/hip-hop tutor)

While it may seem an obvious statement to make, what Alex's insight seems to suggest is that developing confidence often takes place for children and young people in music-making encounters (dialogical and participatory) prior to presentational performance encounters. These are the sites where confidence-building can effectively be nurtured pre-presentational performance and musicians across MEPs felt strongly about having greater sensitivity around this. Moreover, when a child or young person is 'ready' (that is, has developed sufficient confidence) to perform on stage, the presentational performances themselves can act as confidence-builders for future presentational performances. Effectively communicating this latter point was a young musician who performed for the first time in an end-of-programme concert which took place in her school's gymnasium:

*I think that it's given me like confidence... like even doing that there... that little concert thing... that would like give me confidence to do something with a bigger crowd if I wanted to!*

*(Niamh, age 15, CS2SC2)*

Beyond thinking about confidence in the context of presentational performance, Owen (guitarist/singer/guitar tutor) who co-facilitated Katelynn's song-writing programme (CS3SC2) often referred to a more general sense of confidence which he observed the children developing from one stage of the programme to the next. During observations of Owen in a second MEP programme, it was evident that he made a consistent effort to get to know the children in the short time that the lesson lasted. He communicated positively with them, encouraged the children to try out new songs/techniques, always reacted positively to their endeavours. These are potential actions which could underpin the practice of musicians who wish to imbue children and young people with an increased sense of confidence through their music-making.

### *Feature 2: Self-worth*

The self-worth quality of personal meaning-making encompasses the self-esteem and self-respect and to some extent the 'pride' which engaging in music-making across the PME modes nurtured. Drawing again on Owen's responses, musicians sought during his programme to work with the children in ways which communicated to them that their voices mattered, that what they did mattered, and that they mattered:

*I think the big thing as well is like what everyone is trying to do... it pretty much is that their voices matter and what they say matters and what they want to do matters and that they matter.*

*(Owen, guitarist/singer/guitar tutor, CS3SC2)*

The musicians attempted to achieve and nurture this 'self-worth' quality of personal meaning-making by involving the children in music-making decisions, engaging with and responding to the children's voices, asking their opinions, communicating with them in a way which conveyed a sense of trust and respect, and seeking to involve them in the music-making process – from musical exploration, to composition, to final performance. When one young participant was asked how he felt the programme could be improved – 'if they could change anything at all about it' – he responded by saying that he and his friends would now like to have the opportunity to perform their music for the musicians, rather than participate in a primarily dialogical manner. While it cannot be stated definitively that the programme was instrumental in building this sense of self-worth, the young participant's comment demonstrated the self-worth that he and his classmates had accrued to the stage where they perceived of the music as their own, and themselves as performers, alongside the facilitating musicians. In another subcase (CS3SC3), the young musicians also referred to the ways that presentational performance opportunities nurtured this sense of self-worth with Jenny (age 16) explaining that 'it feels like you've achieved something... when you can play' and Amy (age 17) revealing the 'feel good' factor where '[performing] kind of makes you feel good because you can show other people what you can do'.

### *Feature 3: Emotional well-being*

The power of music in positively impacting the emotional well-being of children and young people was strongly evident across all subcases. Whether observed in the unfettered joy of an early-years performance, the 'buzz of performing' as one musician described, or through the laughter, positive energy and outlook, and sense of happiness that permeated elements of many of the other programmes, the sense of emotional well-being of the children and young people involved was often to the fore. Focus-group musicians often described those programmes which took place as part of Garda Youth

Diversion Projects and in healthcare settings in terms of the associated emotional well-being outcomes for the children and young people involved. When a group of young musicians (CS2SC2) were asked why we would want to keep learning music when it is so challenging, one girl simply responded that ‘because, like, it brings happiness’ and in another subcase, a young girl in 3rd class expressed that ‘music just cheers me up’ (CS3SC1). In other words, music-making worked to brighten and elevate children and young people’s psychological states of well-being. Music-making was also associated with imbuing children and young people with a sense of personal safety, calm, relaxation. In terms of the latter, the director of a community hub pointed to how music lets children ‘live in the moment’ and for some children and young people, she believed that music-making has a therapeutic dimension to it:

*Music allows you to live in the moment... it allows you a break from everything else that's going on in your head... and for some of them... there's a couple that would have more intensive supports coming in with them... like for them [...] there's no doubt in my mind that it is psychologically therapeutic.*  
(Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)

The observations that were part of this research witnessed the calm which music-making often instilled in children and young people across the PME-areas. The response from Jack, who participated in a foundation music programme in his school summed up his personal response. When asked to complete a written response to the sentence ‘What I enjoy most about my music class is...’ Jack (age 7, CS2SC1) responded that it was ‘when I was alaxte [relaxed]’, presumably connected to his experience of the gentle chime bars element of workshop, of which he also created a picture (FIGURE 15). The sense of relaxation that can accompany music-making was also revealed by a parent in another subcase (CS1SC2) as a possible future self and this is an example of how the process of musical meaning-making can ultimately realise the personal possible self-goals of children and young people.



FIGURE 15: WHAT I ENJOY MOST ABOUT MY MUSIC CLASS IS... ‘WHEN I WAS ALAXTE [SIC]’ (AGE 7, CS2SC1)

Often however, music-making was viewed by musicians/classroom teachers/parents/guardians as a potential antidote to those negative emotions which children and young people can sometimes experience. For example, Joseph (CS3SC2) believed that the value of music-making lies in 'the different ways that it can help you to diffuse negative emotions as well as enthuse positive emotions', and Sara (CS3SC2) agreed, describing how through musical expression, the potential to turn negative emotions into positive emotions is possible:

*And I think that what music is great for as well and I say it to kids the whole time is turning negatives into positives you know if they're down about something and you know... they can get it out through expressing it whether it's through scribbling down words on a piece of paper and trying to turn them into something or listening to music and trying to get something out of that... like... it's just so much.*  
(Sara, singer/song tutor, CS3SC2)

#### Feature 4: Purpose and aspirations

Music-making in a number of subcases functioned to give children and young people a sense of purpose. This sense of purpose was experienced by Jacob (age 8, CS2SC1) who simply enjoyed music because it gave him something to do so that he's not just sitting around all day: 'every wounn can lisen to songs and not just be siten ther all day when you can be rating new songs to play' [Everyone can listen to songs and not just be sitting there all day when you can be writing new songs to play]. This 'self-belief and purpose' component of personal meaning-making was also heightened in those subcase contexts where individual and local level partners felt that children and young people were potentially 'at risk' of educational and/or social exclusion.

*[Music-making] is something to do... it gives them a bit of a purpose.... That's what I feel anyway... like, it's always nice to have something like a lot of kids growing up... this is happening now and it's there for them and they're coming... and they're you know... that's what I feel.*  
(Sara, singer/song tutor, CS3SC2)

#### Feature 5: Grit

*Yeah [performing in concerts] would give you loads of confidence and like believe in yourself... like you can actually do something!*  
(Paul, age 15, CS2SC2)

This component of personal meaning-making encompasses children and young people's sense of self-belief and determination in their capabilities, and it is closely connected to the nurturing of children and young people's intrinsic motivation encapsulated in a healthy 'I can do it!' attitude. While not often explicitly expressed by children and young people in an 'I can do it!' spoken sense, it was certainly tangible across my observations of children and young people where they were observed as being focused, determined, and ambitious in striving to make positive steps, musically and otherwise. Tristian (CS3SC2) connected this component of meaning-making with that of musical meaning where as well as nurturing musical meaning, he placed value on instilling in children and young people the belief that 'they can do it':

*I think that it's both... I think that obviously we want them to learn to sing or to learn to be a better... whatever we're doing... but there's almost a bigger kind of... we want them to believe that they CAN do it...*  
(Tristian, piano player/keyboard tutor, CS3SC2)



### Feature 6: A sense of personal identity in/through music

Several observations over the course of the research supports the finding that music-making can help children and young people construct new identities while reflecting simultaneously on existing or old ones. A sense of individual identity in and through music refers to the relationship between the child/young person's own self and his/her music-making, and the impact of this relationship on his/her identity development.<sup>30</sup> The personal meaning-making component of 'individual identity' was observed where it was perceived that a child/young person's relationship with his/her music was being used by them to mark boundaries against other individuals. For example, by week-six of the classical strings programme (CS1SC2), the children participating had begun to clearly identify themselves musically in terms of who they were and who they were not – for example, they often expressed this along the lines of 'I'm a violin player... not a cello player' or 'I'm a double bass player and not a cello player'. While on the face of it these are simple distinctions, they are a glimpse into the potential of music-making to nurture strong self-identities for children and young people. Music-making allowed children and young people to foster individual personal identities imbued with the musical delineations associated with their particular musical practice.

Martin (CS2SC2) referred to this component of musical meaning when he described the actions of Jo, a young girl who had expressed her interest in heavy-metal very early on in the programme. From Martin's perspective, he had to put in place the conditions to facilitate Jo's interest in heavy-metal as she would have otherwise shown little interest in jazz or classical guitar.

*The young people have no problem expressing their individuality and that comes through music doesn't it really... you know when they come in here everybody has a different interest... and that's where they really... and there's one girl who comes in and she really likes heavy-metal and that's her thing and that's her statement. And you'd never be able to just start playing another genre with her...*  
(Martin, jazz guitarist/guitar tutor, CS2SC2)

#### 4.3.3. Personal meaning conclusion

Music-making has potentially powerful personal meaning outcomes for children and young people. For musicians, promoting a sense of well-being can include getting to know children and young people, responding appropriately to them, communicating positively with them, encouraging them to take initiatives, reacting positively to their endeavours, and enabling them to become independent in this musical doing. Additionally, nurturing children and young people's sense of wonder and curiosity about music and their musical worlds, and encouraging them to act on their curiosity and take risks could also enhance their creativity and sense of well-being. It is important that those across Music Generation's infrastructure do not focus on the 'group' to the extent that a meaningful consideration of the experience of the individual becomes lost. It is also important that musicians, coordinators, and others consult with children and young people to reveal the depth of personal meaning-making which is occurring.

#### 4.4. Relational meaning

Relational meaning, the third type of meaning conceptualised in this research, describes a form of interpersonal meaning-making which children and young people experienced through their engagement with others at an individual level of Music Generation's infrastructure. This is the meaning experienced by children and young people through relationships which were deeply embedded in their music-making endeavours across the PME-spectrum areas. Relational meaning highlights and values the role of others in promoting learning and performing as part of a group. Relational meaning was experienced by children and young people when they felt valued and

30 This is distinct from the collective identity component which is discussed in the context of relational meaning.

rewarded as part of a collective enterprise. This section serves to provide an introductory overview and conceptualisation of relational meaning for the reader.

The relationships which led to the construction of relational meaning were between children/young people and musicians. However, other interpersonal relationships involved relationships between children/young people and parents/guardians, classroom teachers, MEP coordinators, etc. Music Generation has recognised the essential role of others in enriching and enhancing children and young people's experience through music-making and it deeply values the partnership of children/young people and others 'within a vibrant local music community' (Music Generation Policy and Priorities 2010-2015, p.2). The central role of others in the psyche of young children was richly illustrated when young children across a number of research subcases (CS1SC1, CS2SC1) were asked to 'draw a happy music memory' as part of the research process. A significant number of children drew on memories which involved their musical interactions with others. For example, several children recalled when they first attended their music lesson (FIGURE 16, FIGURE 17, FIGURE 18); others illustrated their relationship with audience members as they performed at a concert (FIGURE 19); and many remembered fond music-making memories which involved listening to and playing music with friends and family members – 'Listening to music with my friends' (FIGURE 20); 'Playing my grandad's guitar' (FIGURE 21); 'Listening to music with my sister' (FIGURE 22); 'My friend playing the guitar' (FIGURE 23); 'My dad playing the guitar' (FIGURE 24); 'My brother singing the duck song' (FIGURE 25); and 'Listening to music outside with my family' (FIGURE 26).

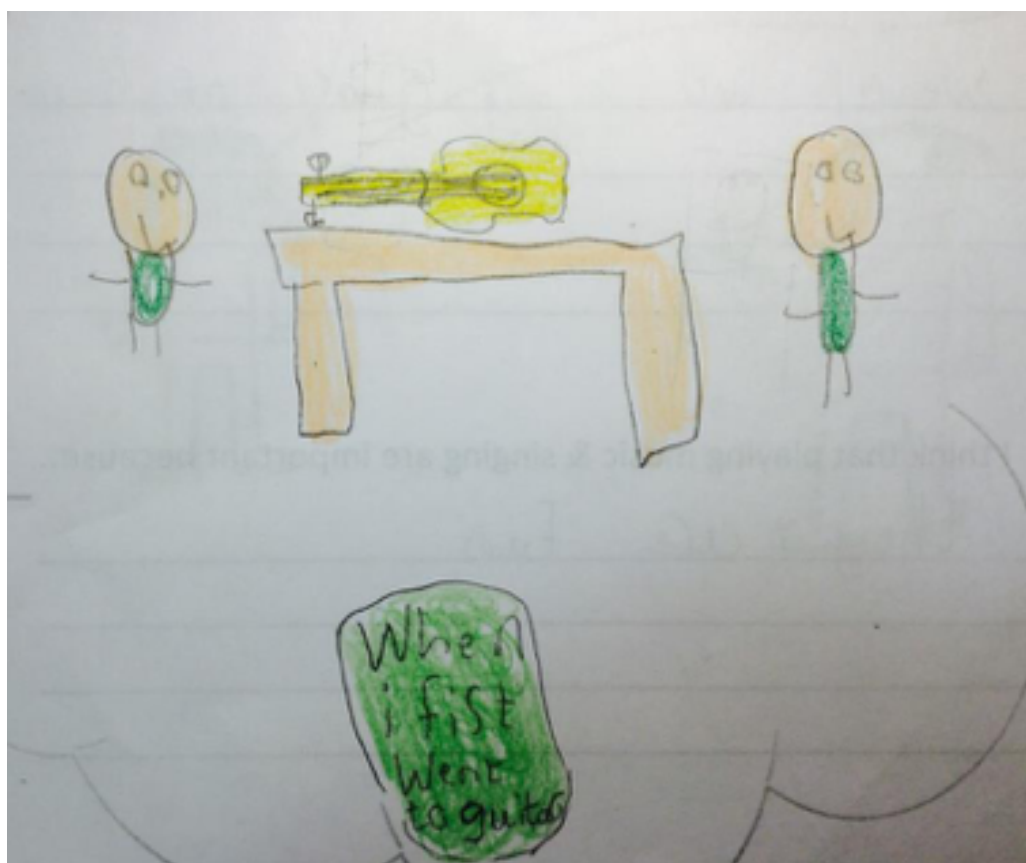


FIGURE 16 'WHEN I FIST [FIRST] WENT TO GUITAR' (AGE 8, CS2SC1)

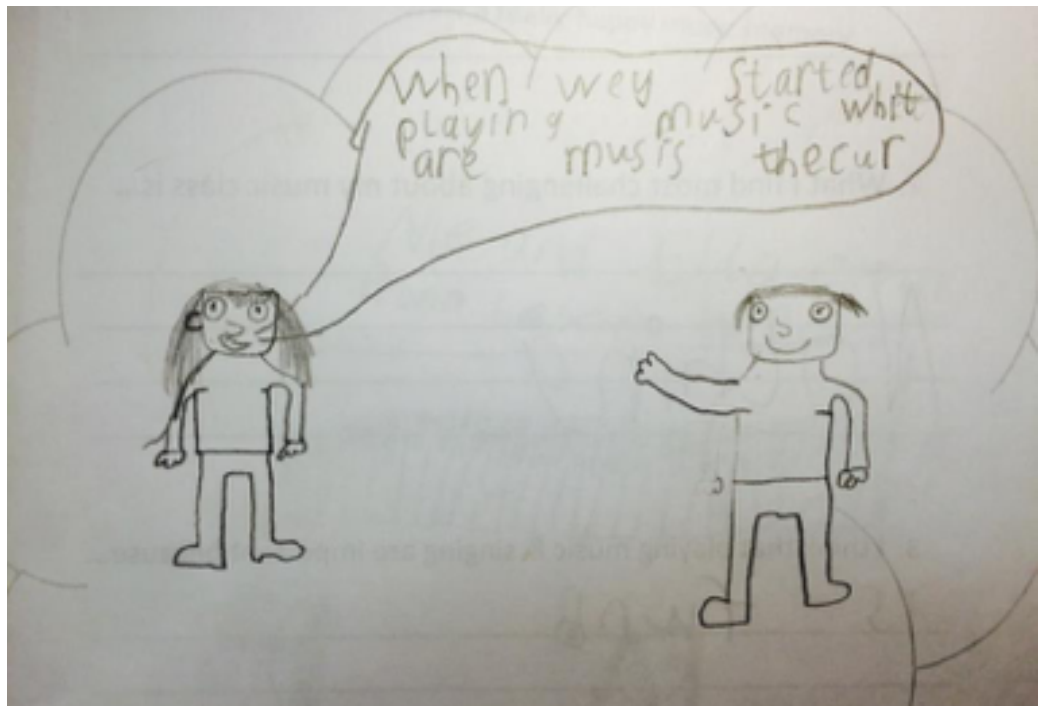


FIGURE 17: 'WHEN WEY STARTED PLAYING MUSIC WHIT ARE MUSIS THECUR [WITH OUR MUSIC TEACHER]'  
AGE 8, CS2SC1)



FIGURE 18: 'FIRST PIANO LESSON TOGETHER' (AGE 8, CS2SC1)

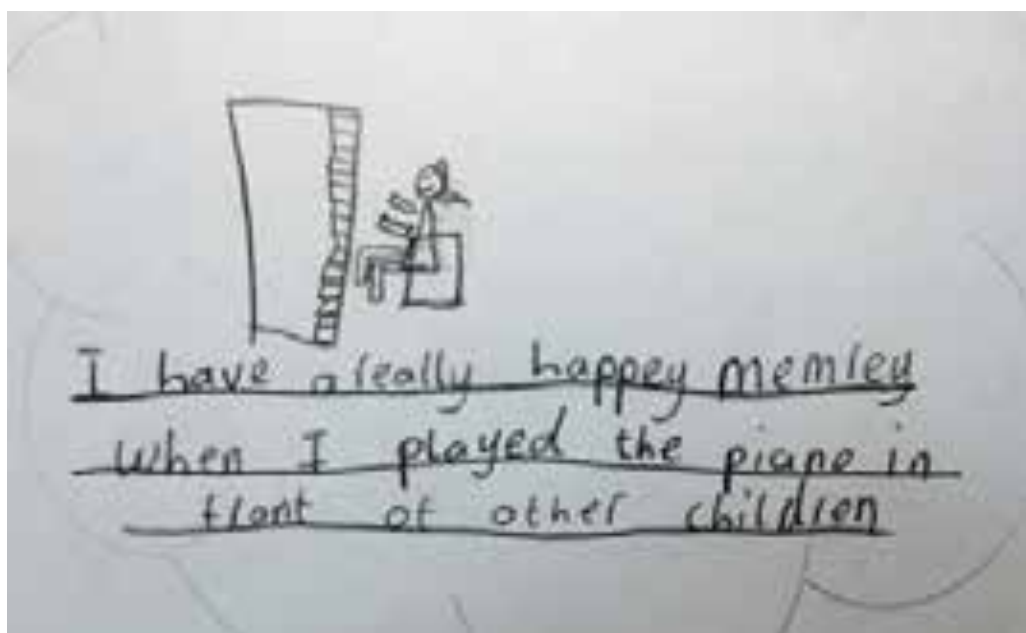


FIGURE 19: 'WHEN I PLAYED THE PIANO IN FRONT OF OTHER CHILDREN' (AGE 8, CS2SC2)



FIGURE 20: 'LISTENING TO MUSIC WITH MY FRIENDS' (CS2SC1)



FIGURE 21: 'PLAYING MY GRANDAD'S GUITAR' (AGE 8, CS2SCT)



FIGURE 22: 'LISTENING TO MUSIC WITH MY SISTER' (AGE 8, CS2SCT)



FIGURE 23: 'MY FRIEND PLAYING THE GUITAR' (CS2SC1)



FIGURE 24: 'MY DAD PLAYING THE GUITAR' (AGE 7, CS2SC1)



FIGURE 25: MY BROTHER SINGING THE DUCK SONG' (AGE 7, CS2SC1)



FIGURE 26: 'LISTENING TO MUSIC OUTSIDE WITH MY FAMILY' (AGE 8, CS2SC1)

Relational meaning was identified as a distinctive type of meaning-making in and of itself. However, it was deeply entwined with the other types of meaning-making and experienced by children and young people multi-directionally. For example consider Sorcha (CS3SC2), a young hip hop artist who deeply and intrinsically connected with the challenging lyrics and melody of her song which she had composed (musical meaning), and who felt that she was doing something that she was really good at and was slowly building up the self-esteem to perform at the upcoming showcase (personal meaning); Sorcha also really enjoyed hanging out with her friends each week at the music workshop (relational meaning) and working on new material (musical meaning) with her tutor with whom she had recently built up a good friendship (relational meaning). Consider Doireann (CS2SC1, age 8) – her favourite part of the music class was listening to all the sounds when her classmates played on the instruments (musical meaning); at the weekend, she described how she feels really happy and relaxed when she listens to music outside with her family (FIGURE 26, relational meaning).

#### **4.4.1. Relational meaning through musical doing: drawing from the literature**

Relational meaning captures the music-making orientated relationships between a child/young person and others. The scholarship and literature in related fields which resonates closest with this relational concept of meaning-making deals with concepts often described as ‘social meaning’, ‘social outcomes’, ‘social cohesion’, ‘social action’, ‘social inclusion’ etc. While these perspectives tend to take a wider-angle view of the benefits and impact of music-making on ‘society’ beyond the individual, they are nevertheless useful in supporting and informing a conceptualisation of relational meaning for this research.

For example, Hallam (2015) in her synthesis of a range of literature (e.g., Sloboda 1985; Hove and Risen 2009; Cross 2009; Eerola and Eerola 2014) concludes that ‘group music making [across a wide range of settings] clearly has the potential to promote social cohesion and support inclusion’ (p.84). Other outcomes of group music-making revealed across Hallam’s work includes co-operation with others, pro-social behaviour, belongingness, relationships, making new friends, collaborative learning, social-advancement, group identity, solidarity, taking turns, teamwork and helping others (2015, p.15). Across music education, community music, and related scholarship, a wide spectrum of research has focused on the social impact of music learning including: Durrant (2005) who investigates the social dimension of collective choral singing and finds that through working together towards a common goal, participants of different backgrounds, social status and ethnicity can relate to each other through musical participation and derive satisfaction from social approval and acceptance; Beynon and Alfano (2013) who discuss how participating in singing in an intergenerational setting might inform opinions and stereotypes of a different age cohort by fostering multi-age friendships; Abrams (2013) who discusses working with ‘young people who are hard to reach’ and reflects on the music-making process of working with socially driven outcomes and balancing social and artistic outcomes; Barrett and Smigiel (2007) who identify ‘unity of purpose’ and the importance of relationships as major factors concerning children’s (aged 6-17) perceptions of participation in music youth arts settings; and Schippers and Bartleet (2013) who present ‘social engagement’ as a domain of community music which involves committing to inclusiveness and engaging the marginalized ‘at risk’ or ‘lost to music’ (pp.460-461).

Moreover, the area of relational meaning in Music Generation resonates with the focus of a number of other music education programmes and organisations in Ireland and further afield. For example, El Sistema, Venezuela’s national youth orchestra network has as a fundamental objective ‘social transformation through the pursuit of musical excellence’ (Govias 2011, .21). Incidentally, Govias also highlights the multi-directionality of social and musical aims in El Sistema, where ‘one happens through the other, and neither is prioritized at the expense of the other’ (ibid.). The Guri Programme (São Paulo, Brazil) which offers courses in choir singing and string, percussion and woodwind instruments



during non-school hours, and reaches over 49,000 students in 410 education centres in the state of São Paulo has a major social and cultural inclusion focus.<sup>31</sup> Youth Music (a UK children's music education charity) considers social outcomes from the perspective of the individual or group in terms of 'developments in team working, cultural understanding, community connectedness, personal relationships, group creativity and problem-solving, and communication' as well as from the perspective of the community or environments 'in terms of use of resources [...] community cohesion, perceived value and reputation of young people, family relationships...' (Youth Music 2014, p.20). Within an Irish context, the National Concert Hall's Education, Community and Outreach (ECO) programme seeks to enhance people's understanding and appreciation of music and music-making, and to 'encourage personal, community and social development through music' – again, supporting the concept of multi-directionality of musical, personal, and relational meaning-making for this research.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the Irish Chamber Orchestra's Sing Out with Strings programme has 'issues of inclusion' as a focus.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, Dillon's (2007) description of social meaning is one which aligns particularly closely with that of relational meaning developed in this research. Dillon explains that music-making as a 'means of communion with others, as a wordless way of knowing others is a powerful idea for self-formation and promoting social inclusion' (p.165). He believes that music-making 'provides a vehicle for social interaction based on a musical discourse and construction of self' (ibid.). He further states:

*[Music-making is about connections between people and how they respond collectively to context, shared values and how sound might be used to express something about a collective identity. It is about relational knowledge and ways of knowing that are not dependent upon words and knowledge. (Dillon 2007, p.165)]*

#### 4.4.2. Features of relational meaning

The most salient features which emerged in this research in the context of relational meaning overlap considerably with Dillon's (2007) findings with regard to social meaning. The features of relational meaning described here are relevant to each PME mode discussed throughout this document.

##### *Feature 1: Promoting broader social connections for children and young people*

Music-making across subcases was often cited as a powerful way for children and young people to connect and engage with others with whom they might not otherwise have the opportunity. In the context of Music Generation's programmes, this included programmes which were multi-aged, included both genders, and included others from different areas who children and young people may not have encountered normally. The following interview extract paints a vivid picture of the role that music-making played in this community context in terms of bringing young people together from different areas. It also highlights the bi-directionality of meaning-making:

*To see how the young people behave together when they're coming from all different areas... it was very interesting because people would be on their guard a bit... because it wasn't all the usual suspects... or it was... but it was others. And so they had to sound each other out and so then they started becoming friends and you know... inspiring each other to sing songs and read books and all those things... you know I don't know where music stops and education starts... I don't see clear defining... I don't see where music stops and science starts... I know I've my music hat on today and that's music... it's my thing... but from a young person's point of*

31 <http://www.projetoguri.org.br/english/institutional/who-we-are/> (accessed 06/08/2015)

32 <https://www.nch.ie/Online/Education> (accessed 05/08/2015)

33 <http://www.irishchamberorchestra.com/community-engagement/sing-out-with-strings/> (accessed 05/08/2015)

*view there's a world of development and the social skills that they learn from playing music together. It should be then adapted to other areas of life too so you don't see someone from that area... or you don't see someone with that colour of hair... Or you don't hear someone with that kind of accent... you just meet people... who are... who are great! And little by little...*

*(Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)*

Additionally, a number of intergenerational programmes across Music Generation's MEP infrastructure included Music Generation Carlow's 'Intergenerational Sing-a-Long' and Music Generation Mayo's 'The Iona Connection Intergenerational Music Exchange Workshop'. It was observed during the research where children and young people encountered and very often became friends with older/younger children and young people in dialogical, presentational, and participatory contexts who they would not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet. Importantly, music-making allowed children and young people as a collective to engage with their local communities through street festivals and events, publicised concerts, and through local media. As one musician described, the young people in his context felt that for the first time they were visible and were being noticed in their communities. Music-making in this way can challenge children and young people to move out of their comfort zones and meaningfully experience the worlds of others, including musicians, other children and young people, other communities, etc. This 'community connectedness' also challenges communities to 'meet' and get to know children and young people on their terms.

Musicians in one subcase (CS3SC2) described how their programme provided opportunities for children and young people to meet with and get to know young people from another part of the city:

- Owen: *Like you have kids from all sides of the city and some parts of the county all coming in and hanging out and you know the ASTI strike was happening last Tuesday and most of the guys came up and met up in town and had a bit of a jam on the day... and these are kids that said when we were first coming to [this part of the city]... they were like 'is that near [names area of the city]? We can't go there!' And we're like, 'nothing's going to happen to you, calm down!'*
- Sara: *It happens all the time... it's a beautiful thing... but to see all the kids from completely different... completely different sides...*
- Gabriel: *The kids are also meeting outside the programme... socially.*

Across MEPs, opportunities could therefore be probed to broaden children and young people's social connections through music-making, thereby expanding experiences and enhancing relational meaning.

### *Feature 2: 'Music is a social discourse' widening cultural understandings*

There were several observations made where children and young people encountered the music-making of others which was outside their normal musical frames of reference. Young rock musicians and rappers watched folk musicians perform at a showcase (CS3SC3), a group of young children listened to classical musicians for the first time in concert (CS1SC2), and a collaborative composition programme involved bringing young people together who practiced across a number of musical genres. These experiences, arguably, presented to children and young people a reflection of themselves which challenged their own musical practice and widened their perceptions of cultural understanding where they did not necessarily have to (initially) like the music of others, but were encouraged to value the interest of others in it.

*Feature 3: Pleasurable music-making activity becomes the directing force for the group*

Group music-making activities often emitted a positive and productive energy which was directed by the group, collectively, rather than by the activities of one individual. Whether engaging in music lessons, concerts/gigs, or more participatory contexts, group music-making could give children and young people a true collective perception of their performance ability and credibility. Focus group musicians suggested that children and young people's team-working, collaborative learning, and group problem solving skills had been greatly enriched by their experiences of engaging with groups and ensembles. Young children observed over the course of a six-week programme (CS1SC1) gradually learned how to take turns singing/passing an instrument, became more aware of the importance of listening to one another and working together, all of which allowed them to experience enjoyable music-making. Children and young people interviewed also expressed how they understood the need to contribute meaningfully to the group and 'work better in the group' in music lessons (dialogical PME contexts) and in rehearsals for upcoming concerts and other events (presentational PME contexts). In a focus group with a group of young children who had just collectively composed a song, one respondent seemed to understand that by meaningfully working together (relational meaning), the group could achieve its musical meaning goals. In responding to my question 'who wrote the song', he explained that:

*We wrote it equally... we don't make mistakes and we don't get distracted when we're all writing it...*  
(Troy, age 9, CS3SC1)

Children and young people largely valued the collaborative music-making process and importantly, understood what they could take away from this collective meaning-making (i.e., having too many/too few people in the group, having a group where some were learning music faster/slower than others, having children and young people who tried to distract others from the task at hand, etc.).

*Feature 4: Music-making can contribute to a sense of collective well-being and belonging*

The process of group music-making across the PME spectrum led to a sense of collective well-being and belonging for children and young people. This was observed across early-years contexts, in orchestral programmes taking place in primary schools, in musical hangout spaces, and in the dynamic of a group of young jazz musicians as they prepared to go on stage. In one subcase programme (CS2SC1), two young musicians described the camaraderie which had developed over time with the musician, the educative value of their relationship with each other, and one of the girls also explained – in social terms – why she might not enjoy a one-on-one lesson as much:

*Niamh: I'd rather have two in the class because you feel lonely when you don't have anyone else in the room...*  
*Ellen: Like it's good to have someone else your own age group in the room with you because then it helps to learn...*  
*Niamh: I'd say so too... when I go in I have a chat...*  
*Ellen: Yeah, you have a nice chat in the music class as well like at the start*  
*Niamh: When we go in we'd always have a chat with him before we start... it might take away from the lesson but it's nice... it's more fun like... you get more of a laugh in...*  
(Niamh and Ellen, aged 15 and 17, CS2SC2)

The cello tutor facilitating a classical strings programme also explained that there was no one moment that was particularly meaningful for her, but meaning-making in music came from a sense of belonging since her own encounter with Junior Orchestra when she was 10 years of age, a music-making ‘relational meaning’ which she had nurtured to this day.

*I would be a big believer in [the meaning of] music... there was no real one [meaning-making] point. Music in general would have had such an impact on my life. There have been people I've been friendly with since the Junior Orchestra when I was 10 until now when they're still my best friends no matter where we are... like they're all over the world now... but we'd still be the best of friends all through music. Like I don't have one real point...*  
(Siobhán, cellist/cello tutor, CS1SC2)

#### Feature 5: Supportive and trusting relationships with musicians

A primary focus for musicians in certain subcase programmes was the engagement of children and young people and building trusting relationships so that musical meaning could potentially occur. Musicians, particularly those who worked with children/young people with additional needs in community contexts, spoke of the difficulty of engaging children and young people. For them, building up positive and trusting relationships was an important and essential first step. Engaging with children and young people in this way then paved the way for children and young people to build supportive and trusting relationships with other children/young people and others at an individual level.

Sara: *Where I just think that most of the programmes that I'm involved in... I just think that if you get engagement out of them at all it's something... for a lot of the programmes..*

Alex: *I mean a lot of the work that we do would be in Garda Diversion sort of stuff as well*

Sara: *I mean so that's everything to those kids you know..*

Alex: *And in the other programme as well we've had kind of similar..*

Brian: *Just for them to build up a relationship with an adult is a big thing..*

Joseph: *That's a crucial part of it – I think that it's nearly as important as any..*

Alex: *It's got almost nothing to do with music nearly at all!*

Brian: *They're saying 'these guys [musicians] aren't so bad like... these old people aren't too bad' you know.*

Joseph: *That I can relate to them and they can relate to me..*  
(Programme musicians, CS3SC2)

#### 4.5. Conclusion

Relational meaning highlights the role of others in children and young people's musical engagement. Through music-making, children and young people were enabled to extend and deepen their social connections, broaden and widen their cultural understandings of others, engage in a process of collective meaningful music-making, contribute to a collective sense of well-being and belonging, and build trusting and supporting intergenerational relationships with musicians and the wider community. Supporting the conditions for relational meaning to emerge necessitates placing music-making in the wider context of children and young people's lives, and nurturing those opportunities for children and young people to interrelate and build relationships through music-making. Through this, relational meaning – embedded with musical and personal meaning – will surely thrive.

To experience the spectrum of relational, personal, and musical meaning in/through musical doing, children and young people need to have access to a widest range of music-making encounters. The following section takes the reader along the continuum from meaning-making to those types of music-making encounters which support children and young people's meaning-making, and ultimately their striving towards their possible selves. These meaningful music-making encounters are described in the context of a PME spectrum across three modes.

## Chapter 05.

# Performance Music Education (PME)

### 5.1. Introduction: transforming the landscape of instrumental and vocal music education

The research witnessed the real and everyday musical encounters of children and young people as they navigated disparate yet interlinked musical worlds. For example, consider Carla (age 3) participating in an urban-based early-years programme; Jack (age 17) practising his guitar riffs as he excitedly awaits his first showcase with his fledgling rock band; Sophie (age 16) meeting a group of her friends in her post-primary school's common room for a lunchtime jam; Mark (age 14) standing side-stage in preparation for his choir's end-of-term performance; Jim (age 16) collaborating with his Irish traditional music band to compose a new song; Sara (age 9) practising her bowing technique ahead of tomorrow's violin class; and Bobby (age 15) meeting with his hip-hop tutor to work on his song lyrics for an upcoming recording session; Toyin (age 7) participating in musical games with a visiting musician where she lives in a Direct Provision Centre; and Cormack (age 11) rehearsing his clarinet solo with the wind band under the guidance of the band leader.

Since Music Generation was established in 2010, an evolving landscape of instrumental and vocal tuition has been nurtured across four phases.<sup>34</sup> Since then, and within an expanding national infrastructure, MEPs have been tasked at local level with developing a multitude of programmes for children and young people in response to local needs and contexts. This landscape, facilitated and supported by the formation and strengthening of new and existing national, local, and individual-level partnerships, has become increasingly diverse. For instance, over the six months of July to December 2014, 11 MEPs (299 musicians) provided 83 different programmes in 358 centres to 27,070 children and young people.

These programmes include approaches that are both long established as well as highly innovative, and those that are embedded in and across many musical genres and practices. While many would recognise approaches informed by those of a conventional music school, it would be a mistake to limit our understanding of Music Generation's work to this traditional model. It is clear that programmes also draw extensively on principles and practices of community music and social action, in addition to ways of engaging, learning, and performing that are distinctive across genres such as Irish traditional music or rock music, among others. The contexts in which these occur are similarly diverse. Some programmes are linked with other types of educational provision within and outside schools. Some are embedded in the community such as local wind/brass bands, choirs or traditional groups. Others address youth engagement and social or geographical inclusion and consequently occur in a variety of appropriate locations and situations. Still others connect with the contexts of the semi-professional and professional worlds of music.

It is a strength of Music Generation that it has the flexibility and agility to accommodate this broad range of purposes, approaches and practices. It lifts it out of the ordinary and creates the potential for the myriad of children and young people to experience meaning-making in and with music. At its best, Music Generation is transformative in that it creates the environment where participants can strive towards their future possible selves; whether this is in music, through music, or simply with music as part of their lives. In order to achieve this, it often has to accommodate competing

34 Phase one: Sligo, Louth, Mayo; Phase two: Wicklow, Laois, Cork City; Phase three: Limerick City, Carlow, Offaly/Westmeath; Phase four: South Dublin, Clare.

philosophies and orientations within the one MEP. Musicians from one tradition may be puzzled by the highly formalised Kodály method of developing music literacy and understanding, while musicians from other traditions may not fully realise what is actually being achieved in a rap or jazz workshop. The acknowledgement that there is no one single way is a vital aspect of Music Generation achieving its vision. This has allowed Music Generation to grow and develop in ways that are best suited to drawing on the strengths and meeting the needs of each locality. However it brings with it its own complexities.

It would be a misunderstanding to view this diversity as neatly boxed into genres or repertoire. A choir may sing jazz songs among other repertoire, but its performance practice and interpretative style may be drawn from a classical model. Many traditional musicians learn by ear and in intergenerational social settings, however many also learn in classroom-like environments organised by age with some aspect of notation. Many instrumental and ensemble programmes across many genres rightly focus strongly on skills development. For some community musicians the initial aim might be inclusion, especially of 'hard to reach' groups, and although skills are certainly developed, the focus is often one of participation. One purpose (among many) is to enable and foster future engagement with the range of music programmes available.

Two particular challenges face Music Generation. The first is how to authentically represent and encompass these different orientations while ensuring that children and young people gain the best experience in all of the approaches, purposes, practices and genres provided within each MEP. The second challenge is to guard against the danger of having an innovative and richly diverse 'set-up' phase but settling down into something less complex, more homogenous and systematisable – in the process losing the richness, the flexibility to innovate and respond, and perhaps become a service only for very particular groups, rather than strive to achieve the broad ambition set out in its initial strategic plan and the strong wishes of the philanthropic donors.

There is an inherent complexity in achieving and ensuring consistently high quality music provision and engagement across such diverse practices, purposes and approaches. This is worth pursuing however. It begins in developing a strong understanding of the multitude of valid ways of engaging with music and articulating what is best across all of these practices. This section provides one of the tools to do this. It proposes a way of capturing a spectrum of performance modes that are broadly categorised as: a) dialogical performance music education, (e.g., think of a dynamic and engaging instrumental lesson); b) participatory performance music education (e.g., think of an excellent community music initiative); and c) presentational performance music education. (e.g., think of performing at or attending a concert, gig, or sharing your music online). While these are simple examples, the material presented throughout this section illustrates the full spectrum within these categories which was encountered in this research.

The research constructs a set of fluid categories within each of these performance modes – underpinned by relevant findings and literature – to represent and illustrate the different musical encounters that participants experienced in their engagement with the performance music education. The resultant modes of performance music education and those areas included within each mode provide a framework to understand, encompass, and account for the range of purposes approaches and practices that are a significant and relevant part of music education in the 21st century.

Articulating performance music education in this way allows otherwise hidden, overlooked, and perhaps undervalued approaches to become visible. It identifies what is best about these approaches, for example, that an effective instrumental/vocal lesson is actively dialogical rather than a routine series of instructions. Acquiring a language to discuss these modes is an important part of developing an understanding and awareness of their distinctive role and strengths. It also helps to avoid the assumption that ‘what always was should continue to be’ without further critical consideration. Furthermore, this articulation is useful to MEPs in assessing the balance of their programmes. For instance, it would be a concern if an MEP found that most of their programmes were participatory and that there were few or limited opportunities for children and young people to learn through dialogical or presentational modes, or equally, if most programmes were dialogical in nature.

There has been very little published research carried out in this area in an Irish context; examples of work include Lennon and Reed 2012, Tiernan 2010; Kenny 2014. The emergence of Music Generation in all its diverse forms provides a valuable opportunity to develop an insightful understanding of this area not just for the benefit of Music Generation but also, to benefit our wider understanding of performance music education. Rather than try to evaluate a still developing and changing Music Generation, this research uses a strong theoretical lens drawn from international literature to examine the diverse programmes and interactions witnessed across the MEPs. It develops a framework that can continue to be used by MEPs to think through and plan their future development. It goes without saying that such a framework could also be relevant to international initiatives which are attempting to develop a national infrastructure for performance music education.

A universally available performance music education was a piece of the infrastructural jigsaw that has long been missing in the Irish Arts development landscape. As a young initiative, Music Generation was afforded an unconventional approach to bringing this about: seeded by philanthropy, engaged with existing statutory structures, but retaining an independent identity where it could act as honest broker. It has brought together somewhat competing ideologies to create, develop, and continue to sustain and grow a music service that remains close to and draws on the professional music world while being provided locally within a national infrastructure.

As an ambitious national initiative, Music Generation is striving to nurture and lead change across national and local landscapes. It is a complex process which involves challenging the status quo, embedding new ways of working (and thinking) within national and local infrastructures, and addressing those deeply rooted historical barriers to what is beginning to be termed ‘non-mainstream music education’ which generations of children and young people have long encountered. This fledgling process of ‘landscape’ transformation is ongoing across Music Generation’s infrastructure, and where it has been observed as occurring most effectively it is defined by the dialectic interplay between critical reflection and action. Crucially, the process has also been underpinned by those core values of inclusion, quality, partnership, diversity, creativity, and sustainability.<sup>35</sup> Change, in this way, has the potential to be markedly profound. Not simply providing, but leading a different way of thinking about performance music education that has the potential to be transformative for the children and young people who participate.



### 5.2. Performance Music Education: a new term for the Irish landscape

In its strategic plan, Music Generation came to describe its vision for non-mainstream music education as Performance Music Education (PME). PME was adopted by Music Generation for a number of reasons, the primary one being that as an organisation, it realised that a new term was needed to differentiate its work from what was already being carried out in the context of mainstream curricular music education. The donors had specified that funding should be used to bring into place what was missing, that is instrumental and vocal music education, and not to be used for what should already be provided through mainstream education. Thereafter, the concept of PME carried with it the implicit understanding that it was distinct from what should already occur in arts education at primary level or in the context of the post-primary music curricula. This is a vital distinction given that primary and post-primary schools represent a significant percentage of contexts wherein programmes are initially embedded within local contexts.<sup>36</sup> According to a number of musicians and classroom teachers interviewed for the research, establishing programmes in these contexts often brings with it the need to carefully communicate and maintain an understanding amongst all parties of the differing role and place (as well as time/resource implications) of the non-mainstream music education approach. For instance, one musician interviewed indicated that he was urged (unsuccessfully) by a primary classroom teacher to adapt his pedagogical content to align with the requirements of the music curriculum, while a primary classroom teacher revealed that she rarely engaged with the music-making in the classroom beyond the foundation music programme which the musician was delivering each week. Another primary school teacher's comments indicate the need to have further discussion around this area:

*We do very little singing other than [the musician visiting] because we're restricted by our curriculum time. We've only got an hour of teaching music per week so for 2nd class that's their full hour gone already. Not so much for 1st class... music was one hour per week and now there's an emphasis on numeracy and literacy and the time has to be taken from other subjects so I mean an hour a week is as generous as you can afford to give music. But bar [the musician visiting] they get very little other music tuition in the school except for choir practice and school events things like that. My teaching of music has certainly... I've had to cut it back because of time constraints and curriculum overload. (Lucy, classroom teacher, CS2SC1)*

By and large however, the research suggests that these were issues which were discussed in the planning stages of post-primary and primary-based programmes. At a macro national level however, this issue is flagged tentatively as a potential concern for Music Generation to address as it continues to embed and create spaces for itself within mainstream educational contexts.

Allied to this is the decision of Music Generation to describe the musician-educators who work in each MEP as 'musicians' rather than 'teachers' (previously discussed in the context of critical diversity and the role of the musician, see Section 2). This came about in order to accommodate the widest possible range of music genres and practices and to respect and include genres/practices that may not have a formal tradition of 'teachers' but would have a tradition of passing music on. It sought to ensure that it could move out of a conventional model of a music school into something quite new and innovative. The focus is on the child/young person's encounter and exchange with a vibrant practising musician who has the skills and expertise required to pass their music on to the next generation. Music Generation also sought to support practising musicians in developing the necessarily skills required across diverse contexts. Children/young people may encounter musicians in a learning situation and also be aware of their musical lives beyond the learning space, attending a gig in which they perform or listening to their recordings. For instance, this is the case: in Wicklow where musicians who engage children in a programme based in a primary school also perform with the Gregory Walkers; in Sligo where the composer who facilitated the Big Bang is also working on a commission for Wide Open Opera, later performed as part of a Dublin-based festival; in Mayo where

<sup>36</sup> As of December 2014, 63% of programmes were taking place in primary school settings, while 13% of programmes were taking place in post-primary school settings (Source: internal statistical report drawn up by Dr. Patricia Flynn (St Patrick's College DCU) from the figures reported by each MEP as part of their six-monthly report to Music Generation National Office.

the director of Kaleidoscope Big Band has their own Rhombus quartet that perform regularly; in Louth where a traditional musician moves from teaching traditional fiddle to performing in a concert series, collaborating with other well-known musicians and launching a new CD, and Limerick City where the musicians who facilitate song development with primary children regularly perform locally and internationally with various bands and ensembles. This is the added value achievable in Music Generation as it aligns itself with the world of music beyond the teaching space, and it inspires children and young people to see themselves not solely as music learners but also as musicians.

By necessity, PME is a broad and complex concept for Music Generation which can be applied to all musical genres, all contexts, all encounters, and all pedagogical approaches relevant to particular musical cultures and traditions. The term PME is reflective of Music Generation's desire to value and be inclusive of the widest possible interpretation of what it means to engage children and young people in meaningful music-making. It includes the diverse intentions of all those musicians who strive to facilitate and sustain meaning-making experiences in music for children and young people across Music Generation's MEPs, including hip-hop mentors, bodhrán teachers, electronic music artists, community musicians, early childhood music specialists, classical ensemble directors, bass tutors, guitar teachers, choral practitioners, and jazz guitarists. It also challenges us to question our assumptions around what we understand 'performance' and 'music education' to mean in diverse contexts. What does each term include or exclude for a non-mainstream music education context? Dunbar-Hall (2009), for instance, in proposing a field of ethnopädagogy where the learning and teaching of music are perceived as culturally contextualised, defines performance as a physical interaction with music and a requirement in making music. He also describes performance as 'the purposeful activity of making or moving to sound rather than the presentation of a polished instantiation of a musical work' (p.63). Resonating with the three-mode concept of PME developed through this research, Dunbar-Hall continues that performance, in music education, is:

*(1) symbiotic with other learning and teaching strategies in the development of aural skills, creating music and understanding music, (2) a spectrum of activities, from simple, short tasks, through to practising, rehearsing and workshop involvement, and (3) the final presentation of pieces of music.*  
(Dunbar-Hall 2009, p.64)

When Music Generation's spectrum of activities which it engages in as PME is considered, it is clear that its interpretation of PME includes – yet goes much wider than – widely accepted understandings of 'performance' practice. This research draws on these understandings, and attempts to expand and deepen them in order to inform an inclusive and broadly relevant concept of PME for Music Generation's diverse landscape.

For Music Generation, the concept of PME aligns an understanding of music education with an evolved concept of performance. It provides a theoretical framework within which the 'musical doing' of children and young people, facilitated by musicians and the wider community, can be situated. It provides a means of understanding the spectrum of musical routes by which children and young people, musicians, and the wider community can realise their diverse intentions and motivations. It places musical doing at the heart of children and young people's lived experience. This 'musical doing' is inclusive and accessible. It is facilitated within an ecological model of effective partnership-working, underpinned by a concept of critical diversity, imbued by creativity, sustainable across a national infrastructure, and informed by an understanding of what 'quality' means for diverse contexts. Rosaleen Molloy, National Director of Music Generation, outlines the breadth of what Music Generation aspires for PME to entail:

*Music Generation recognises performance music education in its broadest sense. It is inclusive of all instruments, everything from concertinas to clarinets, piccolos to pipes, tubas to tin whistles, drums to didgeridoos, and all vocal styles including singing, beat boxing, rapping and liltin. It embraces all genres of music including classical, rock, pop, jazz, world and Irish traditional music. It incorporates a range of music education programmes, including but not limited to individual and group tuition, workshops,*

*mentoring, master classes, ensembles such as choirs, bands and orchestras, aural training, musical theory, sight-reading, composition and music technology. It also includes a range of performance activity, such as marching bands, community choirs and traditional music sessions. It can happen in many formal and informal contexts such as primary/secondary/music schools, classrooms, community centres, arts centres, theatres, outdoor spaces, churches, parish halls, youth clubs and studios. It embraces a diversity of approaches to teaching and learning across all genres of music that are relevant to particular musical cultures and traditions, such as the oral tradition associated with traditional Irish music, notation associated with classical music, improvisation associated with jazz and composition associated with rap. (Molloy 2011, p.11)*

### 5.3. Developing a PME framework across three modes

However, within this broad spectrum we need some way of capturing, conceptualising and understanding the kaleidoscope of musical happenings which are possible, some which have already taken place, are currently underway, or have yet to occur within and across Music Generation's MEPs. In developing a theoretical framework for PME, we recognised that these happenings were arguably infinite in their diversity and a suitably inclusive and flexible yet robust framework must reflect this diversity. This PME framework aims to be inclusive of all those values and intentions which underpin the spectrum of musical encounters which occur daily across the PME landscape; in settings such as community centres, festivals and other events, primary schools, hospitals, live performance venues, childcare settings, outdoor spaces, youth centres, music schools, and summer courses, among others. These are values and intentions which have been revealed by research participants in disparate contexts; from the musician facilitating an early-years programme in Music Generation Carlow, to a group of young teenagers composing songs in Music Generation Limerick City, to the parents/guardians of young children learning violin in a primary school context in Music Generation Louth, to the young traditional musicians travelling to Dublin from Music Generation Mayo for a concert performance. The logic is that if a deeper understanding of what is happening can be achieved and communicated, then a deeper process of informed strategic planning and reflection amongst all involved parties will follow.

Informed by research observations over a two-year investigation, and by a breadth of relevant literature from the field, the theoretical model for PME is constructed across three modes – dialogical PME, presentational PME, and participatory PME. The motivation for developing this framework across the three modes is to reveal, capture, and attribute value to the diversity of meaningful music-making experiences which were observed over the course of a two-year investigation. It recognises, acknowledges, and communicates the different ways that PME is experienced across Music Generation's MEPs. By encouraging coordinators, musicians, parents/guardians, and others to know (or find out) where and what the alternative meaningful music-making 'entry points' and pathways are, the three-mode model includes a range of perspectives and 'opens up' new or perhaps unthought-of ways that music-making can be experienced. It therefore cautions against any approach to PME which focuses wholly on one mode over another, as this could be limiting and 'close down' the potential for meaning-making to occur in other ways. Admittedly, it also grew out of some concern that particular types of PME experiences were being valued (and by default, planned for) over others. Take for instance the emphasis often placed upon and the energy often dedicated to the 'final concert'. While these presentational contexts (end-of-year concerts, showcase events, performance recitals, etc.) are undeniably essential and important sites for meaning-making to occur, they only represent one particular way of experiencing music. The three-mode PME framework acknowledges that what can at times go un(der)valued [and by default, un(der)planned for] can happen behind closed doors, in youth cafés and childcare settings, in living rooms and workshop spaces, and far from the rapturous applause. These other experiences can also trigger subtle or even profoundly positive reverberations into the lives of a child or young person, and they raise important points for the practice of musicians. Thus, the three aforementioned modes were informed by the research process, are representative of the breadth of music-making encounters observed, have been developed to ensure that the diversity of meaningful PME experiences are recognised and

valued, and outline the potential options to musicians and others in how PME experiences can be designed and facilitated.

#### 5.4. Introducing the three modes and associated spectrum areas

The three PME interconnected modes which were developed throughout this investigation are dialogical PME, participatory PME, and presentational PME (FIGURE 27). Given their epistemological differences, each PME mode is underpinned by its respective theoretical framework.

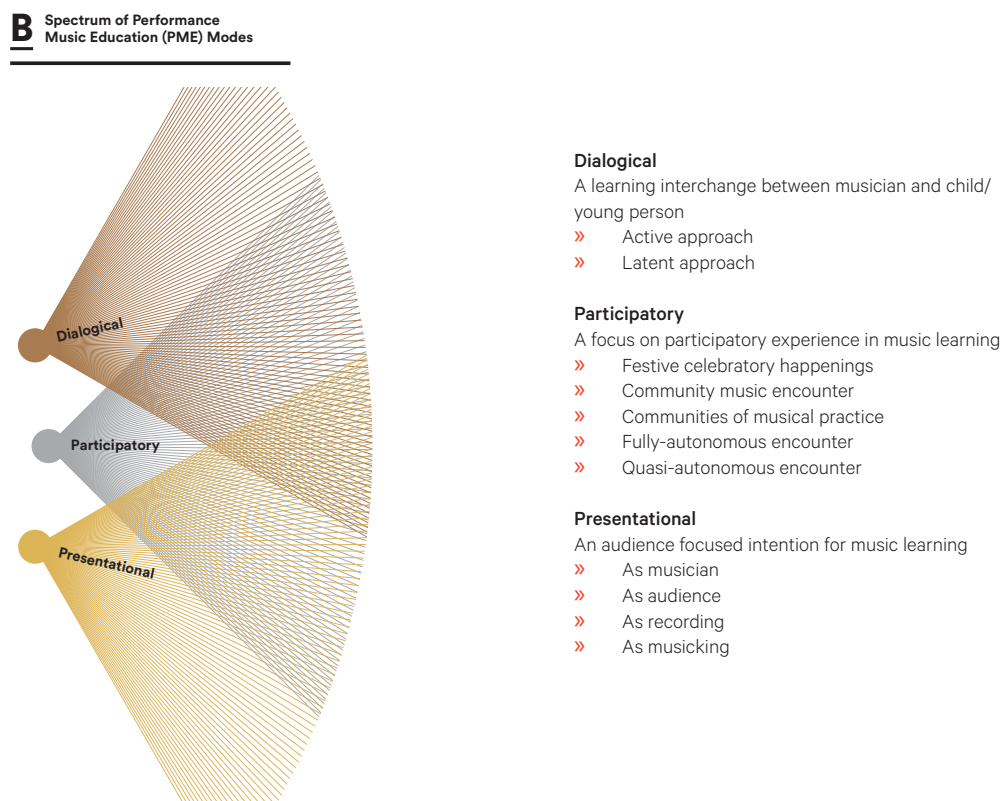


FIGURE 27: THREE PME MODES AND SPECTRUM AREAS

As a brief introduction, the first mode – dialogical PME – is perhaps what most would recognise as the types of engagement that occur in typical instrumental/vocal teaching and learning encounters, either in one-to-one or group lesson contexts. In dialogical PME encounters, particular types of relationships were nurtured and developed between musicians and children/young people. Musicians' intentions and children and young people's motivations in these moments were firmly focused towards engaging in an educative process of instrumental/vocal learning and progression. Dialogical PME contexts were also characterised by a particular type of meaning-making associated with the challenging educative process. Effective dialogical PME relationships relied on the musician(s) having a level of pedagogical experience and expertise suited to meeting the needs of children and young people across various contexts. Consider, for example, a song-writing workshop in a community context, a young cellist meeting her tutor each week at the local music school for a lesson, a traditional musician facilitating a céilí band practice with a group of teenagers, a classical singer delivering lessons to a group of children across a number of primary schools, or a jazz guitarist working with small groups of teenagers.

Participatory PME on the other hand is distinguishable from dialogical PME in that the intention within this similarly expansive mode invariably leans towards inclusive, participatory musical doing. Children and young people's 'way in' to music-making is through a participatory framework which includes community music encounters, festivals and celebrations, participation within communities of musical practice, and through child/young person initiated and/or led participatory encounters. Participatory PME is also distinguishable in terms of the particular areas of pedagogical expertise which musicians needed to possess in order to draw out and support meaning-making for children and young people. For instance, particular contexts required the particular skill-set of a community musician in order to engage children and young people's inclusive and participatory musical doing. In these contexts, the possible selves construct of musicians for children/young people often included yet extended beyond primarily musical possible selves to include strong intentions for personal and social transformation, emancipation, and empowerment.

The third and final presentational PME mode captures those experiences where children and young people engage in musician-audience contexts, either as musician, as audience, in terms of recording, and also in terms of participating beyond these roles in any capacity in a musicking (Small 1999, 1998) context.

Each PME mode is comprised of a spectrum within which there are a number of embedded areas. The modes and comprising areas are not defined by genre or context – although these can be usefully examined through the three modes – rather, they are designed to represent the spectrum of diverse ways in which children and young people can encounter meaningful musical engagement. Therefore, while it might be tempting to think of the modes as belonging to different genres or contexts, the research shows that they cross genres and contexts, and it is much more useful to acknowledge the meaning-making intentions associated with each mode. As such, the three modes are a lens through which the many different ways that children and young people come to encounter music-making can be understood.

### 5.5. Pathways to meaningful musical engagement

The graphic representation of PME (FIGURE 27) also suggests the rejection of any sort of hierarchy within the three modes, in favour of a broad spectrum of pathways to meaningful musical engagement. The three-mode illustrative model also provides a means of visualising how children and young people can potentially move fluidly and with ease from one PME mode to another, one PME area to another, and one PME strand to another, provided/providing that the necessary conditions are in place for them to do so. As each mode and comprising areas are discussed hereafter, this point regarding progression between modes will be highlighted and emphasised further as it is entwined with several other key issues/questions. For instance: a) How are responsive<sup>37</sup> programmes designed and implemented for (and with) children and young people? b) How do children and young people experience meaning-making within these responsive programmes? c) How do musicians support this meaning-making? d) How can progression routes be mapped and facilitated to support children and young people in striving towards their future possible selves and ultimately, a life-long engagement with music? e) How can Music Generation ensure the longevity and sustainability of programmes (and Music Generation itself) into the future?

### 5.6. An inclusive PME framework

The three-mode PME framework developed in this way for several reasons, a fundamental one being that it seeks to represent the breadth of what was observed happening 'on the ground' over the course of a longitudinal cross-MEP investigation. It was also of central importance that the broad community of musicians who 'work' that ground – engaging with children and young people in diverse ways and in diverse contexts – could situate themselves and their practice within this evolving framework. Research findings show that musicians have a myriad of musical identities, musical backgrounds, motivations, and intentions. They each construct self-identities as music tutors, strings teachers, early childhood facilitators, community musicians, composers,

37 A responsive programme refers to the ability of a programme to align and resonate with the needs of children and young people and local infrastructure and contexts.

instrumental outreach tutors, traditional musicians, band leaders, musician-educators, choral leaders, and community choir leaders, among other assumed identities. They are driven and motivated in different ways, and for different reasons. The three-mode PME framework attempts to provide a space for musicians, regardless of background, motivation, or intention, to situate what they do and constructively reflect on why they do it in a particular way. The real implication of the three-mode framework is that it calls for an understanding of the diversity of ways in which children and young people can experience meaning-making in music. It reveals the perhaps unforeseen possibilities and potentialities for children and young people to have meaningful experiences in music. Once these have been revealed, only then can supportive measures be put in place to ensure that those opportunities are valued in the first instance, planned for, resourced, and allowed to develop in response to local contexts.

### 5.7. Dialogical PME

Dialogical PME is a term used in this research to describe particular types of relationships that were observed to occur between musicians and children/young people across Music Generation's dialogical PME contexts. As a mode of PME, it describes where the goal was for a child or young person's musical knowledge to be developed in dialogue with the knowledge and experience of the musician. Within this mode, the spectrum of meaning-making encounters observed were characterised by children and young people meeting musicians to explore their instrument or voice, learn new musical skills and techniques, improve on these, expand their musical horizons, collaborate, question, face and overcome musical challenges, compose, and create. They are what one might describe as typical instrumental/vocal teaching and learning contexts where communication is controlled to different degrees by the child or young person's voice. These dialogical PME encounters were either one-to-one, small group, or large group encounters, facilitated by a musician or group of musicians, and were generally of a 'formal' nature in that they took place at an agreed time, for an agreed length of time, at an agreed location, and had an agreed purpose.

One of the ways in which these diverse encounters can be analysed for meaning-making and subsequently better understood is through a concept of 'dialogue'. General consensus would arguably be that an educative experience characterised by 'dialogue' infers one where meaningful conversations take place between 'teacher' and 'learner', where relationships are forged and strengthened, where the thoughts and opinions of each individual are listened to and appreciated, and where the educative process is an expanding, mutually respectful, two-way flow of shared experience. It follows that a performance music education experience which is informed by dialogue takes and coalesces these processes, and aligns them with a musicians' intentions for children and young people to have meaningful music-making experiences in diverse teaching and learning contexts. It could be summarised then that dialogical PME is a process of dialogue between musicians, children, and young people with intentions for meaningful music-making experiences.

Considering music teaching and learning contexts (and arts education more broadly speaking) through the lens of 'dialogue' is not a new phenomenon, although much of this scholarship has been focused on school-based music education. In an arts education context, Zander (2004) explains that dialogue is much more than understanding a teaching strategy or asking the right questions, it is a 'matter of creating an environment in which the teaching relationship becomes one of open-ended discovery' (2004, p.49). Zander describes dialogue as a process and a relationship that requires time, commitment, and mutual respect; an epic experience in teaching and one that transcends teaching and becomes inspirational (Zander 2004, p.49). Rather than focusing on teaching strategies, the dialogical relationship requires active involvement from the child and young person and involves 'a personal philosophy towards teaching that values relationships and the commitment of time to developing an environment in which these relationships can be established' (Zander 2004, p.49). This is undoubtedly difficult given the time constrictions of a normal 30-50 minute music workshop or lesson, even though many of the characteristics of a dialogic encounter are highly valued by musicians, and in many cases are what brought musicians into their musical worlds in the first place. Zander draws from Burbules (1993) who writes that dialogue is a non-teleological and open-ended process in which the teacher acts as participant and facilitator of new and different understandings,

rather than as a guide or leader. Similarly, Tannen (1998) describes dialogue as a 'conversational involvement' that is a shared acknowledgement of respect, concern, trust, affection, appreciation, and hope. For teachers 'it requires not only a personal commitment to the highest order of personal relationships but also the establishment of a delicate balance between caring and the authority inherent in being a teacher' (Zander 2004, p.50). Dialogue in education contexts calls on teachers: to provide children and young people with the kinds of meaningful and open-ended questions that deserve inquiry and merit rich discussion; to 'get to know different points of view and to examine possibilities' (Zander 2004, p.52); to facilitate 'creative encounters' (London 1989, p.87) which are challenging, engaging, inward-seeking, and involve a variety of solutions; and to nurture an environment that supports a variety of factors which consistently work together to communicate a message of safety and trustworthiness' (Zander 2004, p.51). These perspectives reflect particular aspects of those dialogical encounters observed during the research process, and inform the broad goals of dialogical PME for Music Generation.

While a consideration of dialogue as outlined by Zander and others is useful in informing the dialogical mode of PME, the mode is strengthened further by drawing on a number of other theoretical perspectives; namely, the Freirean-inspired critical pedagogy for music education (Freire 1974, 1996/1970) and Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory (1991). These other broad theoretical perspectives interweave to inform and shape the nature of educative engagement and the intention of the musician across two areas which comprise the dialogical mode; in other words, a two-area dialogical spectrum. Each area represents different ways that musicians engaged with children and young people in dialogical PME contexts. An explication of those theories from which this mode and inherent spectrum draws is a precursor to a more in-depth discussion of the dialogical PME mode.

### 5.8. Critical pedagogy for music education (CPME): a Freirean perspective

The underlying theoretical framework for dialogical PME draws in part from a postmodern philosophical approach to music education called Critical Pedagogy for Music Education (CPME). Although primarily developed for school-based music education contexts (Abrahams 2005a, 2005b, 2005c), CPME provides a useful touchstone for what was observed during the research process. It is a perspective where students create new and personal challenges, and view music as something to be constantly questioned, changed, and transformed (Schmidt 2005, p.7). CPME promotes educative experiences which are revealing, liberating, and transformative, and it has its roots in the field of critical pedagogy whose underlying philosophy merges concepts from critical theory and experiential learning. Educational philosopher Paulo Freire is often cited as the primary exponent of critical pedagogy and a Freirean-imbued CPME resonates deeply with a conceptualisation of dialogical PME for Music Generation.

Paulo Freire's work with the poor in Brazil compelled him to develop educational ideals and practices that would help to improve the lives of those who were oppressed. He sought to find strategies for students to intervene in an educative process which he referred to as liberatory action or praxis. We can therefore look to Freire's writings (1970) to locate those concepts which served to develop frameworks that define the philosophy of CPME. Before considering the implications for Music Generation of a CPME-enhanced dialogical PME mode, a brief synopsis of Freire's main perspectives follows to provide some background to his relevance and applicability in this context.

#### 5.8.1. Pedagogy of the oppressed and critical pedagogy

Freire's influential *Pedagogy of the oppressed*<sup>38</sup> (1970) has become increasingly relevant in music education scholarship and practice. Although his message originated in his efforts to liberate oppressed, illiterate adults in Brazil in the 1960s, it is a message equally and enduringly relevant today in the conceptualisation of dialogical PME for Music Generation's performance music education landscape. At its core, Freire's

38 *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, which is the 'pedagogy of people engaged in the fight for their own Liberation.' (Freire 1970, p.35) outlines Freire's approach to libertarian and transformative education. Freire's work as an educational philosopher originates in his efforts to liberate oppressed, illiterate adults in Brazil in the 1960s.

educational philosophy advocates for the fostering of dialogue and reciprocity, and for a consciousness in educational contexts that leads to experiences which are revealing, liberating, and transformative. The transformational imperative of Freire's philosophy is particularly pertinent to this research, and a number of themes coalesce to provide an understanding of Freire's interpretation of 'transformation' in educational contexts. These themes are: conscientization; intercommunication; and a rejection of 'banking education'.

### 5.8.2. *Critical consciousness*

In Brazil in the 1960s, Freire developed his educational philosophy to directly engage the question of how to confront what he called 'oppressive forces' and create emancipatory or liberating education for the 'oppressed'. He contends that through the process of emancipatory education – what he calls conscientização – transformation and liberation in oppressive situations can be achieved. While the use of the term 'oppressive situations' is detached from the reality of Music Generation's dialogical contexts, Freire's oppressor-oppressed dichotomy is nevertheless useful in constructing a concept of dialogical PME which promotes the idea that children and young people should engage and converse with musicians in ways that are empowering and transformative. Conscientization is then a process, and in the context of an emancipatory performance music education, is a phenomenon that occurs when musicians, children, and young people realise that they 'know that they know'. Conscientization implies knowing that reveals new understandings of the world and the ability to act on the learning in such ways as to affect change. With conscientization, children, young people and musicians would experience the total reality of music in dialogical contexts as being real, meaningful, and relevant, as opposed to perceiving music as a cultural artefact, for instance. It implies a dialogical PME experience which is empowering and transformative. In order for this liberation and transformation to happen however, the children, young people, and musicians must firstly perceive the experience as being limiting, and this realisation must then become the motivating force for critical consciousness. Following that, 'critical understanding leads to critical action' (Freire 1974, p.40).

The hope arising from this research is that through conscientization, musicians may effect change in dialogical contexts that will transform the possibilities for children and young people in and beyond their musical lives. Schmidt, albeit in the context of school music education, proposes that 'such knowledge, discovered through dialogue and experienced in and with the world, becomes an impacting and changing force' (2005, p.3).

### 5.8.3. *Intercommunication: critical co-investigators in dialogue*

A further justification for drawing on Freire's ideas is his conceptualisation of the role of the 'teacher' and 'student' as critical co-investigators in dialogue. In the case of Music Generation, we can read this as the musician and child/young person in the role of critical co-investigators in dialogue. This intercommunication, based on dialogue, is 'a horizontal relationship between persons [...] in a *joint* search' [emphasis added] (Freire 1974, p.40). It is quite different to a vertical anti-dialogue which 'was so much a part of our historical-cultural formation' and 'does not communicate, but rather issues communiqués' (Freire 1974, pp.40-41). Freire contends that all education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students (Freire 1996 / 1970, p.53). In other words, the first stage of libertarian pedagogy, such as dialogical PME, occurs when children and young people participate in the process with an increasingly critical awareness of their role as subjects of the transformation (Freire 1996 / 1970, p.108). Dialogical PME then becomes a conversation where children, young people, and musicians pose and solve problems together. Importantly, in terms of the role of the teacher and student, Freire maintains that through dialogue, 'the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers' (ibid., p.61).



*The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who teaches, but one who is [...] taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach[es]. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.*  
(Freire 1996 / 1970, p.61)

The students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. For the dialogical, problem-posing teacher-student, the programme content of education is the organised, systematised, and developed “representation” to individuals of the things about which they want to know more. As Freire explains:

*there is another kind of teacher, the teacher who is absolutely convinced not because somebody told them but because he or she experiences strongly this certainty, that it is impossible to teach without learning. It is impossible to dichotomise teaching from learning, educating from being educated.*  
(Freire and Kirby 1982, p.45)

Freire makes a distinction between the concept of a liberating dialogical education, which encourages the simultaneous nature of teaching and learning through problem posing, and banking education. Banking education focuses on ‘a preconceived structure of the subject rather than on the student’s psychological mind-set of personal construction of knowledge’ (Jorgensen 2003, p.35). Freire states that those committed to transformation and liberation must reject the banking concept in its entirety, and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world (1996, p.60); this, he explains, will involve a constant unveiling of reality.

#### **5.8.4. A multifaceted view of Critical Pedagogy for Music Education (CPME)**

Fundamental to informing the dialogical mode of PME for Music Generation is a multifaceted view of CPME which:

- » considers music education as a conversation between musicians, children, and young people;
- » broadens the child and young person’s view of reality;
- » is empowering, where music-making engages children and young people in ways that ‘are both significant and consistent with what musicians do when they are making music’ (Abrahams 2005a, p.2);
- » is transformative, where both the musicians and children/young people can acknowledge a change in perception;
- » is political, where it is acknowledged that children/young people come to music lessons with knowledge from the ‘outside world’.

As mentioned, it has been developed as a reconceptualisation of school music education where its intention is to ‘break down the barriers that separate the music that students hear in the classroom from the music they prefer in their world outside’ (Abrahams 2005b, p.2). As an approach which is grounded in the social theories of Freire (1970), McLaren (1997, 1998, 2002); McLaren and Giroux (1990), Giroux (1983a; 1983b; 1985; 1988a; 1988b; 1988c; 1994; 1997) and Habermas (1982), CPME guides us into viewing instrumental/vocal teaching and learning contexts through their philosophies and with this, new light shines on these familiar educative contexts. It gives us useful tools which can be used by musicians, coordinators, and others, to carefully consider and reflect on a wide range of dialogical PME contexts, from a choral conductor facilitating a large group of young choristers, to a one-on-one classical guitar lesson with a young teenager, to a group of traditional musicians arranging a large-scale traditional music ensemble, to a DJ/MC working on lyrics with a small group of teenagers, to a musician facilitating an instrumental programme with a group of young children with special needs, to two musicians co-facilitating a music programme in an early-years context. A CPME

perspective gives us the tools with which we can critically reflect on important themes across each of these contexts, including: the relationship between musicians, children, and young people; the nature of dialogue in these contexts; the power and purpose of performance music education; the empowerment of children and young people as musicians; and pedagogical approaches within the dialogical PME mode.

In developing CPME, Abrahams describes what a CPME-imbued music lesson might incorporate. He suggests that music lessons that include ideas from critical pedagogy engage musical imagination, creativity, and celebration through performance (Abrahams 2005c, p.63). He explains that musicians who teach critically would view themselves in a partnership with children and young people and as an approach, CPME would acknowledge that children and young people come into instructional contexts with the ability to teach as well as to learn. Through problem posing and dialoguing, teachers would 'engage children in meaningful conversations that encourage children to not only solve problems, but to pose them as well (Abrahams 2005c, p.66). In the context of this research, musicians could also experience outcomes that are personally transformational (ibid., p.62). Furthermore, CPME would place music 'in a social, political, and cultural context that results in informed opinions' and when the moment of revelation or 'conscientization' happens, one could claim that 'learning has occurred' (Abrahams 2005c, p.63).

When planning instruction, Abrahams, inspired by Habermas (1982), suggests that critical pedagogues ask four questions: Who am I? Who are my students? What might they become? What might we become together? Of course, there are no standard or straightforward answers to these questions and each question will elicit a different response, depending on context and the child or young person within a particular dialogical context. This is contrary to common practice where instead of focusing on a lesson objective, 'concepts emerge as students and teachers construct their own meanings from the music being studied' (Abrahams 2005a, p.1). This allows children and young people to 'better understand who they are, and embrace the possibilities of who or what they might become' (Abrahams 2005a, p.3). Although from a school curriculum perspective, Abrahams' thoughts are particularly pertinent to the 'possible selves' dimension of this research:

*Lessons plans grounded in critical pedagogy include content that is significant to the students and mindful of their lives beyond the classroom. Building a music programme that values students as they are while recognizing what they may become will help secure music's place in the school curriculum and ensure the development of citizens who are musically mindful, musically literate, and committed to lifelong musical enjoyment.*  
(Abrahams 2005c, p.67)

A critical pedagogy orientation would not advocate a particular pedagogical or genre-specific approach, or indeed a particular body of repertoire. Rather, it provides musicians with a flexible pedagogy where the focus is on questioning, challenging, reflecting and empowering children and young people to experience music in these contexts in ways which are meaningful and support them in striving towards their future possible selves; the research findings revisit the importance of these ideas. In a wide-ranging conversation on the role of critical theory in creating fresh approaches for understanding in music education, Regelski (2005) alludes to this hallmark of the critical theory approach – its sense of enquiry which urges us to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions. His statement is particularly poignant if we consider it in light of established instructional methodologies of instrumental and vocal tuition such as the Dalcroze, Kodály, Orff, and Suzuki.

*[V]arious teaching methods take for granted that good means (i.e., “good” methods) automatically bring about good results, although these results are never validated by comparing actual results to claims. Instrumental reason thus leads to authoritarian, how to, orthodoxy where the method is revered regardless of results – where, in any case, results are not even noted because full faith is placed in good methods.*

*Even more problematic, the availability of a multitude of teaching methods leads to an attitude of relativism or nihilism that amounts to “do your own thing” or “what works for me” with regard to curriculum, method, and evaluation. Values, in this technocratic view of teaching, are nothing more than statements of opinion. Thus the conviction arises that one method is as good as another as long as it is followed properly, which is to say with single-minded devotion.*  
(Regelski 2005, p.8)

Regelski continues his questioning of ‘taken-for-granted practices and paradigms’, stating that he views them as ‘warning flags that need to be subjected to critique for signs of ideology, false consciousness, and failure to achieve what is promised’ (Regelski 2005, p.13). CPME on the other hand, having grown from critical theory, favours ‘reason guided in terms of the ends or aims, intentions, interests, or purposes that empower people, in our case, students and teachers, to be free from coercion and thus free to achieve right results for themselves and others’ (Regelski 2005, pp.13-14). In Music Generation’s case, it means empowering children and young people to achieve active, rewarding, and meaningful musical lives of their choice. It also means equipping, resourcing, and supporting musicians to support children and young people in this way. It is no surprise then that a CPME approach, in empowering and meeting the needs of diverse groups of children and young people, also resonates strongly with the ideals of critical diversity; critical diversity itself being informed by a critical theory. We can take this further and suggest that from a macro ‘national’ perspective, a CPME-imbued approach to dialogical PME would resist the potential ‘slowing down’, solidifying, or systemisation of Music Generation into anything that represented a hegemonic, ideologically driven, ‘top-down’ national programme for music education. Instead, in order to take Music Generation’s temperature (at national and local levels) and chart its course into the future, a starting point always includes the experience of children and young people and their dialogical relationships with musicians.

### 5.9. Dialogical PME and levels of intention

The dialogical PME encounters which were observed across Music Generation’s programmes during the research process can be framed within this theoretical framework. These encounters were rich and diverse, and included a multitude of musician intentions, pedagogical approaches, and experiential outcomes for children, young people, and musicians. Analysis of these encounters led to the development of a dialogical PME spectrum comprised of two distinct areas which encompass the multitude of musician intentions and pedagogical approaches: (i) an active approach to dialogical PME and (ii) a latent approach to dialogical PME (FIGURE 28). The following examples illustrate the diversity of encounters within each area:

- » a musician-led music classes involving large whole-class groups of primary-age children learning recorder or keyboard, where arguably out of necessity there was a clear focus on the progression of musical skills and technical expertise with limited opportunity/scope for exploration, conversation, or imaginative play;
- » an early-years music workshop which emphasised the value of collaboration, immersive experiences, and getting to know the children;
- » an Irish traditional music lesson where a harp player taught or ‘passed on’ a tune to a young child with little time afforded to ‘open-ended discovery’ or the development of personal relationships with the child;

- » a community-based instrumental workshop where musicians strove to motivate young people to develop their musical confidence and skills, while simultaneously building with them meaningful relationships;
- » a classical strings lesson where the musician's primary intention was focused on motivating the children to learn the appropriate techniques and skills on their instruments;
- » a woodwind lesson with a group of young teenagers where the musician balanced teaching the melody with time to converse, reflect, and get to know the young people.

An active approach to dialogical PME, expounded upon later, includes those encounters where musicians consciously and actively planned for, pursued, and embraced – either wholly or partly – those outcomes associated with a Freirean-imbued critical pedagogy. What did these encounters 'look like'? For example, they included those contexts (group and one-to-one facilitating) where children and young people's imagination and creativity were celebrated, where children and young people were encouraged to raise and include their voices and join the 'conversation', where learning the music was not the only focus, where children and young people learned in partnership with the musician(s) and other children/young people, where children and young people had the opportunity to teach as well as to learn, and where the musician's pedagogical approach was flexible to meet the needs of the children and young people themselves.

A latent approach to dialogical PME, also expounded upon later, includes those encounters (group and one-to-one teaching) where there was a more pronounced distinction placed on the roles of 'musician-educator' and 'learner' – a master-apprentice model so to speak, rather than a partnership approach; where teaching, leaning towards a form of didacticism, was a matter for the musician who would 'pass on' their musical knowledge; where learning the music was the only focus and consisted largely of children and young people's acquisition of existing musical repertoires; where the content and learning outcomes of a music lesson or workshop were largely predefined; where children and young people learned what the musician had planned for them to learn; where high value was placed on the 'transmission' of a musical tradition; where primary emphasis was placed on the acquisition of skills over those other active dialogical PME outcomes; and where deeply-rooted and often genre-specific pedagogical practices took precedence over more flexible pedagogical approaches.

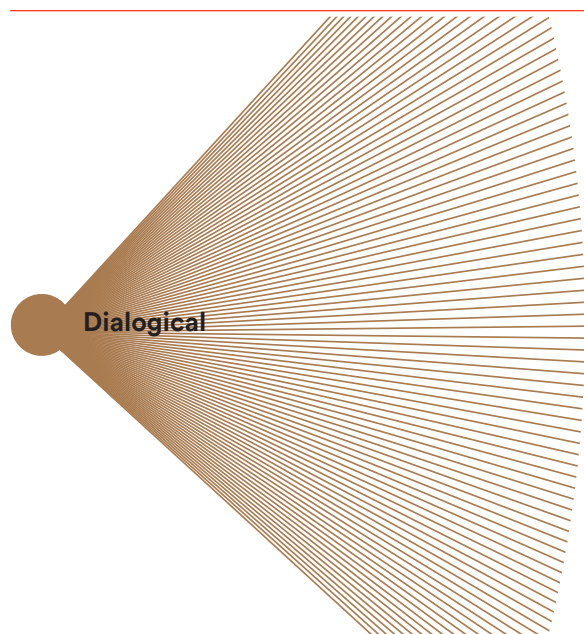


FIGURE 28: AN 'ACTIVE' AND 'LATENT' APPROACH TO DIALOGICAL PME

These approaches – active and latent – were observed in dialogical PME contexts across Music Generation’s MEPs. It is important to point out that active and latent approaches to dialogical PME by no means define genre-specific approaches – although this was sometimes the case in certain contexts – but rather, they reflect choices which musicians were observed to make across Music Generation’s dialogical contexts. Also, where there are examples of musicians situating their practice exclusively within the active strand, and other examples of musicians situating their practice deeply within the latent strand, there are also examples of musicians who transitioned with ease from one strand to the other, often in the context of one music workshop or lesson – a ‘dual approach’ so to speak, leading to ‘dual’ experiential outcomes for children and young people. This is not considered an additional third approach to dialogical PME, but rather describes the approach of those musicians who have a clear understanding of both active and latent approaches, and who employ each approach at different times for particular envisaged meaning-making outcomes.

The two areas of dialogical PME – active and latent – therefore acknowledge and respond to the diversity of dialogical PME encounters observed. They represent ‘levels of intention’, where the practice of musicians observed in these encounters can be described as aligning to a greater degree with one or other of the spectrum areas, or indeed in some cases, both areas with respect to the ‘dual approach’. By framing the intentions and dialogical engagement of musicians in this way, we can hope to better understand the implications of each approach on the meaning-making experiences of children and young people. In other words, the two-areas differentiate between the different ways that musicians might engage children and young people in the educative process, and allow us to understand the potential implications of this. A useful way therefore to distinguish between one dialogical PME strand and another, would be to ask, ‘What is the nature of dialogical engagement between the musician and child/young person or musician group of children/young people in that context?’ or ‘What is the intention of the musician in that particular context?’ Each strand, active and latent, has a number of associated principles outlined below:

## 5.10. Dialogical PME: an active approach

### 5.10.1. Agency and freedom: self-selection of instruments and musical genres/styles

One of the most evident characteristics of an active dialogical encounter was the self-selection of music and/or instruments by children and young people. This involved musicians actively encouraging children and young people to bring music into the lesson or workshop that they were familiar with, that they enjoyed, that was relevant to and meaningful in their lives in the world ‘outside’, and that the children and young people for these reasons were motivated to learn and explore. One musician (Jean, cellist/cello tutor), in recollecting her experience of ‘having to’ learn the recorder as a child highlighted the potential negative implications of removing ‘choice’ from a child’s reach and ‘pressurising children’ to learn instruments that they perhaps are not motivated to learn. Stephanie, a classroom teacher (CS2SC2) also indicated the importance of affording choice to young people in the context of the programme taking place in her school:

*I think with them as well that they want to learn guitar... they’re not being pushed into lessons either. They’re going because they want to do it because if they didn’t want to do guitar and their parents paid for it they wouldn’t have to show up. They want to do it... they love it. They’re there to learn, not like Johnny down the road being pushed into lessons once a week and he absolutely hates it. They’re doing it because they love it.*

*(Stephanie, classroom teacher, CS2SC2)*

Stephanie continues that the musician ‘is not there to fill a half an hour with stuff that the kids might not want to do... he’s not there to do that’. On the contrary, the musician wants the kids to ‘get what they want out of it rather than what the teacher wants out of it’. She describes how one young girl had to be reminded each week about her guitar lessons, until the musician presented her with a bass guitar (which she really wanted to learn) and

'now she is there on time every week'. Given the findings of this research, perhaps the re-evaluation/reshaping of a musician's dialogical engagement with a child to incorporate a choice component could create the conditions which would intrinsically and extrinsically motivate the child to learn a particular instrument – and thereby experience meaning-making. Musicians who employed the alternative strategy of integrating children and young people's 'own' music into the dialogical space often used it as a stepping stone to eventually 'leading them' to a place where they could expand their musical horizons, be it through learning unfamiliar music or through creative composition. While young people enjoyed learning music that they already recognised and enjoyed, evidence suggests that this initial engagement with familiar music is a stepping stone to a child/young person's exploration of new and previously unheard musical genres and styles. In the words of one young person (Paul, age 15, CS2SC2), 'like it won't hurt, it'll only broaden your musical knowledge', however he was quick to remind me that 'you look forward to your lessons more when you're playing your own music' (ibid).

The self-selection of music by children and young people is by no means a new phenomenon and it has been written about extensively in the context of informal learning in popular music, most notably by Green (2008) and other aficionados of so-called informal learning pedagogy:

*Perhaps the prime factor is that informal learning always starts with music which the learners choose for themselves. Therefore, it tends to be music which they already know and understand, like, enjoy and identify with. This is distinct from most formal educational settings, in which the main idea is to introduce learners to music that they do not already know, and which is usually selected by the teacher.*  
(Green 2008, p.10)

The following vignettes illustrate various contexts where this principle was observed:

#### *Vignette 1.1 Ciara (aged 14), CS2SC2*

Ciara entered the room apologising that she was a little bit late. Martin, the musician, told her 'not to worry' and closed his notebook where he had been transcribing lyrics from a YouTube clip for the young guitar player who had had his lesson moments before. Martin intended giving these to the other young musician at next week's class. Ciara sat down and Martin began to tune her guitar for her, while cordially catching up on any news that Ciara had. Only a minute or two had passed when Martin asked Ciara if there was any song in particular that she would like to learn. Ciara immediately took her phone out to play, from YouTube, Bastille's *Pompeii*. 'I love it', Ciara said, and held up her phone so that they each could listen. Already familiar with the song, Martin almost immediately began to work out the song's key, chord shapes, and general structure so that he could adjust it to meet Ciara's needs and begin the process of 'working through it' with her.

#### *Vignette 1.2 Sarah (aged 16, guitar) and Dean (aged 17, bass guitar), CS3SC3*

Sarah (guitar) and Dean (bass) were taking part in an instrumental programme which happened each week on a double decker bus which had been transformed by Music Generation into a purposively designed teaching and performance space. The bus, parked in the carpark of a local music centre – a partner organisation of the MEP – was just a short walk from their school. A focus group interview with Sarah and Dean's young colleagues took place about six weeks into their ten-week programme. During the interview, Sarah and Dean clearly ascribed value and importance to the way in which the musicians allowed them to choose both instruments and musical material.

*Sarah: Well in a way they [the musicians] give us a choice about what we want to learn they're not telling us to actually learn something...*

*Dean: Like they're not forcing songs on us that we don't want to learn...*

*Sarah: And they're not forcing an instrument on us either...*

Sarah explained that the element of choice impacted on how she approached learning in her guitar lesson in contrast to a classroom context. During her 'interesting and fun' guitar lessons, she described how she took more responsibility for her learning. In school however, she relied on the classroom teacher to guide and direct her learning and explained that "here [in school], you'd be inclined to ask the classroom teacher 'what do I do now and how do I do it?' And even if you did something online they'd [school teachers] give out to you". Having the ability to choose therefore led Sarah to a greater sense of ownership, relevancy, and increased motivation.

This principle of the active dialogical approach would seem to be embedded across this particular MEP. In the context of another of its programmes, the ambition of one musician was to 'give [children] an opportunity to study [music] whether it's vocal tuition... singing their pop songs, or classical training, orchestral music, rock, jazz, whatever they want to study' and to 'try and get the creativity going in them... with the type of music that they're interested in as opposed to putting upon them... we want them to shine'. Resonating with this sentiment, the MEP coordinator was recorded as saying:

*On the first day we divided them based slightly on age but also by style... there was a group of children who wanted to play hip-hop, there was a group who wanted to go down the heavy metal route, we had some more drawn to the acoustic, folksy side, and so the groups formed quite naturally, and we had the tutors to put with them who were skilled in those areas.*

*(MEP coordinator)*

### *Vignette 1.3 Celine (age 16), CS2SC2*

Celine entered the room where her lesson took place each week with Martin. Before long, she was settled down with Martin and working through some of the difficulties that she said she had experienced with the previous week's song, Passenger's *Catch in the Dark*. Afterwards, she took out her iPod to play another of Passenger's songs that she wanted Martin to help her to learn. In a later focus group, Celine explained to me that during her initial lessons she was 'just naming the song that we do, but then I started bringing in my iPod'. Celine loved to sing, and often sang at a local open mic night, and her main motivation for learning the guitar was that she could accompany herself on guitar.

Celine's keen interest to learn guitar ultimately resulted in the school's music teacher contacting Music Generation to enquire whether or not a programme could be established. Subsequently, the classroom teacher collaborated with the musician to develop the programme. In a focus group with Celine's fellow school mates, she described how important it was for her to be able to choose to learn the guitar, rather than a woodwind instrument that she could have otherwise learned from a peripatetic musician who was also visiting the school.

*Well I always wanted to learn how to play the guitar and then I kept asking Ms Sweeney [the music teacher in the school] because they already had woodwind classes and piano classes in the school and stuff but they didn't have guitar. So, I kept asking Ms Sweeney was she getting someone in to do guitar lessons and then she finally got someone in so then I started doing that.*

*(Celine, age 16, CS2SC2)*

As well as being attracted to a particular instrument, Celine was also drawn to a particular style of music. Her enjoyment of learning music was heightened by the fact that she was given the opportunity to learn within a style of music that she already listened to and was familiar with:

*Well everyone has their different styles of music that they like, and I think that people would have more fun if they're playing in a style of music that they like, that they're being taught, and it makes them enjoy their instrument more. If they can play the songs that they listen to it makes it easier to learn if you know the song... you know... so you can play it. If you've played a song that you've never heard before it's harder to catch on to it.*  
(Celine, age 16, CS2SC2)

Celine's emphasis on the importance of 'choice' reflects the thoughts of the other young people involved in the programme, one of whom 'picked up the guitar because it goes nicely with singing' and another who 'just wanted to learn something instead of strings'. Celine also contrasts her perspective on 'choice' in an instrumental lesson to her experience of music as a curricular subject, and her thoughts closely align with those of Sarah and Dean (Vignette 1.2), from a different MEP:

*With music [as a curricular subject], like with any subject, the course is set so you have to come to class and you have to do this, but in the guitar lessons you can go in with any song that you want and he will teach you it.*  
(Celine, age 16, CS2SC2)

Jo also alluded to this aspect of 'choice' where she said that:

*I wasn't really interested in the music side [as a curricular subject]. I just liked guitar. Like classical music, I wasn't really interested in that, it just didn't click with me.*  
(Jo, age 17, CS2SC2)

Both Celine and Jo spoke about the sense of freedom that comes with being able to make your own decisions. Contrastingly, they also spoke about the sense of freedom that is lost when they are meeting 'someone else's expectations' especially in the context of 'set' performance exams:

*I think that's probably why people stop playing instruments when they're young because they're told what they have to play and they've no choice... like choices in what they get to play, and I think that they get bored of it when they're younger because they're being told what to play [...] If you choose to do exams then fair enough, then you have to like... learn set pieces... but when your parents decide 'oh no, I don't want them doing exams' then they should be allowed to have the freedom to then... make their own decision.*  
(Celine, age 16, CS2SC2)

*When you're given the 'set thing' and then the next thing you're given something else, and, there's no freedom in it. Like, maybe you might learn something different to what somebody else thinks that you should be learning like a set structure on someone else's thoughts on music but like you might not be suited to that or you might... that mightn't encourage you... like when kids take up an instrument and they hate it for years until they kind of understand it more maybe that's because there's someone else's expectations of what they should be able to do and they're given like exams on pieces that they should learn and play like this.*  
(Jo, age 17, CS2SC2)



### 5.10.2. Valuing and building relationships

Observations were made where musicians conscientiously sought to strike a balance between operating in an 'educating' role and a more 'caring' role where personal relationships could be established and nurtured. These musicians placed value on building personal relationships and establishing a sense of mutual trust and collegiality with the children and young people. One MEP partner described how important it was for musicians to have considerable empathy in their dealings with children and young people. In her particular community context, she explained, the musician as well as the physical environment often becomes a 'safe space' for children and young people. Nurturing this safe space depended largely on the relationship that was developed between the musicians and the children and young people. Insights from the musicians' focus group also highlighted the value that musicians place on nurturing secure and safe environments for children, particular in early-years settings. Engaging with children and young people in this way took energy, commitment, and time in environments where 'time' was often a resource in limited supply. Smaller groups or one-to-one lessons were typically conducive to building relationships with children and young people. The musician(s) who valued this principle sought to: 1) acknowledge the everydayness of children's lives beyond the music lesson; 2) ensure that children and young people felt that they were being listened to<sup>39</sup>; 3) respect children and young people as 'knowing' individuals who brought life-experience into the music lesson; 4) communicate to children and young people their understanding of them as complex and interesting fellow human beings; and 5) resist the hierarchy or relations of 'power' which can sometimes define teacher-student type relationships. This sense of mutuality and reciprocity had a positive impact on the musical experience of children and young people, and led to a degree of openness in music lessons and workshops where children and young people felt that they could ask questions and progress at their own pace within a friendly and caring environment.

The following vignettes illustrate various contexts where this principle was observed.

#### *Vignette 2.1 Sarah (age 16) and Dean (age 17), CS3SC3*

Dean met Gabriel (the musician) on the upper level of the double decker bus where his music lesson was to take place. Gabriel asked Dean how he has been keeping since he saw him last, and Dean told Gabriel about a gig that he had been to see at the weekend. They had a chat about the band that was playing, and discussed what they liked most about the band's music. The conversation flowed between the two of them for a few minutes, and they spoke about the weekend, school, and eventually settled on the task at hand – Dean's song from the previous week. Dean explained that he found one part of it a little difficult, and he began to play it for Gabriel.

At the same time, Sarah was downstairs on the bus with Owen (the other musician), and a similar rapport had developed between musician and learner since the programme began.

In a focus group, both Dean and Sarah highlighted the importance of these relationships and comradery that developed. Dean described how his relationship with Gabriel was different to what he was already familiar with in a school classroom context, and inferred that the positivity of musicians facilitating this programme was affirming for him as a fledgling musician.

39 The importance of children and young people feeling that they were being listened to and musicians communicating that 'I hear you' was emphasised by several musicians who participated in the musicians' focus group.

*Like if you're in a classroom it's just... like you've been in a classroom your whole life... we'd already have that feeling in a classroom that you're the teacher and we're the students. But over there it feels more like, friends I suppose... That's the thing they [the musicians] are very positive... they'll always... Gabriel [the bass player] makes me feel like I'm the best bass player in the world [laughs]!*  
(Dean, age 17, CS3SC3)

Sarah also described how the 'teacher vs. student' contradiction of which Freire (1970) speaks is dissolved in her guitar lesson, and that she perceived the nature of her relationship with Owen as being on a friendship footing. While this was the case, Sarah simultaneously acknowledged Owen's role as a 'musician-educator' who had the patience to support her learning at an appropriate pace:

*We're also seen equally in there as well, like, they don't see themselves there as teachers. If you can't do something, they're not like 'you just have to keep learning'. They're like, 'you'll get it eventually, don't worry'. They're not telling you 'just keep doing it, keep doing it'. [...] They're like, 'don't worry you'll get it eventually'.*  
(Sarah, age 16, CS3SC3)

### Vignette 2.2 (Musicians' Focus Group) CS3SC2 and CS3SC3

At a focus group (n=7) which included Owen and Gabriel (see Vignette 2.1) as well as other musicians who facilitate workshops across two subcases, the topic of building relationships with children and young people arose. All musicians were heavily involved in facilitating community-based programmes for young teenagers, and a number of the other musicians described how 'engagement' and building relationships was of utmost importance:

- Sara: *I just think that most of the programmes that I'm involved in... I just think that if you get engagement out of them at all it's something... for a lot of the programmes...*
- Alex: *I mean a lot of the work that we do would be in diversion sort of stuff as well . . . I mean so that's everything to those kids you know*
- Brian: *Just for them to build up a relationship with an adult is a big thing*
- Joseph: *That's a crucial part of it – I think that it's nearly as important as any...*
- Alex: *It's got almost nothing to do with music nearly at all!*
- Brian: *They're saying 'these guys aren't so bad like... these old people aren't too bad', you know.*
- Joseph: *That I can relate to them and they can relate to me...*

### Vignette 2.3 Ellen (aged 17), CS2SC2

Since the instrumental programme began, Martin built up a friendly rapport with Julie and the rest of her fellow schoolmates. Each week, Julie (guitar and vocals) met with Martin for a one-to-one lesson and on entering the room, a conversation would almost immediately strike up, initiated by Martin. He usually asked about her day, her weekend, almost always a topic of conversation removed from the later focus of the music lesson. Martin seemed to take a genuine interest in the lives and welfare of the entire group, and he later revealed that this was a conscious strategy on his part to connect with the young people. This effort was not lost on Julie, and she remarked that 'he's a lot more personal... like he's not sitting behind a desk or something... he's right beside you and he's friendly and he'll ask about the weekend'. Julie valued the informal nature of their relationship and she connected this informality with the ease at which she could begin to learn the guitar in this context.

*It's almost like there's no formality... you like go in and you say hello and it's all fine and everyone's happy and then you start learning in the same easy-goingness that you like walked in and had your little conversation in.*

*(Ellen, age 17, guitar, CS2SC2)*

### **5.10.3. Open-ended discovery: music that children and young people create**

An active dialogical approach included opportunities for children and young people to engage in creative and open-ended musical discovery. The intention of musicians who informed this principle was for creative and exploratory composition to be led by the children and young people themselves and guided 'at arm's length' by the musician(s). While open-ended discovery may seem haphazard and unstructured from an outsider's perspective, musicians who facilitated such music-making encounters had a clear vision of where they wished to guide the children and young people over the course of a music lesson/workshop. This approach was observed across a number of contexts described below, and was an approach particularly valued when working with younger children. One focus group musician pointed out the pertinence of open-ended discovery for very young 'playschool' children, but the role of facilitating such exploration with older children and teenagers should not be lost:

*I think that at that age (early-years) they are so inquisitive and they're so ready to explore and see you know... even when you go into a playschool you do so much with them but they're open to everything.*

*(Aileen, piano teacher)*

Musicians established parameters – often in consultation with the children and young people – and worked collaboratively towards creating a piece of music, a song, or even a soundscape. Environments where open-ended musical discovery was observed were highly conducive to children and young people constantly questioning the musicians and themselves – this of course aligns with the CPME approach. Open-ended musical discovery of this kind was observed across various contexts – community settings, early childcare settings, primary school settings, etc. – and was employed by musicians to achieve particular meaning-making outcomes for children and young people. Therefore, rather than being associated with any particular musical genre or style, it was the philosophical and ideological grounding of the musician, as well as their expertise in facilitating such encounters, that determined whether or not this approach was employed.

Whether or not musicians were successful in this approach depended on several factors, including: musicians' relevant experience and expertise; a willingness to stray from the 'safety net' of a more structured pedagogical approach; the size and age range of the group involved; the openness and willingness of the group to engage with the process; the value placed on a creative composition approach by others (including classroom teachers, coordinators, other musicians, etc.).

Open-ended discovery allowed children and young people to explore and discover music-making on their own terms. An active dialogical encounter facilitated in this way: 1) was informed to the greatest extent possible by the ideas and input of children and young people themselves; 2) enabled conversation to occur during the process between children and young people, and between children and young people and the musician(s); 3) valued children and young people's voices and communicated this to participants; 4) challenged the children and young people musically and developed skills to meet those challenges; and crucially 5) provided pathways for children and young people to shape and determine their own learning.

#### 5.10.4. Musician in role as learner (musician as participant, as co-investigator)

As well as performing in the role of ‘musician-educator’, musicians engaging in an active dialogical approach were also open to learning in these contexts. They welcomed the opportunity of following the lead of children and young people away and straying from their normal ‘comfort zone’. To borrow from Freire’s (1970) phrase – they embraced their role as co-conspirators in dialogue with children and young people. While musicians were acutely aware of their role as ‘tutor’ or ‘facilitator’, the music lesson or workshop took on a quality of being a place where knowledge and ideas were exchanged, rather than passed on from ‘teacher to student’. The musician was then not perceived as someone who possessed all the musical knowledge with a responsibility of passing on this knowledge, but rather someone who could learn as well as teach.

#### 5.10.5. Child and young person in role as ‘teacher’

Children and young people in active dialogical contexts had the opportunity to transition from the role of learner to that of ‘teacher’ or ‘more experienced person’. Where this occurred, children and young people assumed the role of ‘teacher’ with fellow children and young people or with the musician. Often a subtle or momentary transition during a music lesson or workshop, it was facilitated by musicians who had an awareness of, recognised, and valued the meaning-making potential of allowing children and young people to share expertise and teach one another. This happens frequently in participatory contexts but in a dialogical context, the musician had the intuition to ‘step back’ and allow this type of learning to occur.

#### 5.10.6. Flexible in approach and pedagogical strategy

Flexibility means not being constrained by the ideals of one particular approach or pedagogical strategy, but instead and where appropriate, it means drawing from a range of approaches. This principle was informed by those instances where musicians were observed shaping their pedagogical approach to the particular needs of the children and young people rather than any ideology. In these instances, children and young people’s meaning-making and sustained engagement in music was the ultimate goal. One focus group musician (Paul, guitar player and singer) attributed his early engagement with music to the fact that his shyness as a child was addressed through being given an opportunity to learn the guitar in a one-to-one context. While this may not be feasible in many Music Generation contexts, it serves to highlight the fact that children and young people have particular emotional needs which must be addressed if they are to continue engaging in music.

*My whole thing was that I was too shy and my parents wanted me to play an instrument because I loved music but I was too shy and the idea of going into a group was the most horrible thing in the entire world... as in ‘I’m not going in there, no way’. And then I got a one-on-one with my teacher so it was brilliant... and even to get me to do that was a huge deal because I just wouldn’t do anything.*  
(Paul, guitar player/singer/guitar teacher)

A flexible approach can also be informed by a musician’s individual style, with one focus group musician describing how the coordinator of her MEP had encouraged musicians facilitating an early-years music programme to look to their own experience and strengths when designing the programme:

*Our coordinator’s idea from the beginning was that we wouldn’t use a set syllabus, that we’d all come from our own angle... that we would use our instruments as kind of our... to try and get our main strengths... whether you were a traditional harpist or classical flautist.*  
(Joan, flautist/early-years musician)

A flexible pedagogical approach resists a ‘one size fits all’ approach and musicians instead exhibit a ‘pedagogical reflex’ where they can embrace and draw from a diversity of methods as required ‘in the moment’. This ability to choose from a range of approaches is arguably a musician’s response to the way in which children and young people are encouraged to constantly question in active dialogical contexts. One young musician, when asked about the traits of an effective teacher, remarked that ‘you can ask him whatever you want and he’ll show you in his own time’ (Paul, age 15, CS2SC2). The flexible approach is also appropriate given that several young members of one focus group (CS2SC2) indicated that they each preferred to learn in different ways – through listening, notation, observation and demonstration, etc. One young person revealed how a musician’s flexible pedagogical approach had opened up a whole new musical world for her and this had broadened her musical knowledge:

*He’s so good at helping you at other things... like you were there when he brought me into the piano and made me play a scale and do like... composing... even though that was nothing to do with guitar... it like... helps... like I went home and started doing that as well... and it just... broadens my musical knowledge...*  
(Ellen, aged 15, CS2SC2)

Another young person remarked that ‘he gives the notes and then you can look at them and follow it... it’s not just like ‘do this and remember it’ (Amelie, age 16, CS2SC2). In the setting where these young people were learning guitar, I observed how the musician attuned to the particular needs and interests of different groups of young people over the course of one day, and adjusted his pedagogical plan accordingly. I later learned that the musician’s flexibility had led to the young people experiencing that aforementioned ‘sense of freedom’ which came from making decisions and having a say in determining their own course:

Celine: *But you can give him your opinion easy too like... say you don’t like a certain way and you say... some teachers you’d just be afraid to say... ‘Actually I don’t like that, can I do it a different way?’. But, like with him it’s grand.*

Researcher: *So could you say anything to him?*

Paul: *Yeah you could ask him could you change some part of it and he’d let you... he’d change it...*

Researcher: *And what does that feel like to have that... to be able to make those decisions in music? Can you put words to it?*

Paul: *It’s kind of you have your own freedom to what you want to do...*

Researcher: *Freedom... I like that word... freedom in what you want to do... because someone else could come in and say... ‘This is what we’re doing... learn this for next week... see you next week... grand’. So what does that nice idea of freedom bring...*

Celine: *He has understanding in your musical preferences...*  
(Celine age 16 and Paul age 14, CS2SC2)

This is not to say that ‘anything goes’ – on the contrary. Resonating with the concept of critical diversity and its ‘So what?’ question, a flexible pedagogical strategy is one which musicians employ to effectively engage children and young people in meaningful music-making experiences which support them in striving towards their future possible selves.

Musicians valuing an active dialogical approach across Music Generation’s MEPs were observed employing a range of pedagogical approaches to meet the particular needs of children and young people in dialogical contexts. These musicians were observed working in diverse contexts, from whole class choral ensembles in Louth MEP, to early-years settings in Clare MEP, to small group woodwind lessons in Cork MEP, to rock and pop lessons in Laois MEP. The musicians did not follow a predetermined syllabus

but were led by a flexible pedagogical strategy that required a considerable degree of planning and critical reflection on the part of the musician, before and after music lessons/workshops took place. They shifted between guiding and demonstrating (for example, a tricky technique or unusual rhythm), offering immediate constructive feedback (an important characteristic in supporting children and young people's musical meaning-making, and allowing the children and young people to 'figure it out for themselves'. They transitioned from teaching through notation systems, to focusing on aural awareness, to facilitating peer-teaching, to incorporating movement, to drawing from traditional pedagogical methods such as Orff, Kodály, tonic sol-fa, Dalcroze, and the Suzuki Method. On one occasion, I observed what can only be described as the 'gamification' of learning where a musician teaching woodwind to a group of 'lively' and 'quite easily distracted' young teenagers in Cork MEP employed an innovative and effective approach to increasing the lung capacity of the young musicians – she held a 'stopwatch competition' to determine who could sustain a note for the longest, and it worked.

These diverse pedagogical approaches were accompanied by a heightened sense of enquiry, curiosity, and critical self-reflection. Musicians continually probed their practice for new understandings of how they could better engage with children and young people. They conversed and collaborated with other musicians to exchange ideas, received and offered feedback on what was 'working' and what could be improved upon, and were open to others observing and commenting upon their work. Importantly, this feedback was received by musicians as constructive to their professional development rather than any type of affront to their pedagogical practice. Musicians employing a flexible pedagogy also challenged and questioned their own taken-for-granted processes, and developed multiple ways of engaging with children and young people across contexts. It is akin to an action research process which is 'an orientation to enquiry that seeks to create participative communities of inquiry in which qualities of engagement, curiosity and question posing are brought to bear on significant practical issues' (Reason and Bradbury 2008, p.1).

### 5.11. Dialogical PME: a latent approach

A latent approach to dialogical PME frames a different set of musician intentions which were observed and alluded to by musicians over the course of the investigation. These intentions were of a different shade to those that informed the active strand, and it is proposed that they led to different experiential and thus meaning-making outcomes for children and young people. Together with those encounters that informed the active strand, they interweave to create a diverse tapestry of dialogical PME across Music Generation's MEP landscape.

Included in these latent-leaning contexts were those encounters where musicians approached a programme with predetermined syllabi and musical learning outcomes for children and young people, and an arguably musician-led understanding of what the musical experience of children and young people should be. This is encapsulated in the master-apprentice-esque relationships between musician and children/young people which were observed, and which have informed an understanding of the latent approach to dialogical PME.

The distinction between active and latent dialogical PME can also be understood through the often subtle pedagogical differences between 'delivering' a programme and a more 'facilitative' approach within the active strand. A latent approach included the teaching and transmission of particular musical genres using historically-grounded genre-specific pedagogical methods. It was defined by a more didactic approach to instruction rooted in a prevailing/dominant pedagogical approach and the transmission of musical genres such as Irish traditional music and Western classical music. This often brought with it a musician's emphasis on musical competence and proficiency and learning outcomes such as the development of aural skills, vocal techniques, sight-reading, and learning from a specific body of repertoire.

It is important to stress at this juncture that we should not conceive of each strand – active and latent – and the practice of musicians within each strand, as belonging solely to one strand or another or existing independently of one another. The latent strand does not belong to one type of context and the active to another. While the practice of some musicians did align largely with either the active or latent strand, there were also those musicians who traversed along the spectrum from one strand to another – a dual approach – depending on the meaning-making outcomes which those musicians sought for those children and young people in a music lesson or workshop. On reflection then, one musician could potentially situate their practice firmly on the outermost end of the active-latent continuum, while another could situate their practice at a ‘mid-way point’. This is illustrative of the diversity of what was observed across Music Generation’s MEPs. Therefore, rather than perceiving of latent encounters as belonging to a different category than their active-counterparts, it is more useful to perceive of all encounters as falling along this latent-active spectrum.

A number of principles describe the latent approach to dialogical PME.

#### **5.11.1. Grounding music-making encounters in traditional pedagogical practices**

Across Music Generation’s MEPs, it was observed that a cross-section of musicians employed primarily traditional genre-associated pedagogical practices to achieve musical outcomes for children and young people. Traditional pedagogical practice in this context infers ‘a set of assumptions about how to best impart a certain body of knowledge’ (Shulman 2005, p.3). As a brief illustrative comparison, in the case of a classical strings programme observed (CS1SC2), it was assumed that technical mastery and musical expression was central to the children’s experience and understanding of this ‘body of knowledge’, while it was assumed that those young people involved in a Jazz programme should engage with the conventions of that musical tradition, such as improvisation and group interaction. Traditional pedagogical practices also included instrument-specific pedagogical practices such as those observed on fieldtrips in classical guitar lessons, uilleann pipes lessons, keyboard lessons, and recorder lessons.

Drawing on their own musical backgrounds and professional development as pedagogues, musicians grounded their practice in traditional pedagogical methods such as Suzuki, Kodály, and Dalcroze to achieve these musical goals. Consider for example a violin teacher employing the Suzuki method to teach violin to large groups of children in four schools on a weekly basis, a musician developing an eight-week Kodály-based programme for ‘roll out’ across ten early childcare settings, or a traditional harp player teaching solely ‘by ear’ as she had also been taught as a young musician. What these scenarios have in common is that the pedagogical approaches employed have well-defined and historically-grounded parameters which provide musicians with a ‘safety net’ of tools to develop, structure, and plan for a music lesson/workshop or a series of music lessons/workshops. In those contexts where a musician was observed aligning their practice in this way with a traditional pedagogy, the general understanding communicated by musicians was that such pedagogical approaches were accepted and legitimised by a wider community of musical practice to which the musician belonged. Historically speaking, the pedagogical strategies employed by these musicians have been developed and honed by their respective communities of musical practice for the purpose of achieving primarily musical outcomes for children and young people. This was useful as it allowed a musician or group of musicians within a community of musical practice – be they classical strings players, traditional musicians, choral practitioners, etc. – to work towards broadly similar musical objectives across diverse contexts.

Other musicians reflected on their own pedagogical practice and explained that rather than following a traditional pedagogical approach, they taught as they had been taught themselves.

*I had two brilliant teachers and I was really lucky and that's how I teach... I would like to think that I would teach how I was taught...*

*(Joanne, Violinist/violin tutor, CS1SC2)*

Those musicians whose pedagogical practice was informed wholly or partly by traditional pedagogical approaches often cited their own previous teachers when describing and explaining their approach. For example, a violin teacher (Joanne, CS1SC2) described her first violin teacher's style of teaching, and recalled how his pedagogical style had been influenced by extensive self-directed professional development. Evidently, this was a trait that she deeply admired. Although Joanne recognised that she now delivers the musical 'fundamentals' in a different way to her previous teacher who was 'very strict [and] very old-fashioned in his style', she acknowledged that she now mirrors how she had been taught and that through her approach she is 'trying to get the same message... the same result':

*His style of teaching was very much one-on-one. The teacher took you for an hour a week regardless of whether it was Christmas week, Holy week, summer holidays, whatever week. There was never a holiday unless you were away or he was away and you didn't miss a lesson. And he was brilliant, he was absolutely fantastic... very strict... very old-fashioned in his style. There were no fun games or fun but in a very safe and loving environment you know... if there were more like him [...] And he went to numerous professors, summer schools, he just went to every teacher trainer person anywhere... masterclasses to learn how to do this and perfect it. He read all the books on how to teach the violin... different bowings different styles of bowing... he had studies for absolutely everything. But, the style of teaching nowadays is a bit different but the fundamentals are still the same and I would maybe deliver them in a different way than he did but I'm still trying to get the same message... get the same result. I still use a lot of the repertoire that he would have used... a lot of the exercises.*

*(Joanne, Violinist/violin tutor, CS1SC2)*

These latent pedagogical approaches to dialogical PME differ from active approaches in that they are informed and defined by the ideals of one particular pedagogical approach. Dialogical contexts were observed where the musician's engagement with children and young people were shaped heavily by the pedagogical ideologies associated with particular musical genres. Ultimately, the musicians observed aligned their pedagogical practice with the conventions of particular musical genres to achieve their intention of musical meaning for children and young people.

### **5.11.2. Pre-determined musical outcomes (and musical conventions)**

The nature of the relationship between musicians and children/young people in a cross-section of dialogical contexts was guided primarily by projected musical outcomes which were pre-determined and scaffolded by the musician(s), rather than child/young person-led exploration and discovery of musical meaning. That is, musicians had specific intentions regarding what they wanted young people to achieve. In addition, the pursuit of musical outcomes took precedence over providing conditions for personal and relational meaning-making.

Across a number of MEPs, musicians were observed – including cellists, uilleann pipers, and vocalists – approaching music lessons with an understanding of exactly what they were going to do (that is, teach a particular tune, song, or piece of music), why they were going to teach it a particular way, and how they were going to teach it. Joanne (CS1SC2) explained how her intentions for the music lessons were technique focused from workshop to workshop:



*It would be more or less getting their technique set up so that they have a good technique... then... that it's not in the way of when they want to express themselves. If they have a good technique... and a good style of bowing and a good left hand... if they want to play a phrase it's going to be easier for them to do that so that they're not fighting with left hands or fighting with bow holds... that they can express it. If you have a really bad technique and you're very stiff and tense you can't... you can't play musically.*

*(Joanne, Violinist/violin tutor, CS1SC2)*

While elements of the latent approach to dialogical PME as described in this comment arguably contradict Freire's arguments around the role of banking education (1996/1970), it was often the case the musicians called on children and young people to perform a musical task or specific technique as it should be done correctly. This need to align with certain musical conventions was referred to by a focus group musician (Jean, cello player) who explained that there are some things 'that you have to do when you learn music'. For example, it was observed where musicians demonstrated what they perceived as the correct way to warm up the voice, the correct way to pluck a harp string, and the correct way to strike a drum skin with a drum stick. Conversely, there were observations made in primarily latent-leaning encounters where musicians created space for children and young people to choose what piece of music/tune/song they should learn, thereby bringing an element of agency to a latent-inclined encounter. To understand the reasoning behind each approach, we can look to the meaning-making intentions of the musicians involved, and whether these intentions aligned to a greater degree with musical, personal, or relational outcomes.

During interviews, the general consensus from a number of musicians across various genres was that there are certain expectations – sometimes explicit, often unspoken – embedded in the genre itself regarding what it is should be achieved during a music class, and how it should be achieved. The main motivation behind these conventions was to assist children and young people in gaining the necessary skills so that they could go on to experience musical meaning. These predetermined outcomes centred on technical skills and cognitive-based abilities such as technique, 'playing natural with a lovely style' (Joanne, violinist/violin tutor, CS1SC2), learning to hold an instrument in a certain way, learning to play an instrument in the correct manner, improving learning 'by ear', being able to feel the beat, understanding and precisely following a score, achieving a particular tone from an instrument, learning the exact melody of a tune, and knowing how and when to play with their neighbour (ibid.). They included the essential ingredients of playing an instrument 'the right way' or singing 'correctly' according to particular conventions and generally accepted standards of particular musical genres.

For example, Joanne (CS1SC2) spoke about the 'result' which she wished to achieve for the children participating in the classical strings programme. The question then follows, what was this 'result' that Joanne strove towards for children and young people? Looking at this from a broader dialogical PME perspective, what is the result/outcome that musicians inclined towards a latent approach wish to achieve for children and young people? While Joanne certainly hoped that the children would 'have fun' (personal meaning), 'get on well with one another' (relational meaning), and build a positive relationship with her as musician (relational meaning), I observed that the outcomes which she strived towards and which she encouraged the children to strive towards were ultimately musical in nature. The focus of violin lessons was on technique, learning to hold the bow properly, learning to play in tune, etc. so that the children could 'continue with that nice feeling' where 'poor' technique would not be 'getting in the way'. Acquiring musical skills were of utmost importance and were the primary focus of each lesson. This is in contrast to those musicians with an active-approach inclination, where it could be argued that intentions in music lessons were balanced to a greater degree to include creating conditions for personal and relational meaning-making.

### 5.11.3. Group teaching by perceived musical ability in nature

Latent-leaning dialogical encounters with groups of children and young people were often either implicitly or explicitly grouped by perceived musical ability. This was often a response to the challenges surrounding group tuition encounters and describes the practice of assigning children and young people to smaller groups based on their perceived musical abilities and potential. Given the focus on musical outcomes and musical meaning-making for children and young people in latent dialogical PME contexts, this strategy on a practical level enabled musicians to more effectively musically engage and challenge a group of children/young people. In a classical strings programme that was observed, the musician described how a two-tier 'project' and 'core' group structure facilitated the delivery of two different pedagogical approaches tailored to the needs of the children and young people:

*So, I have eleven children (in the core group), and I think that the other musician has five children who rent the instrument, bring it home, do a bit of practice, and they have a folder and they're learning to read music. Now, the group tuition... the big groups... they tend not to read... it's all by ear or learning the notes. When they go into core tuition... then they start reading.*  
(Joanne, Violinist/violin tutor, CS1SC2)

It also allowed children/young people to experience dialogical PME on par with other young musicians of perceived similar musical ability. For some musicians, it allowed them to afford children and young people the quality of attention which larger group tuition was not suited to, as Joanne (CS1SC2) alluded to:

*Now, in group teaching you can't get around to everybody as much so you don't get that one-to-one attention... you never know... you know it's up to them really to go home and do their practice and work out whether they're in tune or not... they're not spoon-fed maybe as we were*  
(Joanne, Violinist/violin tutor, CS1SC2)

This move towards ability structuring of groups was observed across diverse contexts. In each context, there was a strong focus on the need to put in place conditions which would most effectively engage children and young people 'where they were at' musically and work towards the musician's pre-determined musical outcomes. For instance, the musician facilitating a large weekly percussion workshop taking place in a post-primary school alluded to the frustration which he felt at not being able to work in a smaller group context with a number of young people who had significantly progressed on their instruments. His aspiration was to work with a smaller group of young people – chosen from the larger group – who he believed were 'showing promise'. The musician explained that there was only so much that he could achieve musically when working with a large group of 20+ young people for an eight-week programme (one hour per week). For example, he could not begin to explore more complex rhythms with the large group given the need for one-to-one attention that this would require. Ability structuring was also observed in a primary school context where a smaller group of children from the larger whole-class group tuition had the opportunity to learn the ukulele. The children in this case expressed the benefits of learning in smaller group sizes.

Joanne (CS1SC2) described a 'pyramid' model where she would teach 'a whole class until you got one at the top' and indicated that this was a common model with the Western classical music tradition. As a strategy of working with large groups of children, smaller groups of children/young people progress from the 'base of the pyramid' up to the next level until 'there's the one or two that maybe choose to do music as a career out of this'. She believed that smaller groups are likely to 'progress better' and explained how the

pyramid model facilitates this:

*If you take the whole class of 30 children, so out of that the following year then... say out of 5th and 6th class eight children continued with their lessons, so we're on to the next level. So when they go into the next year will the eight children continue or will six continue or... until there's the one or two that maybe choose to do music as a career out of this?*

*(Joanne, Violinist/violin tutor, CS1SC2)*

The pyramid model was already in operation in the programme which Joanne was co-delivering, and a 'core tuition group' from the initial larger group had already been established. Joanne explained how the school principal had a role in this:

*Maura has wanted an orchestra... she just loves music and wanted them all to do it. [...] I think that Maura could also see that in the [larger] groups last year there were children that were doing really well... they were really focused... they were looking to get on a wee bit further and there were other children who weren't. I suppose over chats saying 'well could we get them instruments... could we take the instruments home'. So, it was sort of from that... I think that maybe we identified a number of children in the class who we felt would really benefit from having an extra lesson and taking the instrument home and practising... and also some children were really keen to take the instruments home and do this. So, a mixture of all of those things, maybe back in March or April we started to identify who we felt was making really good progress and was maybe starting to overtake some of the other children in the class. [...] So we just identified them and then Maura said we'll get them to rent their violins and I thought she'd get three or four and she got sixteen to rent the violin and have a lesson, out of such a small school.*

*(Joanne, Violinist/violin tutor, CS1SC2)*

This ability structuring of groups addresses the issues which musicians face when working with large groups of children and young people. However, it comes with the caution that all children and young people, regardless of perceived musical ability, have the opportunity to access meaning-making dialogical experiences. Joanne cited 'lack of interest, lack of support from home, learning difficulties, struggling with challenging musical material, and being given an instrument that they are not interested in' as reasons why children and young people may not continue with music tuition and progress 'up the pyramid'. It is vital, therefore, that conditions can be put in place to address what are essentially barriers to meaningful dialogical PME.

### 5.12. Participatory PME

Participatory PME includes those encounters which were strongly characterised by an inclusive and participatory approach to music-making for children and young people. Children and young people's 'way in' to music-making through a participatory framework includes distinct areas that have been called: autonomous participatory PME encounters, on a spectrum of fully- to quasi-autonomous participatory encounters; festive celebratory happenings (FCHs); communities of musical practice (CoMP); and community music encounters (CME).

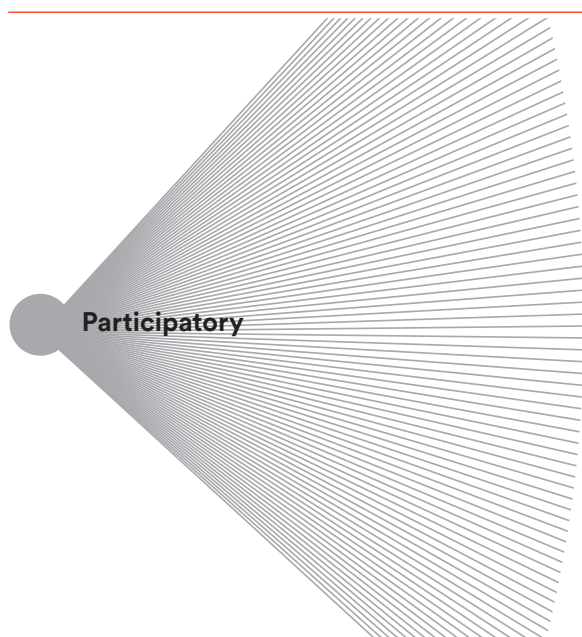


FIGURE 29: Participatory PME Mode

### 5.13. Autonomous participatory PME encounters: Introduction

In contrast to the previously discussed dialogical PME mode which involved the presence of an experienced musician-educator to facilitate children and young people's educative musical engagement, the research observed participatory music-making encounters where children/young people either fully or predominantly-initiated and led their own musical doing. These autonomous participatory PME encounters are a valuable aspect of music learning and of becoming musically independent. They are more prevalent in some genres or contexts than others and occur on what this research describes as a spectrum of fully- to quasi-autonomous participatory encounters. Experiencing music-making in this area of the PME spectrum is highly valuable for children and young people; these encounters nurture a strong sense of musical freedom, agency, and ownership, and they allow children and young people to experience meaning in music on their own terms.

Over the course of the research, observations and interviews revealed that children and young people took the initiative and were greatly enthusiastic, motivated, and resourceful in organising and creating spaces and opportunities – jams, sessions, and hangouts – where they could engage in highly participatory music-making and associated peer-learning away from the guidance, direction, and oversight of a facilitating musician(s). It was also the case that musicians in some contexts helped to create and sustain the conditions whereby children and young people could experience such participatory music-making on their own terms. That is, there were provisions put in place in order for these types of quasi-autonomous encounters to happen. These are important discoveries to acknowledge, as they unearth and identify other participatory ways in which children and young people meaningfully engage with music-making across Music Generation's infrastructure.

While some autonomous encounters noted during this research were carefully and strategically embedded within programmes by musicians, many others were relatively hidden phenomena that were generally unplanned for and occurred on the periphery of structured programmes. Moreover, sites which were conducive to autonomous encounters comprised a diversity of informal spaces such as cafés, youth clubs, workshop spaces, community centres, homes, and school classrooms. An important consideration in any future planning is to create an environment conducive to their development and ensure that opportunities are not inadvertently shut down.

Though 'hidden' and often haphazard in occurrence, autonomous encounters were nonetheless found to be considerably potent in terms of meaningfully enhancing the musical worlds of children and young people, and supporting them on the journey towards achieving their future possible selves. Young people in one subcase (CS2SC2) spoke about how these encounters allowed them to be musically creative and experiment on their instruments, as well as allowing them to play 'on par' with peers who may have more or less musical experience. In another subcase (CS2SC1), a young child spoke about how these encounters facilitated his fledgling rock band in preparing for summer concerts.

Examples of children and young people's meaning-making in these autonomous encounters are discussed below, as are the future possible selves which children and young people constructed through these experiences. Such experiences enabled children and young people to: meet and learn how to cooperate with others; build inter-personal relationships; witness the musical progression of other children and young people in a non-threatening environment, and by doing so construct new possible selves; improve on their instruments/voice; extend and deepen their musical experience; grow their personal and musical confidence; perform 'on par' with other children/young people; and take time to explore the musical worlds of others. In these autonomous situations young participants were independently acting and thinking as musicians. A significant finding of the research however was also the type of quasi-autonomous encounters where musicians, in a less formal role than teachers, performed and learned alongside children and young people on an, as it were, 'on par footing'. From these findings, there are implications for the future direction of Music Generation which largely concern ways in which such valuable autonomous experiences for children and young people can be further embedded within MEPs' programming infrastructures.

The research has determined that support for such autonomy is:

- » Physical: planned support (space, resources, an environment conducive to such encounters);
- » Opportune: awareness of and alert to possibilities (at musician, organisation, and partnership-levels). There is a responsibility to ensure that opportunities are not closed down, however well-meaning the intention;
- » Musical: musicians/children/young people need to develop skills and techniques that allow such engagement. Children and young people also need to be consulted in the process to strongly and directly inform the ways in which autonomous encounters are designed.
- » Linked: planning for autonomous encounters should be clearly articulated so that they can be linked to other music-making encounters, to CPD for musicians, and to planned strategic initiatives.

### **5.13.1. Support from the literature for autonomous participatory PME encounters**

The notion of children and young people creating autonomous spaces and opportunities to collectively 'participate' in/with music is certainly not a new phenomenon; in fact, it is considerably common across the practice of many genres and is widely recognised as an important means by which children and young people can meaningfully connect with one another to engage in creative participatory music making and peer-directed learning. Cunha and Lorenzino (2012) describe this type of musical doing as 'collective music-making'. Their investigation into how such collective processes 'stimulate actions, feelings, and thoughts by group members that go beyond the music itself' (p.74) has strong resonance with the meaning-making potential of autonomous encounters outlined in this research. They argue that those social, cultural, cognitive, affective, and physical expressions that occur when people come to make music together might be viewed more as parallel than secondary in nature. This supports the findings of this research where it was found that musical, personal, and relational meaning-making in autonomous encounters<sup>40</sup> are often intricately woven around one another:

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40 This was also the case in terms of meaning-making across those other areas of the PME spectrum.

*Social, cultural, cognitive, affective, and physical expressions that develop naturally as groups interact through music expand the possibilities of learning and human development, and might be viewed more as parallel than secondary in nature [...] The expression of musicality is the main result of learning and playing music; however, being part of a musical group means more than playing together. When musical groups practise they create learning and teaching experiences while simultaneously facing and managing conflict and situations of living together. Playing music with others is therefore a collective action that can generate emotion and stimulate creativity.*  
(Cunha and Lorenzino 2012, p.74)

What then are the 'learning and teaching experiences' which children and young people engage with in autonomous encounters? An area to which we can look where these ideas are widely discussed is the rapidly emerging scholarly field of informal music learning practices. Of particular import in this area is the seminal work of Green (1988, 1997, 2008) whose investigation into the informal pedagogical practices of popular musicians helped pave the way for a wave of contributors to the field. Since then, scholarship in the area of informal learning in music has expanded to include and represent a wide range of musical genres. Aspects of Green's original work and the subsequent contributions of others resonate strongly with each type of 'autonomous participatory encounter' – fully-autonomous and quasi-autonomous – identified in this research. For example, Green's principle of informal popular music learning which describes the role of 'self-directed learning, peer-directed learning and group learning' is particularly poignant:

*Informal learning takes place alone as well as alongside friends, through self-directed learning, peer-directed learning and group learning. This involves the conscious and unconscious acquisition and exchange of skills and knowledge by listening, watching, imitating, and talking. Unlike the pupil-teacher relationship in formal education, there is little or no adult supervision and guidance. Along with this, friendship and identification with a social group such as a particular sub-culture or other markers of social identity form an important part in the choice of music to be played. These factors are also central to negotiation over music-making and music-learning practices amongst the members of the band*  
(Green 2008, p.10)

Expanding on the inherent processes of collective music-making amongst children and young people, the role of the guiding musician in participatory encounters across diverse musical genres and contexts has not gone unnoticed in previous research. For example, Westerlund (2006) describes her conception of garage band learning and states that 'in knowledge-building communities, the teacher is a participator and co-learner, a more expert learner' (p.122). Yet, she agrees with Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) who argue that 'the teacher's own knowledge does not limit what is to be learned by the students' (p.211). Gregory (2010) investigates collaborative approaches to music-making in a classical music conservatoire context. While highlighting the role of such collective experiences in conservatoire contexts in leading to people 'expressing themselves creatively', in instilling a sense of ownership and responsibility both in the process and in the final product, and in collectively giving people the 'freedom to interact and to respond intuitively to what is going on around them', he raises concerns as to how far such approaches can be embedded in these contexts:

*How far this potential can be realized within conservatoires, where teaching is still arguably locked into approaches that have evolved out of a nineteenth-century European tradition, remains an intriguing surmise.*  
(Gregory 2010, p.388)

Allsup and Ollson (2012) provide a useful interpretation of this diverse informal learning realm as 'Purposeful, democratic spaces where teachers and students come together, not through the casualties of formalist and informalist ideologies, but through methods of living and learning where plausible human interests and diverse expertise intersect with shared desires' (p.15). They continue that these aspirations 'take many forms, they are not linked to a singular genre or method of instruction; they do not focus wholly on the teacher or exclusively on the student' (ibid.). It is with this view that autonomous encounters are an important consideration across all musical genres, across all musical contexts, and can involve both children/young people and musicians, that the two types of autonomous encounters are introduced.

These scholarly extracts are diverse interpretations of the impact of 'collective music-making' amongst children and young people, the role of the musician in guiding participatory experiences across diverse musical genres and contexts, and the potential of such 'democratic spaces' in bringing children and young people together with musicians to share their musical passions and expertise. Each perspective informs and resonates with my understanding of autonomous participatory encounters for this research. Moreover, they collectively underscore and strongly emphasise the need to support what I have described as 'autonomous participatory experiences' across Music Generation's infrastructure.

#### **5.13.2. Connections with other Performance Music Education modes**

The research revealed that autonomous encounters happen alongside, between and often at the same time as many of the other ways of experiencing PME. It represents one 'shade' of a boarder spectrum of PME through which children and young people pass as they navigate from one mode to another. This type of participatory learning is often hidden, overlooked or misunderstood as just 'messaging about'. However, autonomous participatory encounters, whether quasi- or fully-autonomous, and irrespective of genre, age-group, or context, are potentially meaning-laden encounters for children and young people and are important to acknowledge in terms of their value and importance in supporting children/young people's striving towards their possible musical selves. The following are some examples where this was observed to be the case:

- » in the midst of a dynamic and playful early-years music workshop where the young children were given an opportunity mid-workshop to participate in their own way, semi-guided by early-years music specialist/community musician (active dialogical encounter, quasi-autonomous encounter);
- » in informal practice sessions in the days preceding a group of young teenagers' presentational performance who have been learning guitar from their guitar tutor/professional jazz guitarist (fully-autonomous encounters, presentational performance-as-musician, CS2SC2);
- » when a group of young teenagers spontaneously congregated to try out their new material after their rap workshop with their rap tutor/scratch DJ (active dialogical encounter, fully-autonomous encounter, CS3SC2);
- » when a community musician designed a song-writing workshop in such a way that allowed a group of young teenagers to work by themselves at a mid-point of the workshop (participatory community music encounter, active dialogical encounter, participatory quasi-autonomous encounter);
- » when a group of young traditional musicians gathered in the foyer of the National Concert Hall after performing on stage to have an impromptu session (presentational performance-as-musician, fully-autonomous encounter).

#### 5.14. Fully-autonomous and quasi-autonomous participatory encounters

The following sections take a closer look at the two types of autonomous participatory encounters (fully- and quasi-autonomous) which were revealed over the course of the research. Each type of encounter is illustrated with observations from the research, associated implications are presented, and a number of important themes are articulated. These include: the ways in which autonomous participatory encounters can enhance children and young people's music-making experience across the PME spectrum; the ways in which these music-making encounters can support children and young people in striving towards their possible selves; and the multi-layered role of musicians in these contexts.

##### 5.14.1. Fully-autonomous participatory encounters

Fully-autonomous describes those encounters where children and young people engaged in self-directed participatory performance and/or peer-learning without the guidance or supervision of an experienced musician.

##### Fully-autonomous encounter example

The classroom teacher and young people in one of the subcases (CS2SC2) explained that there was an 'instrument bank room' in the school which the young people involved in the programme could freely access. This room contained guitars, keyboards, a drum kit, small percussion instruments, and a number of other instruments. She explained that the original and continuing purpose of the instrument bank was to support those students in the school who were studying music as a Junior and Leaving Certificate subject. However, all the young people participating in the Music Generation guitar programme were welcome to access these resources. It emerged during interviews with the young people that they regularly used this room to meet and as one young person put it, 'have a jamming session'. The following is a short conversation between Paul, a young musician who played guitar/bass/cajón and his music tutor Martin. In this extract they describe the benefits of having an open and accessible room, where young people of different ages can meet, and experiment with different instruments.

- Paul: *There's a chap in 6th year and we'd literally be down here every lunch-time just playing music*
- Martin: *And playing bass... with the guy on the bass?*
- Paul: *Yeah...*
- Martin: *And the two of them playing bass... that's the great thing about it here isn't it? It's open...*
- Paul: *Exactly...*
- Martin: *And they can just come in and play whenever they've the opportunity...*
- Paul: *And they come in and play different instruments...*

In fact, on entering the school each week to conduct the research, sounds of music-making – young people playing guitars, drums, and singing – would more often than not emanate from the room and down the corridor towards me; the musician facilitating the programme often spoke of the same on his arrival. The classroom teacher who was instrumental in initiating and setting up the programme and partnering with Martin, the musician, highlighted the musical and relational benefits of having a designated space where the young people could meet:

*What some of them do is leave their guitar at home and just play the school's guitar in here for their lesson and then go home and practise on their own guitar [...] We've an instrument bank [in the room] and it's great... it's great. Even the people who have taken the guitar lessons here... they mightn't necessarily all know each other but they're getting to know each other. [They are saying when they meet] 'Oh look what I learned in today's lesson' and 'look what I did'. They're making friends as well.*  
(Stephanie, classroom teacher, CS2SC2)



The young people's responses are also indicative of the personal, musical and relational meaning experienced as a result of having had the opportunity to engage in fully-autonomous encounters. One young person enjoyed the easy-going and 'laid back' atmosphere where there was not a lot of pressure to prepare and perform 'in front of a bunch of people'. Another young person spoke about the fact that in a 'jamming session' they 'all learn off each other' in a way that's 'kind of communal... kind of like connecting'. She explained that, 'when you're jamming you can spend as much time as you want [to spend at it]'. It was also explained that in contrast to a presentational-type performance, the jam session allowed for a different kind of experience:

*With the jam session you can do it anywhere... like... I remember at the Gaeltacht at like lunchtimes we'd just sit around in a circle and like someone would have the guitar and everybody would just sing-along. You can do it anywhere like... a concert you'd have to really prepare and have a place picked... where you're going to have it...*

*(Cora, age 16, CS2SC2)*

Finally, another young guitar player alluded to the musical meaning experienced in 'adding your own little bit which works' in a jamming session. Interestingly, in terms of the value of such autonomous encounters, he went on to explain that in contrast to 'concert' presentational scenarios, jamming sessions provide: a) a place where the young musicians consider each other as musical equals; b) an opportunity to 'join in' with the group and contribute what they are able to musically contribute, c) an opportunity to be musically creative and engage with other young musicians in a way 'that works'.

*And you're all on the same par... like for a concert someone could be obviously better than you because they could be on grade 8 on the violin and you're starting recorder or something whereas in a jam session you're all kind of like... linking... you're adding your own little bit which works... kind of way...*

*(Paul, age 15, CS2SC2)*

Regarding potential implications of these findings, it is worth emphasising that it was largely by chance that this particular school had an available physical space and instrument bank for encounters such as that described; additionally, the classroom teacher and wider school staff was thoroughly involved from the onset in working with the musician in constructive partnership to facilitate this space. Unfortunately, the majority of other subcases observed did not seem to be so well resourced in this respect, and the immense benefits of engaging in musical doing in this way were absent in those other contexts. Imagining the flip of this particularly rich scenario paints a picture where children and young people do not have access to such musically creative and musically meaningful encounters, and they therefore miss out on opportunities to engage meaningfully in music across the full spectrum of ways. Furthermore, considering the wider research context, interviews and focus group conversations across all subcases indicates that experiencing music-making in this way is largely restricted to young people who have the motivation and capacity to pursue such opportunities. For example, those subcases whose participants were of a younger age group did not, insofar as was possible to ascertain, have access to instruments or a suitable space to explore music-making in this way from one week to the next. There is then a role for those at individual and local level partnerships to 'step in' and nurture children and young people's motivation and ensure that access is provided to appropriate guidance, spaces, and instruments.

One could conclude from these findings that children and young people are significantly empowered when they have the opportunity to experience agency in fully-autonomous participatory encounters. However, what about those children and young people who do not have the opportunity or capacity to experience such agency in autonomous musical doing? While children and young people in a number of subcases did allude to taking

the initiative in creating the conditions where such fully-autonomous encounters could flourish, what about those who need a little expert guidance and support? What about those who do not have access to their instrument from one week's lesson to the next because it is locked up in a classroom cupboard? What about those whose peers, parents, music tutors, classroom teachers do not place any value on these participatory ways of engaging with music? What about those in a rural three-classroom school with no 'spare room' for jamming and limited local access to an appropriate space? What about those in a direct provision centre where instruments are brought and taken away after each week's workshop? What about the musician who has 40-minutes with a group each week and therefore limited time to focus on setting up this type of musical engagement for the young people? What about the coordinator who has to design a programme which incorporates such meaningful participatory experiences for children and young people and addresses the budgetary/logistical implications of such diverse and responsive programming? What about those who cannot afford an instrument to bring to the local youth centre or home to play with friends?

#### *Considerations for Music Generation*

How then can Music Generation ensure that these opportunities are not lost on a cohort of young musicians? There are several implications for how such experiences can be nurtured and facilitated for children and young people as they simultaneously navigate various other areas of the three PME modes.

*Raising awareness:* Undoubtedly, partnerships at local and individual levels can play an important role in creating those conditions which ensure that children and young people have sustained opportunities to experience this area of the broad PME spectrum. In the first instance, bringing an awareness of these types of encounters to those conversations where programmes are initially designed is crucial.

*Embedding conditions for autonomous encounters at planning stages:* At the initial planning stages, consultation between coordinators and musicians and other local/individual partners can ensure that the necessary conditions for autonomous encounters are embedded within responsive programmes. This would communicate to all concerned that autonomous encounters are valid, valuable, and critical ways in which children and young people's meaning-making in music can be supported.

*Revisiting to maintain position and relevance:* Responsive programme strategies that are agreed upon should be revisited at pertinent points during a programme's implementation. This would ensure that fully-autonomous encounters have maintained their position and relevance within the programme.

*Sustained local partnership-building:* In many instances, there are 'hidden' spaces in rural locations/villages/towns/cities which would suitably facilitate children and young people meeting to make music. These spaces can be revealed and made suitable through sustained local partnership-building

*The voices of children and young people:* In addition, children and young people themselves can be a valuable way of illuminating this rich local knowledge, and the importance of consulting the voices of children and young people for these and other reasons cannot be overly emphasised.

#### **5.14.2. Quasi-autonomous participatory encounters**

Quasi-autonomous, as the name suggests, describes those autonomous encounters where children and young people engaged in self-directed participatory performance and/or peer-learning with 'light touch' guidance and supervision from an experienced musician.

Unsurprisingly, quasi-autonomous encounters are closely related to those previously discussed fully-autonomous encounters. There is an important distinction however in that a musician – or musicians – in creating the conditions for autonomous encounters to occur, would intentionally participate to some extent in guiding and shaping the participatory music-making activities of children and young people. This has implications for musicians' practice in terms of a) their willingness to engage in facilitating music-making in this way, b) their knowledge and expertise in being able to facilitate music-making in this way, and c) the support they receive in order to facilitate music-making in this way.

It was recognised by one MEP coordinator that in such participatory musical encounters, 'a different type of learning happens' to that in traditional teaching and learning contexts. In the following quote, he explains the challenge of sensitively putting supporting conditions in place without it looking like too much effort has gone into organising and structuring the experience for children and young people.

*A different type of learning happens... It's very hard to get right [...] If you try to structure it and create it too cleverly you'll just kill it [...] It's a weird thing to try and create because if it looks like it's trying to be created, you've lost it. You have to sort of organically create and put everything into place... and we've had that... where it's been created that way around.*  
(MEP coordinator)

A number of those musicians who helped to facilitate such experiences for children and young people expressed their strong belief in the musical and interpersonal benefits which they felt that such encounters led to for children and young people. They also commented upon the great deal of forward planning and reflection which was required to ensure that the desired experiential outcomes – musical, personal and relational – were achieved for children and young people.

#### *Quasi-autonomous encounter example*

Musicians were observed facilitating such experiences for children and young people in numerous contexts. For example, in an early-years music context, the musician was observed strategically 'handing back' ownership and direction of the musical activities to the young children, so that they could continue and sustain music-making in a semi-self-determined fashion. In the context of early-years music, these moments have been described by Young (2003) as a 'semi-guided music play' (p.72). Young describes her observations of an early-years music specialist who prioritised 'an enabling of the participation of the group', and who in effectively facilitating rather than actively leading the group, made herself 'productively redundant' (ibid. pp.74-76).

There were a number of other examples of quasi-autonomous encounters observed across the subcases and referred to in conversations with children/young people and musicians. One in particular is illustrated in this section.

In the multi-instrumental programme which took place in a community hub (CS3SC2), the development of an innovative music café initiative was spoken about by a centre coordinator as well as the MEP coordinator; this initiative which involved the 'light touch' oversight of musician mentors resonates with the 'quasi-autonomous encounter' concept. Joseph, a hub coordinator, explained that before the Music Generation-funded instrumental programme commenced, it was 'already in the air' to set-up a music café 'hang out space' where children and young people would have the opportunity to go in-between their music lessons and 'just be'. He explained that when the additional funding stream for their instrumental programme 'really got things moving', there was then the

potential to create ensembles. Such a hangout space, he said, could be used to support 'ensembles that not only perform but teach each other'.<sup>41</sup> What we can see here is that the original thinking behind establishing this space was to support fully-autonomous encounters, where young people could hangout between lessons, however – and as we will see – this thinking was to evolve and move towards considering the potential of a quasi-autonomous space. According to Joseph, the quasi-autonomous space was to have all the qualities and benefits of the fully-autonomous space, but with the added benefit of having an experienced musician-mentor 'on site' to appropriately guide the young musicians in their musical endeavours.

### *Imagining the possibilities: from 'living room vibe', to mentored music sessions, to community ownership*

In discussing his motivations for setting up such a café-style performance space, one could deduce that Joseph's own personal experience as a young musician informed the 'possible selves' which he had in mind for those children and young people who would benefit from the space. The following quote which concludes with an insight into Joseph's vision of a 'mentored' participatory space for children and young people, also supports a number of those points which have previously been made regarding the benefits of fully-autonomous encounters. Firstly, Joseph emphasises how his vision of a 'living room vibe' space could allow children and young people to interchangeably play with and learn from one another, and secondly, he describes how such an experience could support learning after a 'formal lesson' – or in the context of this research, how a fully-autonomous encounter could occur after a dialogical encounter.

*This comes back to what... an idea that we spoke about when we were discussing getting the whole programme off the ground [...] When I was growing up, I went to music lessons but I had a family situation where we played music at home. I had friends who would come to our house or we'd go to their house and we'd all play music. And if you don't have that 'living room vibe' of people playing and hanging around teaching each other... vocal lines... teaching each other different lines on their instruments... playing in harmony instinctively and getting those things off the ground, it's very hard to learn informally after your formal lesson. And so, the idea that you'd have... in the case of my upbringing my mum would teach us different lines of harmony after we'd had our music classes... and so we could go in we could sing and play together, and that's just one model. Some of my friends didn't have that but they could teach me things and I could learn from them, and it was perfectly acceptable to be playing music and I don't know why, but to a degree, I think it's less... I don't know if people don't go to people's houses so much or...*

*But then, the idea that [in] that space... that café [...] you could bring your instruments there... you could show you friends or the other children that are hanging out there what you learned [and] they could show you what they learned. And again, it's not as difficult to do once you have the space but just to have at least one person there who would encourage them to play together, and we could bring mentors in...*

*(Joseph, Programme Coordinator/Musician at Community Hub, CS3SC2)*

### **Considerations for Music Generation**

There are important learnings that can be deduced for Music Generation:

- » Valuable peer-learning occurs in fully-autonomous encounters; hence these types of encounters should be nurtured and supported at local level, as previously argued;

<sup>41</sup> This point reveals the 'added value' role of partnership in enabling new things to happen beyond what is already happening. This is discussed further in Section 6: An ecological model of partnership for Music Generation.

- » The learning that occurs in fully-autonomous encounters can support the music learning which occurs in active/latent dialogical PME contexts. Therefore, responsive programmes which embed a wide range of ways for children and young people to engage with music-making should be designed and implemented;
- » Encouraging the proliferation of fully-autonomous encounters can 'normalise' music-making in community contexts. Such an ambition strongly aligns with Music Generation's Mission Statement of creating a 'vibrant local music community' and priority of engaging with the community in ways which 'will support local ownership and sustainability';
- » Quasi-autonomous musician-mentored encounters are potentially highly motivational situations where those children/young people who may not yet have the self-determination and self-motivation to engage in fully-autonomous music-making can be supported.

#### *Quasi-autonomous encounters leading to and preparing for presentational performance-as-musician encounters*

In expanding on his vision for the café, Joseph outlines how it could function as a safe and judgement-free environment where performing 'would start to happen very naturally' for children and young people. Joseph also highlights how an opportunity to perform in such an informal context could lead to and prepare children and young people for performing in more 'formal' contexts, thereby increasing a child or young person's musical confidence. As he explains, 'they would be performing but not really performing'. This understanding of quasi-autonomous encounters as potentially leading to and preparing for those occasions where children and young people perform in presentational performance-as-musician encounters aligns with how the research interprets quasi-autonomous encounters as being but one 'shade' along a spectrum of possible encounters with music-making. Finally, Joseph reveals his ambition of linking in with similar spaces that are already in the city – in other words, propagating new local partnerships to achieve the goal of creating quasi-autonomous music-making encounters for children and young people.

*My idea about the youth café is that you'd have a couple of instruments there that would be fixtures, like, let's say a piano or a couple of mics and maybe a few guitars, violins... maybe some kind of percussion where people could jam and play. The idea would be that performance would start to happen very naturally... that they would be performing but not really performing... that they would be learning from each other and then when they came to things like formal performance they'd realise that they'd done a lot of it already in a safe, and very judgement free environment, because if there's one thing that I've noticed it's that a lot of young people when they come in they're quite competent but as soon as it comes to playing in front of other people it's like 'oh no, I couldn't do that'. And sometimes you're looking at someone and you'd say they are beyond competent and they somehow have this issue with playing in front of other people and I would see what we're doing here as something that could tie in with spaces that are already in the city. I've never been in the [names local Youth Club] but I hear that it's very popular with young people and they're open to things like this where you could have open mic nights in a non-alcohol environment... a very positive environment with family. And family mightn't be the right word because lots of young people don't want to see their parents... they don't want parents in there but peers are really what they're after. And, it's also the opportunity to hangout and I suppose impress each other.*  
(Joseph, Programme Coordinator/Musician at Community Hub, CS3SC2)

### Considerations for Music Generation

There are a number of implications which can be drawn from this for Music Generation.

- » Effective spaces which facilitate quasi-autonomous encounters should be ‘owned’ by the children and young people themselves, and not artificially set-up spaces removed from where children and young people would normally ‘hang out’;
- » These spaces need to be resourced sufficiently – i.e., a sufficient number of instruments for the number of young people usually present, and resourced appropriately – for example, there would be little sense in resourcing a space with banjos and bodhráns if it was clear that the young musicians were more interested in drums and bass guitars;
- » Although the musician-mentor has a critical guiding role to play in quasi-autonomous encounters, every opportunity should be given to children and young people themselves to initiate and lead music-making in these contexts. It is suggested that such a strategy would enhance children and young people’s capacity to construct musical, personal, and relational meaning in these contexts;
- » Once the conditions for quasi-autonomous encounters have been effectively setup in one physical space, there are potential opportunities to setup, if not replicate, these conditions in other local spaces. On the part of the coordinator, musicians, and others, this necessitates a constant ‘seeking out’ and nurturing of local partnerships to identify suitable spaces and ultimately create an ecosystem wherein these types of encounters can thrive.

### Supporting a constellation of possible selves:

What is particularly striking about Joseph’s musings is that they are rich in visions of children and young people’s future possible musical, personal, and relational selves; from experiencing the musical highs of performing for other people, to building personal confidence and feeling safe and unjudged, to building relationships with other young people. In the following quote, he describes how a musician in a quasi-autonomous context can give an opportunity to children and young people to ‘open their eyes to different genres’ and ‘expand their musical interests’. When this happens, he explains, ‘the doors open for them... just a little bit ajar’:

*You can open their eyes to different genres. It’s amazing to see how many children expand their musical interests in terms of genre and they start playing things... like I’ve seen it here where they might start playing Irish music and they’ve never played Irish music in their lives they thought it was crap and then they find that it’s great fun, you know. You know, that sort of buzz you get and all it takes for that to happen is to get the opportunity to do it! You know, you see some guy playing electric guitar who only wants to play electric guitar, and he doesn’t just want to play electric guitar, he wants to play heavily distorted black metal Scandinavian, if possible... all those speed tricks and all those arpeggios and all them they’re perfectly applicable in here... and then they start to see the crossover... and the doors open for them... just a little bit ajar.*

*(Joseph, Programme Coordinator/Musician at Community Hub, CS3SC2)*

Joseph draws a potential connection between children and young people’s quasi-autonomous encounters and their engagement in ‘joint projects’ in these contexts to ‘impress each other’ and encourage one another towards achieving their future possible selves. These are salient examples of how quasi-autonomous encounters can support children and young people in the expansion and pursuit of their possible selves. In addition, they further emphasise the importance of accommodating these types of encounters in any MEP’s responsive programming strategy.

*'A light touch': The multi-layered role of the musician in quasi-autonomous encounters*

Joseph described the 'light touch' role of the musician in quasi-autonomous encounters and cautioned that it is important to get the right balance in terms of guiding the children 'because you don't want to be too light touch'. He emphasised that these are spaces where a musician can a) collaboratively create and play music with children and young people, b) learn music from and with children and young people that children and young people have chosen themselves, c) motivate and provide direction to children and young people in ways that would 'allow them to develop' and d) have fun with children and young people in the process. He also brought to life the importance of learning and playing music with children and young people to nurture meaningful relationships and accomplish a shared sense of musical achievement. In other words, quasi-autonomous encounters help musicians to co-construct musical, personal, and relational meaning-making with children and young people:

*You can play with them in that environment, you know, you can actually sit down and play with them, and they can teach you things. There's a move further down the line to [...] bring people in who would like to sit down and play with them, or let them play and just give them the kind of 'light touch direction' that would allow them to develop. [...] For example, I may be able to teach something and if they say 'no, I like this song, and this is one that I've been learning'... for example, I may be able to play it after a few minutes... but I may not have heard it before and they could teach me. And that idea of kind of 'shared learning together', I really think about the fun you would have. I mean, I can think of obviously teachers that I had over the years... but I remember that you'd meet people ten, twenty, thirty years older than you who'd teach you the song, and they'd teach you the song, and they'd teach you a style of playing, and you'd sit down and you'd work it out and work it out and work it out and then you'd be playing with them and there'd be such a sense on achievement. [...] You know... the role of the older teacher... musician... mentor... whatever... is essential because you don't want to be too 'light touch' either. You don't want to be saying sort of 'go away there and play amongst yourselves', because that's not really going to provide any direction. But, if you can do it organically, where you're standing there and maybe you're tuning up your guitar or you're showing people how to tighten a skin on a drum kit you can say 'look I would find this to be very useful...'*  
(Joseph, Programme Coordinator/Musician at Community Hub, CS3SC2)

As a result of musicians' input, oversight and intention, quasi-autonomous encounters seemed, from the perspective of the research, less haphazard in organisation and occurrence than their fully-autonomous counterparts; that is to say, they didn't happen by chance. However, it could also be the case that due to the 'hidden' nature of fully-autonomous encounters that their occurrence was much more difficult to ascertain. Either way, the existence of each – quasi-autonomous and fully-autonomous – demonstrates the value that was placed on creating these opportunities for children and young people to experience music-making in these ways. The findings from this section illustrate the complex nature of effectively engaging with children and young people in quasi-autonomous encounters. To effectively navigate this environment, musician-mentors undoubtedly require multi-layered levels of expertise and an arguably high level of musical and pedagogical confidence. Additionally, this is a space where the 'musician' can learn with and from the children and young people, and this requires a degree of 'letting go' and 'taking risks' on the part of the musician. A multifaceted CPD-approach could support those musicians who strive to engage more effectively with children and young people in quasi-autonomous environments. Such an approach could: a) encourage musicians to reflect on and constructively challenge their pedagogical practice to incorporate such encounters; b) involve the peer-to-peer observation of other musicians who mentor in this way; and c) involve developing collaborative assessment tools with children and young people to capture the learners voice and ascertain the effectiveness of the musician's approach.

### 5.14.3. Forward steps for autonomous encounters within a participatory framework

The research findings argue that it is important for musicians, coordinators, and other decision-makers to put in place those conditions which support children and young people in experiencing music-making in these ways. Quasi- and fully-autonomous encounters are crucial in the broad context of children and young people's meaning making-possible selves trajectories. They are opportunities for children and young people to experience and participate in rich, meaningful, and creative engagement with music – on their own terms. The importance of recognising and valuing these type of encounters gains further significance in the research with the realisation that by and large, they were initiated by children and young people themselves rather than by musicians or others, they were generally not specifically programmed for, they were not explicitly acknowledged in MEP documentation, and it often came down to chance as to whether or not children and young people could engage in musical doing in these ways. From a broad research perspective, the evidence would suggest that these are music-making opportunities which young and already-motivated musicians have greater access to than those younger children who may not yet be so motivated. There is a need then to ensure that all children and young people, from the youngest to the oldest, have access to such experiences. Additionally, while it cannot be said with any great certainty given the limitations of the research, the evidence would suggest that the practice of certain musical genres – in particular pop, rock, and rap – have a greater resonance with the autonomous realm of participatory performance than the practice of other musical genres. There is then an onus all musicians, across all musical genres and practices, to challenge and critique their pedagogical practice and strive to ensure that those children and young people with whom they engage are afforded the best possible opportunities to explore and create music in these ways.

It is suggested that conversations between musicians, coordinators, classroom teachers, school principals, community leaders, and other partners which address simple yet critical questions could potentially illuminate a wide range of associated issues. For example:

Do children and young people have access to instruments in the hours/days after their weekly lesson? Whose responsibility is it to organise and oversee this? Are instruments 'locked away' in a school cupboard from one lesson to the next? If this is the case, why does this happen? Is there an available room in the school, community centre, etc. for children and young people to meet? Has the availability and purpose of such a space been clearly communicated to children and young people? How can such encounters be best facilitated for very young children in early childcare settings? How can such autonomous encounters be carefully facilitated across the diverse range of other school/community settings? Is there a suitable safe space available in the evening time for young teenagers to meet? Could local partnerships be established (cafés, youth clubs, after school clubs, etc.), to provide a safe space for young people to meet? Have children and young people been asked for their opinions and suggestions? How are they listened to and their voices captured? How can musicians develop their pedagogical practice to incorporate such experiences for children and young people, even within primarily dialogical encounters?

The research, while acknowledging the potential challenges around creating conditions which support autonomous participatory encounters, raises a concern that such encounters for children and young people could easily go un(der)valued and un(der)resourced unless such supporting conditions are carefully constructed. Of course, young people in particular will continue, as they have done, to take the initiative in seeking out spaces and opportunities for these kinds of rich participatory music-making encounters, wherever they may find them. There are, however, those children and young people who will not be so motivated and who will not have the resource to support such actions. As a consequence, these children and young people could potentially have quite narrow experiences of music-making, and as a result of this, develop correspondingly narrow



repertoires of possible selves through music. In other words, if they cannot embrace being autonomous in musical doing, they are not accessing a well-rounded musical experience. Through Music Generation, there is immense potential for such encounters to be supported, valued, and appropriately resourced. In this way, a balance of fully- and quasi- autonomous participatory encounters can provide another pathway along a colourful and vibrant PME spectrum along which children and young people can travel on their journey towards their future possible selves.

### 5.15. Festive Celebratory Happenings (FCH): Introduction

In the short time since Music Generation was established, a wide spectrum of musical doings have sprung up across each of its MEPs. These have included initiatives from exploratory music workshops with very young children in early-years settings, to collaborative composition projects with young teenagers leading to concert hall performances, to traditional music summer schools with a range of age groups, to programmes specifically designed to reach those children and young people experiencing additional challenges, to song-writing and studio recording sessions, to electronic music workshops with young teenagers, to large scale regional choral programmes and performances. These diverse music-making endeavours have been observed over the course of the research, and have been conceptualised through the lens of the PME three-mode dialogical, participatory, presentational spectrum. Within the participatory mode's spectrum, another area was revealed by the research and it is included under the banner of festive celebratory happenings (FCHs).

The term FCH is broadly inclusive of what might typically be described by MEPs and others as festivals, musical celebrations, street festivals (FIGURE 30), musical/choral/brass extravaganzas, musical street parties, etc.<sup>42</sup> While each 'happening' such as those mentioned above is inherently distinctive and diverse in its own right, they collectively inform my understanding of FCHs for this research, and the implications which I have drawn out for Music Generation arising from this understanding.

This understanding is grounded in an interpretation of these happenings as primarily participatory phenomena which provide children and young people with a multitude of interconnected ways in which they can experience meaning in/with music and extend their possible selves repertoires. In other words, the primary intention for these musical happenings was determined by the research to be participatory and inclusive of all children and young people. While perhaps a little ambiguous, a useful cue during the research in determining whether such events were participatory-esque or presentational-esque in nature was to examine the tone of what was spoken about and observed happening. For instance, was the musical happening about belonging, where no child/young person was left out? Or was it selective in terms of who got to perform? What were the reasons for this? Was the emphasis on children and young people's ownership of the process? How and to what extent were children and young people involved in shaping the FCH? How were children and young people's voices heard in the process? Therefore, while children and young people were observed performing in different ways at FCHs, the tone of the happenings were firstly participatory. The attempt here, of course, is not to draw rigid contrasts between FCHs and traditional presentational performances, or between those other areas of the participatory PME mode for that matter – in fact, such a feat would prove futile given the levels of nuance, complexity, and crossover between each. However, as is the case with all areas identified across the three PME modes, important learnings can be gained by looking at children and young people's experiences through the lens of a festive celebratory happening. These issues have some bearing on the underpinning conceptual framework for this area of the participatory mode.

42 Examples of these include Music Generation Clare's Ennis Street Festival Performance; Music Generation Limerick City's Teenfest, Live at the Pery, and Make A Move Festival; Music Generation Cork City's BOLD as BRASS and Concert Party 2015; Music Generation Sligo's multi-cultural youth percussion and choral extravaganza at Parkfest; Music Generation's BIG SING!, as well as a range of other initiatives across all other MEPs.



FIGURE 30: 'SINGING AT THE ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE' (AGE 8, CS2SC1)

#### 5.15.1. A festival of learning: looking at the literature

An obvious starting place for orientating a theoretical underpinning for this dimension of the participatory mode is that body of scholarship which has the festival experience broadly speaking (participation, attendance, etc.) as a focus. However, while there is more general research developing in Ireland and elsewhere in relation to those areas including: audience research (for example, Gorman 2014); the contribution of the music industry to Ireland's economic wellbeing (for example, IMRO 2015); festival attendance and the development of social capital (for example, Arcodia and Whitford 2008); and the role of local government in supporting local music infrastructures (for example, Kenny 2011), there seems a paucity of research which considers the impact of festival-type participatory events of the lived experience of children and young people. Karlsen (2009) concurs and highlights that in the interdisciplinary field of festival research 'much attention has been given to festivals' economic impact on their host municipalities (p.130).

One useful area to which we can look however is that of the music festival as an arena for learning (Snell 2005; Karlsen, 2008; Karlsen, 2009). For example, in an investigation into the informal, musical environment of the OM popular music festival in Canada, Snell (2005) highlights the vast array of less formal teaching and learning that takes place. This informal learning, she says:

*can take on many different forms. For example, people can learn musically through: talking to performers or other participants about a certain genre or performance, being exposed to new genres and styles of musical performance, being exposed to new instruments, observing the performance techniques of musicians at performances, and so on.*  
(Snell 2005, p.21).

According to Karlsen (2009), Snell's study is interesting insofar as she:

*describes how festivals come to be in a unique position for providing attendees with exceptional musical experiences through the outdoor settings often used, the community contexts created, the possibility for participants to immerse themselves in musical contexts for several days and nights, close performer-audience relationships and the large variety of music most often offered at such occasions. She also looks in more detail into learning outcomes, mentioning exposure to*

*new musical styles and genres, learning about instruments and the performance techniques of participating musicians.  
(Karlsen 2009, p.131)*

Karlsen's work (2008; 2009) also explores the festival arena as a source of musical learning. The epistemological basis for Karlsen's study is taken from Lave and Wenger's theories of situated learning<sup>43</sup> (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) 'in which the music festival was seen as a community of practice that entailed learning as an integral constituent, and in which the participants learn through peripheral action' (Karlsen 2009, p.132). Basing her research on one particular Swedish festival, Karlsen concluded that 'festivals may offer possibilities for its attendees to gain similar kinds of learning outcomes as we expect people to gain from other informal as well as formal music educational settings' (ibid., p.137). Three broad findings emerge from Karlsen's study: in the first category, learning music, festival participants became familiar with and enjoyed other musical styles than those normally consumed; in the second category, learning about music, the findings suggested that the audience members were offered opportunities to learn factual information about about the music presented; and in the third category, learning via music, the festival attendees experienced non-musical outcomes such as widening their cultural horizons and learning how to behave in a festival context. Interesting from the perspective of those Music Generation happenings which have informed the FCH participatory area is Karlsen's suggestion that:

*it is possible to see a music festival as a means which different groups in society, whether it be social classes or affinity groups, use in order to educate their own members.  
(Karlsen 2009, p.138).*

### 5.15.2. A musician's perspective

One such happening which informed the FCH area was Teenfest @ Pery Square, a 'one day teen festival... designed by teenagers which took place in Limerick City (July 2015) and involved other young musicians from Music Generation Laois, Cork City, and Clare programmes. Owen, one of the musicians involved in Limerick City MEP, explained that the idea for the festival originally came from those young people involved in Limerick City MEP's Band Explosion programme.<sup>44</sup> He described how the young people came up with the festival name, were involved in organising the various bands, and had an input into all the festival logistics – from setting stages, to promoting the festival on the local radio station, to performing of course.

Teenfest @ Pery Square was one such event whose underlying tone I determined to align with that of an aspiring FCH. Of course, there were a number of other events across Music Generation's MEP infrastructure that were perceived to fall along a FCH spectrum, from 'out and out' fully celebratory and participatory events, to other events where the seed of participation was sown but which needed further nurturing to realise the participatory intentions of organisers. Owen's responses, coalesced with my observations and analysis of a number of other events which had participation as a primary intention, have resulted in the following FCH characteristics.

43 Lave and Wenger's theories of situated learning are also used in the context of this research to underpin the participatory PME area 'Communities of Musical Practice'.

44 Band Explosion is a programme for young people (n=58 in July 2014, although numbers have increased since these statistics were made available) in Limerick City. In the context of Band Explosion, musicians provide instrumental tuition on a range of instruments (voice/guitar/drums/bass/electronic), nurture creativity, support bands, and facilitate performance opportunities across a range genres (rock/pop/folk/hip-hop).

*FCHs are about children and young people and communities collectively celebrating what they have achieved*

Owen explained that the Band Explosion programme had gotten to the stage where young people had progressed considerably on their instruments/voice, had forged friendships, and had become increasingly confident in themselves, in relating to others, and in terms of their musical abilities. His vision for this event was to 'build a community' inspired by street parties where 'your community would come out, sing together, eat together... it's community!'

According to Owen, such events can provide an important platform for children and young people to collectively say to their local communities 'This is what we can do, now come and see it!'. The focus of a FCH is therefore not on the musicians, the organisers, the partnerships, or the organisation – it is about children and young people collectively celebrating their hard work and achievements with their communities. Therefore, rather than focusing exclusively on the high-stakes stage performance as an end goal, Owen explained that 'the way we try to do it, and what takes the sting out of it, is to say that it's about them showing the work that they've done'.

*FCHs are about children and young people's ownership of the process*

The entire Teenfest process involved children and young people, from inception to implementation, to reflection on the process. Children and young people were involved in stage setting and management, in stewarding, in 'designing, curating, and performing', and in other aspects of the event's organisation. As Owen explained, they were 'learning the tricks of the trade' where 'it wasn't just about performance but organising around performance'; it included all those other potential responsibilities which musicians often address in the multiple worlds of music performance. The intention for this level of involvement by children and young people, rather than being primarily led by musicians/other adults, was to encourage the children and young people to own the process, to 'understand why certain things are done', and to shape it into a final event over which they had a strong sense of ownership.

*FCHs are about belonging and inclusivity, where 'no one is left out'*

In close parallel with nurturing this sense of ownership was the intention to include all young people who wanted to participate in some way in the festival. Owen explained that some young people were 'not yet that overly into performance' in the traditional sense, however 'no one was left out' and they could 'perform in different ways' in the context of those disparate roles already mentioned. Young people can be included in 'all aspects of the performance and they can all fit in', he maintained.

Drawing on this, it is suggested that FCHs are about including children and young people in all those related aspects around the performance (from stage management, to stewarding, to sound engineering, etc.). This would allow children and young people to experience roles associated with the 'real worlds' of music performance, and such musicking experiences could potentially be used as a prompt towards encouraging these young people to perform on stage as musician at some future event.

*FCHs are about building and experiencing a multitude of musical communities across diverse genres*

Owen strongly emphasised that Teenfest was 'an amazing learning experience' for all young people involved. It is suggested that there were three different ways in which young people's musical (and other) learning was facilitated at Teenfest, with each involving the enrichment and extension of their own particular community of musical practice (CoMP). Firstly, young people participating in Teenfest were able to experience their peers performing in a range of other musical genres including 'electronic music, rock, folk, rap, and spoken word poetry'. Secondly, other young people were invited from

Music Generation Laois, Cork, Clare, as well as from Ennis Youth Service to perform at Teenfest. Thirdly, children and young people experienced the performance of 'established acts' at Teenfest.

It is argued that each FCH learning experience mentioned had the potential to deepen children and young people's meaning-making (musical, personal, and relational) and extend their repertoire of possible selves:

1. Through experiencing performances across multiple musical genres, children and young people were given the opportunity to become familiar with the practices of other musical genres – a finding confirmed also by Karlsen (2009). Teenfest, in a sense, acted as a meta-community of musical practice in facilitating the coming-together of such diverse musical practices;
2. In meeting and conversing with young musical peers from other areas/counties/cities, the young people had the opportunity to develop friendships, build their musical communities, thereby nurturing relational meaning;
3. Through witnessing 'established musical acts', young people had the opportunity to observe professional musicians and bands operating in a real-life festival context. With this, young people were given the opportunity to extend their repertoire of possible selves and as Owen explained 'see how it can be done'.

### **5.15.3. Conclusion: Considerations for Music Generation**

FCH is a collective term to describe participatory events which are diverse encounters in and of themselves – sometimes crossing over into and strongly coloured by other shades of the broad PME spectrum. On the surface therefore, FCHs may not look dissimilar to what is described elsewhere in this research; for instance in the context of community music encounters, presentational PME, and communities of musical practice (CoMP). Of course, there are critical yet often subtle distinctions, and those distinctions lie in the primary intention of FCHs as festive, celebratory, inclusive and multifaceted participatory musical happenings which support children and young people's inclusion and participation in exultant music-making.

There are several implications of FCHs for the future directions of Music Generation. FCHs which facilitate children and young people's ownership of the multifaceted FCH process and end-event should be encouraged. While the event described primarily involved the experiences of young people, FCHs could be carefully designed at a level which involves designating meaningful responsibilities to younger children and seeking their voices and input.

Some children and young people are not yet at the point of their musical journeys where they have the necessary confidence or interest in performing, in a traditional sense, on stage. There are many ways in which children and young people can experience performing, and FCHs should be supported as 'safe' events where children and young people can nurture their musical intrigue and gain valuable experience on the periphery of presentational performance.

Across Music Generation's infrastructure – at national, local, and individuals levels – there is a sustained need to account for, capture, and publicise such participatory-esque 'events'. Engaging with this layer of accountability is required but can sometimes deflect from the primary purpose of these events which has at its heart the meaning-making and possible selves-enhancing musical experiences of children and young people. A result is that the tone of these events can quickly become presentational-esque in nature. Therefore, engaging with the voices of children and young people at each stage of the

FCH process is of paramount importance to other potentially limiting actions. Children and young people should be trusted to engage with and see through the organising of any such FCH. With the oversight of a coordinator and/or musician(s), they should be encouraged to become involved, make decisions, take risks, and learn from and reflect on the process. FCHs are team efforts, and the 'direction' of any one person – musician or coordinator – could limit what can be achieved for children and young people.

### 5.16. Communities of Musical Practice (CoMP): Introduction

It is a complex undertaking to consider musical genres, musical styles, and musical practices in the context of Music Generation's performance music education infrastructure. A simple answer would be to say that musical genres, musical styles, and musical practices<sup>45</sup> are already considered across all those other areas of the dialogical, participatory, and presentational spectra outlined in this document. That is to say, that we can already think about children and young people experiencing jazz, for instance, in the context of the presentational mode (for example, young musician-as-performer), the dialogical mode (for example, through an active dialogical encounter), and through other areas of the participatory mode (for example, through a community music encounter). Of course, we can. However, what is largely missing from the way that these PME spectra areas are conceptualised, and what this participatory PME area seeks to acknowledge, illuminate, and address, are the normative practices of performance, creation, pedagogy, learning, transmission, and social interaction which were observed as being deeply embedded in the musical practices of many children and young people across Music Generation's infrastructure. Concurrently, there were also contexts and situations where in the context of children and young people's musical experience these normative practices were observed as being considerably narrow in scope; this is perhaps where the most useful learning was gleaned for the research. Hewitt (2009) expands on this concept of normative practices in the context of 'musical styles':

*Just as each musical style has an identifiable set of musical features that provide its distinctive identity (e.g. harmony, instruments used, formats, structures, and so on), so they also embody a set of practices and behaviours in their creation, performance and consumption that are equally distinctive and defining.*  
(Hewitt 2009, p.330)

Normative practices are those often unspoken practices that define a musical community, practices that newcomers to that community must 'accept and adopt if they are to be accepted within that community' (Hewitt 2009, p.330). For example, contrast the normative practices of young people participating in a traditional music session with those of a young rock band meeting to have a jam. Or contrast the normative practices of children writing their own songs in a large-group community music encounter with those attending their weekly classical strings orchestra rehearsal or those meeting their mentor for their afterschool rap workshop. Contrast the normative practices of musicians skilled to work in healthcare contexts to those who conduct large choirs. Contrast the normative practices of those musical genres which employ a formal approach to public performances while others are much more informal in nature (Hewitt 2009). Contrast the normative practices of the dynamic rock/folk 'band scene' being nurtured in one urban context, to the traditional music scene being nurtured in another. Or contrast the normative practices of pedagogy and transmission across multiple musical genres including popular music, traditional, jazz, and classical. These were all observed during the research process, but given the limitations of this research, it would be impossible to include an in-depth and comprehensive overview of even one of those musical practices which were observed – for example, jazz, Irish traditional music, hip-hop, community music practice, folk, electronic, rock, classical, early-years music, etc. – and the breadth of musical practices are conceptually infinite in any case. What is possible however, and what this area sets out to achieve, is to usefully organise and frame these diverse practices within a broad concept of a community of musical practice (CoMP).

45 Hereafter the term 'musical practices' will be inclusive of 'musical genres, musical styles, and musical practices'.

By framing musical practices in this way, the research aims to: a) describe diverse musical genres, styles, and practices which constitute communities of musical practice across Music Generation's infrastructure; b) communicate the value of communities of musical practices as webs of meaning-making which nurture and support children and young people's engagement in music-making; c) emphasise the importance of continuously expanding and cultivating diverse communities of musical practice; and d) suggest ways that this could be achieved so that children and young people are supported by Music Generation in 'becoming members' of meaning-making CoMP, which can in turn motivate children and young people in striving towards their possible selves via this membership.

### 5.17. Music Generation's commitment to a diversity of musical practices

Since 2010, activity across Music Generation's infrastructure has steadfastly nurtured a diversity of musical practices. This diversity was acknowledged and valued by Music Generation from its inception, with the organisation's Policy and Priorities document outlining that:

*Music Generation [...] acknowledges the diverse ways in which children and young people experience performance music education, across the breadth of musical genres. (Music Generation Policy and Priorities 2010–2015, p.2)*

Music Generation's valuing of diversity with respect to genre, style, and practice is further emphasised in its conceptualisation of the term 'musician':

*In order to be inclusive of all music genres, the term 'musician' is used for those who are involved in music education practice. Within the context of Music Generation, the term 'musician' is inclusive of musicians practising in any genre of music, in a variety of contexts, an element of whose practice includes, but is not limited to, vocal and instrumental tuition. (Music Generation Policy and Priorities 2010–2015, p.2)*

It takes only a brief glance across Music Generation's infrastructure in order to gain a sense of the wide and inclusive spectrum of music practices occurring in each of its MEPS. For example, in Music Generation Mayo, the *Kaleidoscope Big Band* musician-in-residence programme facilitated by the Rhombus Quintet<sup>46</sup> brings together a diverse range of young musicians from a 'variety of musical genres including classical, jazz, and traditional, rock and indie backgrounds'.<sup>47</sup> This is an interesting initiative from a CoMP-perspective in terms of the overlap between the young people's respective communities of musical practice, and the positive challenge which the programme undoubtedly brings as the young people involved 'come to know' the normative practices of other young musicians. In Music Generation Offaly/Westmeath, a choral programme has been established in partnership with the Association of Irish Choirs; this is supported by an associated community of professional musical practice (that is, those choral practitioners who undertook the Accredited Professional Development Course in Choral Music Education). In Music Generation Carlow, 'Little People Big Voices' – an early-years programme for childcare settings – incorporates child-centred pedagogies to actively and creatively engage young children in meaningful music-making. This is an example of a musical practice which is not necessarily underpinned by genre, but particular pedagogical practices, performance practices, and practices of transmission associated with music-making with very young children. In Music Generation Laois, a partnership has been established with Na Píobairí Uilleann to teach young musicians Irish traditional music on the uilleann pipes; this is an example of where a facilitating local/national partnership can help to embed those practices associated with a musical genre (in this case traditional music on uilleann pipes) in an area where a

46 According to the ensemble's webpage, "Music should feel honest, responsive and organic'. That's the plan behind the Rhombus ensemble and it's letting the band create an original sound to be savored. Each of its members are soloists in their own right and Rhombus' shows are becoming no-holds-barred performances of respectful musical exploration. Nordic jazz, classical minimalism, blues, drum-and-bass... every style is fair-game so long as it lets the players use their own musicality to create sensitive dialogue.' <http://www.denniswyers.ie/rhombus.php> (accessed 21/07/2015)

47 <http://www.musicgenerationmayo.ie/music-programmes-mayo/workshops-masterclasses/kaleidoscope-big-band.html> (accessed 21/07/2015)

strong CoMP may not have already existed. In Music Generation Cork City, responsive programmes have engaged with already-existing CoMP in the city, and as a result, rap and hip-hop interweaves a number of dynamic programmes. And, in Music Generation Louth, the *Introducing Strings* programme acknowledges the history of classical music in the county, engages with the already-existing musical expertise in the area, and the children involved have a strong CoMP-foundation which supports them in learning to play a range of orchestral stringed instruments – violin, viola, cello and double bass in a whole-class environment. There are also fledgling communities of professional musical practice emerging within and across a number of the MEPs. These professional communities are imbued with the practices and behaviours of the CoMP within which the musicians operate. They address for example, the needs of those musicians working in particular contexts such as early-years contexts, those who work with children and young people with special needs, and those whose musical practice requires a particular set of pedagogical skills.

### 5.18. What is a Community of Musical Practice (CoMP)?

CoMP draws on the community of practice (CoP) concept first introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991).<sup>48</sup> Described by Wenger as groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and who learn how to do it better as they interact regularly, the theoretical starting place of the CoP perspective is therefore not on the actual learning itself, but on individuals' 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.29) within socio-cultural contexts of communities. Given its emphasis on social or 'situated' learning, the CoMP area complements the emphasis of those other areas of the PME spectrum (for example, active/latent dialogical encounters, community music endeavours) which focus primarily (though not exclusively) on the learning itself, rather than the broader question of children and young people's peripheral musical participation.

Learning is therefore considered as a feature of membership of a CoP and as a process of social and personal transformation where participants are continuously experiencing and negotiating meaning-making.<sup>49</sup> It follows then, that through the lens of Lave and Wenger's CoP, a community of musical practice (CoMP) framework emphasises music learning as socially 'situated learning' (Lave and Wenger 1991) and considers the development of musical knowledge as contextual and relational (i.e., knowledge is acquired through participation in socio-cultural contexts). This has implications for how Music Generation should think about and understand children and young people's music learning as including yet going beyond the typical vocal/instrumental tuition context. It necessitates a continuous widening of Music Generation's lens to include opportunities<sup>50</sup> for children and young people to: a) interact with one another so that they can co-construct and negotiate musical, personal, and relational meaning; b) collectively develop, define, and pursue shared musical goals which in turn strengthens their CoMP; and c) create shared musical repertoires/resources over time through jointly pursuing their musical goals, which in turn lead to more opportunities for co-constructing and negotiating meaning-making. As Lave and Wenger explain, this negotiation of meaning is a productive process which constantly changes the situations to which it gives meaning. In turn, this dynamic relationship of living with the world generates new circumstances for further negotiation and further meanings (ibid., p.54).

48 Lave and Wenger's CoP theory echoes the socio-cultural theories of Vygotsky (1962) and Vygotsky and Cole (1978).

49 The process of engagement in a CoMP does not necessarily have to involve others. Engaging in a community of musical practice for instance can involve an individual working with the cultural tools of a practice such as songs, recordings, notations rather than with another individual to develop meaning.

50 These 'opportunities' resonate with and are informed by Wegner's three dimensions of mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002). Mutual engagement involves a practice where people interact regularly and are 'engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another. A joint enterprise of shared goals keeps each CoP together and is the collective process whereby participants pursue and define their stated and negotiated regime of 'mutual accountability' (Wenger 1998, pp.77-82). A shared repertoire is created over time by the joint pursuit of an enterprise to create 'resources for negotiating meaning' (Wenger 1998, p.82). It can be described as the ways of doing, joint pursuit and shared resources (ideas, information, styles, stories, documents, etc.) that are used to make and negotiate meaning.



Such a CoMP perspective can help Music Generation to illuminate the ways in which children and young people's social and situated worlds impact on their musical learning and participation. In this way, learning in a CoMP is seen as much more than pedagogical practice – instead, everything that happens in a community of musical practice is relevant for learning, and can be seen as a useful resource.

Additionally, the CoMP framework is a useful lens through which we can reveal the phenomenon that occurs when a 'newcomer' child or young person attempts to join an existing musical community. The CoMP positions the novice or less experienced child/young person as negotiating and renegotiating participation in a particular community of musical practice until they reach the stage of 'full participation' (ibid., p.37). This can be done by learning how to behave within a particular discourse and by observing the conduct of more experienced members. As Karlsen and Väkevä (2012) explain, as individuals act within a CoMP, they gradually learn what the community is about and what they have to know in order to participate in it. They can then move from the peripheral position of a 'newcomer' to the more mature stage of 'full participation' (p.xiv). Examples of children and young people attempting to join and negotiating participating in CoMP were observed across all the of subcases; children in one subcase (CS1SC2) learning violin/cello/double bass were given rich opportunities to engage with the historically grounded pedagogical practices of classical music, they experienced classical music through normative practices of transmission associated with the genre, they observed the conduct of their 'more experienced' music tutors, and they had an opportunity to perform publicly at an event widely recognised by the classical music CoMP. Of course it is important to acknowledge that there are also those children and young people who may not wish to 'belong' to any one particular musical style or musical genre, or in the words of Hewitt, who may not wish to be 'habituated only into the community of practice associated with that style' (Hewitt 2009, p.335). While a more complex undertaking for those designing responsive programmes, evidence from fieldtrips captured a number of cases where children and young people had the opportunity to experience two or more musical practices; these were interesting observations in terms of how musicians supported the expansion of children and young people's possible selves in these cases. For example: one musician (CS2SC2) interchanged between teaching a young musician classical guitar and jazz guitar so that she could experience the techniques associated with each genre; in another subcase (CS3SC1), a programme was designed specifically to introduce children to a range of different musical genres; and a number of Arts Council Partnership Programmes facilitated the bringing together of children and young people who practiced across a number of musical genres.

The CoP model has gained notable interest in music education research and related fields. Most notably, Barrett (2005) explores CoMP in relation to the nature of children's music-making. She describes communities of musical practice as 'communities in which children are active agents in the determination of the location, the participants, and the nature and range of the activities involved (p.261). This reemphasises for Music Generation the role of children and young people as active participants in determining the nature of their community of musical practice. Connecting with the meaning-making potential of PME, she continues that:

*Recognition of children's musical culture as a location of meaning making and communication holds potential for the further development of our understanding of the meaning and value of music in the lives of children and the ways in which this may be promoted in both school and community settings.*  
(Barrett 2005, p.262)

Barrett helpfully synthesises a wide range of recent research related to the area of CoMP and draws from Wenger et al (2002, p.51) to establish useful principles for the cultivation of CoP in school settings. In summary of these, Barrett suggests that communities of practice in school settings should: 1) be designed for evolution, 2) open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives, 3) invite different levels of participation, 4) develop both public and private community spaces, 5) focus on value, 6) combine familiarity and excitement, and 7) create a rhythm for the community (Wenger et al. 2002, p.51). These are useful suggestions for Music Generation given the high percentage of programmes which are taking place in primary schools across each MEP. Highlighting the role of

partnership in nurturing CoMP, Kenny (2014) explored, through a CoP lens, the relationship between community, music, and learning in a music education partnership which involved a third level institution, a resource agency, and a primary school. While recognising the limitations of CoP theory in terms of an educational environment, Karlsen and Väkevå (2012) highlight the value of Lave and Wenger's communities of practice for the purpose of analysing music-making groups 'according to what is going on within them in terms of learning and distribution of knowledge' (p.xiii).

### 5.19. Snapshots of Music Generation's Communities of Musical Practice

The CoMP encounters observed and illustrated below were identified based on their perceived resonance with Wegner's three dimensions of mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder 2002).

Imagine for a moment a young four-piece rock band (aged 11 approx.) who meet every weekend in one another's living rooms to compose and practice new songs and learn new riffs, who use YouTube and social media to listen to and learn new material and share their music with others, who love talking about their favourite bands, who hang out with members of other young rock bands at concert events in their local park, who know what it takes to interact well with their audience, and who attempt to translate what skills they learn during their weekly ukulele class (CS2SC1) to their passion for playing in their rock band.

Imagine young traditional musicians (aged 14 approx.) travelling from Mayo, Wicklow, Laois, and Sligo to Carlow where they meet with other young traditional musicians for a weekend of music. Over the course of the 'traditional camp', they have group classes and master classes with well-known traditional musicians, they 'learn, perform, and exchange tunes in a collective way with their fellow musicians';<sup>51</sup> are welcome to play in a session in a large communal area in the evenings, and leave with an expanded repertoire of tunes which they have learned, and an expanded network of friends from other areas of the country.

Imagine two musicians co-facilitating an eight-week series of early-years music workshops where each week they create and perform music with the young children, they embed a reflective process within the workshop series to ensure that they maintain a mutual understanding of what it is they are setting out to achieve, they consult with peers and colleagues to continually improve on their practice, and they record a CD at the end of the workshop series to try and ensure that the music lives on in the homes of the young children involved.

Finally, imagine a group of young classical strings players (CS1SC2, aged 8-12 approx.) who meet their tutor each week to improve their musical technique and sight-reading skills, who learn how to 'play tightly' with one another, and who practice determinately for a performance at an upcoming Feis Ceoil Festival where they will meet with other young musicians who are navigating a similar musical trajectory.

### 5.20. Conclusion: CoMP and a vision for Music Generation

Emerging from interview/focus group and fieldwork observation data which in turn informed the communities of musical practice concept for Music Generation, the following areas are presented for consideration. It is suggested that potential actions arising in response to each area would nurture a rich CoMP landscape across Music Generation's infrastructure; this socio-cultural landscape would act as another layer in supporting children and young people's meaning-making across the spectrum of PME areas and their striving towards their future possible selves.

51 <http://musicgenerationcarlow.ie/music-mount-leinster/> (accessed 20/07/2015)

### 1. Multifaceted engagement in 'real life' music-making across the PME spectrum

For children and young people to experience sustained meaning-making in vibrant communities of musical practice, they should have opportunities for continuous, multifaceted engagement in 'real life' music-making in and beyond typical teaching/learning contexts. This would involve encouraging a view across Music Generation's infrastructure that music learning should not only be practical (i.e., dialogical); rather PME should be viewed as requiring a multidimensional learning practice where educative experience is embedded in all activities. This could be achieved by establishing individual/local level facilitating partnerships and putting in place those conditions which support children and young people's access to a wide range of ways of engaging in music-making across the three-mode PME spectrum.

### 2. Progressively more complex engagements with music-making

To maintain children and young people's participation within a CoMP, their musical engagement needs to become gradually more and more complex as they negotiate their way from the CoMP 'periphery'. Children and young people therefore need to be continuously challenged in their musical practice, and their experiences continuously expanded and enriched as they engage across the PME spectrum. This will give them the tools that they need to negotiate membership of their CoMP. For instance, within the dialogical mode musicians should ensure that children and young people are continuously and appropriately challenged and that they have the skills and resources to address these challenges<sup>52</sup>; within the presentational mode, children and young people should have regular opportunities to witness their peers and other more experienced musicians/bands perform, thereby potentially extending their repertoires of possible selves; within the participatory mode, multiple designated spaces in a child/young person's local area could support their autonomous encounters with music.

### 3. Negotiating membership of already-existing CoMP

Music Generation's programmes are often implemented in areas where there is an already-existing community of musical practice. Coordinators, musicians, and other partners should attempt to discover and engage with already-existing CoMP, thereby acting as mediators between children and young people as 'newcomers' and the established CoMP members.

### 4. Seeking out fully participating 'plugged in' CoMP partnerships

By seeking out local or national partners who are already 'plugged in' as fully participating members of CoMP (e.g. AOIC, Na Píobairí Uilleann, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann) MEPs could potentially tap into an already-existing CoMP and 'ease the way' for children and young people. Nurturing such local facilitatory partnerships could a) assist children and young people in negotiating their membership of the CoMP, and b) help to achieve the partner organisation's aims by expanding the CoMP of which they are a member.

#### 5.21. Community music encounters: Introduction

This area of the participatory mode has as its primary focus those children and young people across the research subcases who were identified as having diverse additional needs; needs which were potential barriers to meaningful music-making. While the findings which inform this area often overlap with other areas of the PME spectrum, they were found to have a much stronger conceptual fit with ideas from the rich field of community music research and practice (e.g., Harrison and Mullen 2013; Higgins 2012). This reemphasises the point made in other sections of this document that the 'borders' created between the eleven areas of the PME spectrum are not meant to be perceived as impermeable – instead, they are completely porous and they seek to illustrate the fluid movement, practically and conceptually, that is possible from one PME mode spectrum area to another. The 'community music encounter' (CME) area – as one of a number of 'ways in' to meaningful music-making for children and young people – is no different.

52 See discussion on 'flow' in Section 4.

The CME area was informed over the duration of the research by observations conducted in subcase programmes/additional MEP field-trips, interviews/focus groups with a wide range of participants, and through consultation with other available data (MEP reports, MEP plans, informal conversations, etc.). During this process, I became aware of a distinct thread of thinking amongst research participants in particular contexts which was concerned with the additional needs of children and young people in challenging circumstances,<sup>53</sup> and as I sought to illuminate their issues and perspectives, I was drawn to the field of community music. What emerged was another hue on an enlarging PME kaleidoscope; a hue which can be used to examine the ways in which 'hard to reach' (Harrison and Mullen 2013) children and young people can be supported to experience meaning-making in music and strive towards their future possible selves.

Some of the questions which are considered within this area of the participatory mode include:

- » What were the additional needs of 'hard to reach' children and young people across Music Generation's MEPs?
- » What were the intentions of partner organisations/individuals in those contexts where children and young people experienced diverse additional needs?
- » What were the characteristics and conditions of partnership-working which supported and sustained children and young people in meaningful music-making and in striving towards their future possible selves?
- » What were the additional skills and expertise which musicians required to engage children and young people in meaningful music-making in these contexts?

### 5.22. Community music: finding a resonance with Music Generation

Community Music has for some time resisted definition and categorisation, with Higgins (2012) explaining that the claim has long been that 'activities named community music are just too diverse, complex, multifaceted, and contextual to be captured in one universal statement of meaning' (p.3). The challenge of orientating a consensus on the definition of community music permeates literature in the area, with Veblen (2013) asking 'Why does community music so vigorously and so robustly resist categorization?' (p.1) and Schippers and Bartlett (2013) underscoring the difficulty of defining community music:

*While it is relatively easy to compile a long list of community music activities, it is much more difficult to arrive at a working definition of what community music is. Because community music activities tend to be flexible and cover a wide range of styles, formats and approaches, these remain somewhat elusive.*  
(Schippers and Bartlett 2013, p.455)

In recent years however, a number of significant community music publications have emerged which have developed conceptual approaches (Higgins 2012) and compiled practice-based research (e.g., Harrison and Mullen 2013, Veblen et al 2013) in the area; it is within this body of knowledge that relevant findings which emerged in this research are situated. Therefore, while this research acknowledges that a great divergence of perspectives on community music exists within the field itself – and the field, like any other, is continually evolving – the community music encounter area of the participatory PME mode is concerned only with those community music perspectives which relate to and inform salient issues identified in the research.

### 5.23. 'Hard to reach' children and young people

The needs of children and young people in challenging circumstances are described across community music literature, and as outlined in this section, these are not dissimilar to those needs highlighted in conversations with classroom teachers, school principals, musicians, parents/guardians, MEP coordinators during the research. For instance, in *Reaching Out: Music education with 'hard to reach' children and young people*, Mullen (2013) describes 'hard to reach' children in challenging circumstances, who are 'vulnerable, marginalised, disadvantaged, at risk, beyond the

mainstream' and who 'have intellectual challenges, physical disabilities, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, children who don't live with their parents, who are in hospital, who have had lives full of trouble and even those who cause trouble themselves'. In *Community music: in theory and in practice*, Higgins' (2012) descriptions of fourteen community music projects from nine countries bring to the fore the lives of young participants with diverse additional needs. These are children and young people who have 'heavy home burdens [and] negative peer pressures', who are 'troubled' and 'at risk', who have 'behaviour problems' and 'maladjusted families', who have mental health difficulties, who are from areas of 'high social vulnerability and oppression, low income, and high unemployment', who experience tension, hostility, and violence with other young people 'due to perceived [ethnic] differences', who have 'moderate to profound disabilities that include autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome', and who 'have been exposed to extreme violence and traumatic events' and whose 'opportunities to attend school have been frequently and persistently disrupted' (pp.94-116).

What is interesting from the perspective of this research, are the striking similarities between what Music Generation ambitiously sets out to achieve in terms of access, quality, partnerships, diversity, creativity, and sustainability (Music Generation Policy and Priorities 2010-2015, pp.2-3) and the particular ethos which the field of community music evidently espouses.

Higgins (2012) lists a range of 'significant principles that constitute [...] community music practitioners' (p.5), with each strongly resonating across Music Generation's core values. With the right approach, there is potential for a powerful alliance between the 'thinking' embedded in community music practice and research, and the particular needs of children and young people who face additional challenges across Music Generation's MEPs:

*Community musicians: Are committed to the idea that everybody has the right and ability to make, create, and enjoy their own music; Consciously encourage accessible music-making opportunities for members of the community; Seek to foster confidence in participants' creativity; Work within flexible facilitation modes and are committed to multiple participant/facilitator relationships and processes; Strive for excellence in both the processes and products of music making relative to individual goals of participants; Recognize that participants' social and personal goals are as important as their musical growth; Put emphasis on the variety and diversity of musics that reflect and enrich the cultural life of the community, the locality, and of the individual participants; Are particularly aware of the need to include disenfranchised and disadvantaged individuals or groups.*  
(Higgins 2012, p.5)

#### **5.24. Additional needs of children and young people across Music Generation's infrastructure**

In the context of this research, the additional needs of children and young people refer to the widest possible spectrum of needs which due to their nature, required facilitating musicians to have developed additional and compatible expertise, pedagogical approaches, and ways of working. So while children and young people across Music Generation's infrastructure face a multitude of diverse barriers to accessing high quality PME (geographical, available expertise, etc.), those children and young people who are the focus of the CME area required engagement from appropriately skilled musicians. The purpose of outlining examples of children and young people's additional needs in the research is to provide some initial context regarding the often significant challenges which children and young people face in those diverse communities where Music Generation's programmes are implemented.

There is always a risk of inadvertently 'labelling' children and young people when an attempt is made to highlight the specific needs of any one group of children and young people. However, from the range of interviews conducted with parents/guardians, classroom teachers, musicians, community leaders, and others, as well as with those children and young people in their care, it was soon evident that in several contexts across Music Generation's infrastructure, the additional needs of children and young people in challenging circumstances were real, in many cases profound, and necessitated

meaningful discussion. In fact, the spectrum of additional needs of those children and young people who participated in community music projects internationally (Harrison and Mullen 2013; Higgins 2012) aligns, almost without exception, to those additional needs of children and young people in several contexts across Music Generation's infrastructure.

In one MEP's urban area where two subcases (CS3SC1, CS3SC2) were observed, a complex web of socio-economic disadvantage was cited by many of those involved in coordinating and implementing the programmes. The principal of the school in which one of the programmes was happening gave some insight into the socio-economic challenges which faced the parents/guardians of children participating in the programme:

*what you're talking about in terms of parents here... you are talking about practically 100% unemployment and realistically you're talking about over 90% lone parent and all the key indicators around social and economic poverty... they're off the Richter scale.*  
(Nathan, school principal, CS3SC1)

He continued by describing the profound challenges which many of the children faced in their everyday lives which were, he believed, inextricably tied up with the 'concentrated dysfunction' of an area whose social problems had been compounded by successive social and economic policy failures. I listened as the principal convincingly connected the dots between the implementation of macro national policy issues, their detrimental impact on the local area in terms of socio-economic problems, the resulting harmful impact on children and young people, and the potential of carefully designed – what he called 'intervention' programmes – such as Music Generation's programme to make a transformative difference in the participating children's lives. According to Nathan, some of those issues which children encountered in their everyday lives included being placed in care, experiencing various forms of abuse in their home environments (drug, alcohol, etc.), poverty and social exclusion. These issues, he explained, led to a range of behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties amongst children in the school. In another programme happening close-by (CS3SC2), Sara, a vocal tutor, explained that 'in a lot of the areas that they come from, they don't feel like they have a purpose, and they're hanging around and there's stuff happening'.

A further example within this case study which highlights the range of additional needs of children and young people was a music programme which took place as part of a Garda Youth Diversion Project (GYDP). GYDP is a programme operated by the Garda Youth Diversion Office that 'aims to help children move away from behaving in a way that might get them or their friends into trouble with the law'.<sup>54</sup> Other MEPs have also designed specific programmes to engage with young people who are 'at risk' of alcohol/drug abuse in Youth Probation Services and Youth Employment/Addiction Services.

The additional needs of children and young people were revealed across a number of MEP case studies. In one such subcase (CS1SC1), the school principal highlighted the complex needs of children as a result of the educational disadvantage which they often experienced arising from parents/guardians not having had access to education themselves; as a result education was not valued in children's home environments. Jean, the school principal explained that the resultant additional needs of children in her school were compounded by the fact that many children experienced 'poverty as a reality' and had 'difficult home circumstances [with] a lot of daily struggles in their homes'. Like Nathan, Jean connected the children's complex additional needs to the potential of the music programme to act as a powerful momentary 'escape' and as a shield to face the world:

*I've walked into the hall and I've seen children at the junior level and they're just in a different world, and it's a lovely world, you know. And given that the world outside when they get out at 3 o'clock maybe it's very dreary, very sad maybe, maybe contentious, that actually that escape is very powerful because it gives them something to arm themselves for the difficulties.*  
(Jean, school principal, CS1SC1)

54 <http://www.iyjs.ie/en/IYJS/Pages/WP08000062> (accessed 24/07/2015).

Those needs of children and young people across Music Generation's infrastructure were observed as being diverse, and cannot (and should not) be categorised easily. Across a number of other MEPs, inclusive programmes for children and young people with special needs are being designed and implemented, including: *SoundOUT Inclusive Music Programme* (Cork City MEP, a programme which aims to provide inclusive music-making and performance opportunities for children and young people with and without disabilities); and *The Music Box* (Laois MEP, a programme piloted through Laois School of Music in 2010 was being implemented in four settings with 88 children and young people participating. Statistics as of June 2014). In Music Generation Sligo, a programme has been established in partnership with St. Angela's College Sligo's Centre for Special Educational Needs Inclusion and Diversity to address the needs of children and young people in County Sligo with autism spectrum disorders. In a number of MEPs, specific programmes have also been designed to engage with children and young people who are living in direct provision centres (e.g., Music Generation Offaly/Westmeath and Music Generation Limerick City), and with those in residential care units and healthcare contexts (e.g., Music Generation Cork City).

While this overview of children and young people's additional needs and challenges is by no means exhaustive, it attempts to provide an honest representation of the spectrum of additional needs of children and young people who are involved in programmes across Music Generation's infrastructure.

#### **5.24.1. 'Possible selves interventions' and divergence in musical, personal, and relational possible selves**

The future possible selves which parents/guardians, classroom teachers, musicians, youth workers, etc. envisaged for children/young people with additional needs were often deeply entwined in representations of the children/young people's past or current selves. The classroom teacher hoped that the young person who had emotional and mental health difficulties would find an outlet through song-writing to personally express themselves. The parent/guardian hoped that the young person who felt socially excluded would build relationships with the other young people in her workshop. The youth worker hoped that the young teenager with a history of drug and alcohol abuse would manage to attend each week's workshop and see music as something that he could become involved with and potentially interested in. In other examples of subcases whose young participants were identified as having additional needs, the hopes, aims, dreams, and intentions of individual/local-level partners for what programmes could achieve strongly emphasised personal and relational selves. The following are some salient examples:

The principal of a school (CS3SC1) where one programme was taking place referred to the potential of the programme to make a 'real difference' in children's lives and evoked a breadth of possible selves:

*I can only speak for DEIS schools... I can only speak for this area but I think that there's massive scope there for that transformative dimension and making a real difference in children's lives... what I've seen with this programme [...] is just that it gives you little snapshots of what could be achieved...*  
(Nathan, school principal, CS3SC1)

The director of a community hub intimated the possible personal and relational selves she envisaged for children and young people when she described the programme taking place (CS3SC2) in her setting as providing solace and a 'safe space' in music-making encounters for those children and young people who may lack positive parental influence:

*A lot of time our frustration here is that parents are switching off and then what we become for that age group is a safe place to be in a group who doesn't have parental guidance, who doesn't have parental influence, so when they come here as teenagers, we are containing that experience and we are the safe space... and the music tutors become the safe space and the volunteers who are here to support those music programmes become the safe space... so there are a couple of different things going on.*

*(Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)*

An MEP coordinator explained that a community-based programme was 'very much socially driven for the kids' and one of the musicians felt that the programme was helping children and young people to 'diffuse negative emotions and enthuse positive emotions'. Another musician agreed, highlighting her hope for children and young people to become emotionally expressive individuals through musical engagement through expressing their words 'on a piece of paper' and 'turning them into something' (Sara, singer/song tutor, CS3SC2)

Finally, a school principal (CS1SC1) working in a DEIS Band 1 school highlighted a balance of possible selves for children and young people across musical, personal, and relational outcomes.

*We thought, you know, what can we do for the younger children to actually develop the kind of the musical skills and the love of music that will underpin their musical education later on? [...] As regards music for children [...] I suppose this sounds maybe... if it lightens their heart, if it lifts their lives. A lot of the children you know have a lot of daily struggles in their homes and for me, it's actually that space [for them] to actually relax and to be kind of uplifted in life. I just think you know, poverty is a reality for a lot of these children or you know, difficult home circumstances, and I think [of the] joy and the uplifting knock-on effect you know [...] how does it transform their potential life experience? It's that raising of self-esteem [...] It's so important [for their] confidence, self-esteem, relaxation, easing of anxiety. That's actually a key one I think... social and emotional benefits, working in a group together, being part of a joined enterprise. You know... it is mood elevation... it's all those kind of things and I actually feel for children in communities like [that] this is a gift.*

*(Jean, school principal, CS1SC1)*

Of course, these are but glimpses into what were much more complex situations, and they are simplified here to make the point that those partnerships which facilitated the music-making of children and young people who were often spoken about in terms of their additional needs, brought with them a range of intended or hoped for possible selves for those children and young people; these possible selves more often than not leaned towards children and young people's personal and relational selves. It could also be said that the range of individual/local-level partners who engaged with children and young people with additional needs viewed music programmes as – what I have termed – possible selves interventions. This aligns with current thinking in community music, where music-making interventions are 'clearly designed to make change in the participants' (Deane 2013, p.41). For example, in the context of the Garda Youth Diversion Project (CS3), the intention of the Irish Youth Justice Service was to 'help children develop their sense of community and their social skills through different activities';<sup>55</sup> the music-making intervention of the musicians facilitated this, while also striving to achieve a balance of musical, personal, and relational selves for the children and young people.



In those 'interventional' programmes where the majority of young participants were identified as having additional needs, as described previously, the personal and relational outcomes for children and young people were generally regarded as being just as or in some cases more important than musical outcomes. In other words, across those subcases which resonate with this community music encounter area, there was either a) a balance of possible selves where musical, personal, and relational goals were seen as being just as important as each other or b) an imbalance of possible selves in favour of personal and relational outcomes achieved through meaningful music-making. An important caveat here is to acknowledge those musicians who strongly stressed that their focus was on achieving possible musical selves for those children and young people with additional needs with whom they worked; this was a perspective which I felt was shaped by their overarching belief that children and young people, irrespective of their additional needs, should be facilitated in striving towards and achieving their possible musical selves. An example of b) above includes one subcase case (CS3SC2) where a musician who facilitated rap workshops with children whom he identified as having additional needs, explained to me that he felt that his primary role was to involve children and young people and help them to feel that they were a part of something; emphasising the possible selves which he envisaged for children and young people, he reflected on his pedagogical process and concluded that '... you know, it's got almost nothing to do with music nearly at all'. Therefore, it was through facilitating a high-quality and meaningful music-making experience for these young girls, that this musician was striving towards positive personal and relational selves for the young musicians. The valuing of personal and relational outcomes alongside or in some cases above musical outcomes is a common feature of community music programmes. Deane (2013) explains that 'by its definition [CM] is designed to make change on a personal or social level through the music making' and Veblen (2008a) concurs, stating that:

*There is a strong understanding in many programmes that the social and personal well-being of all participants is as important as their musical learning (if not more important). CM leaders frequently emphasize the power of music to bring people together, and to nurture both individual and collective identity [...]. In most cases, the emphasis is on one or some combination of the following: music making for personal satisfaction, enjoyment, self-expression, individual creativity, artistic excellence, self-esteem, joy and/or the enhancement of individual and/or group identity' (Veblen 2008a, pp.6-7).*

### 5.25. Community music encounters and partnership

Those programmes whose intentions leaned towards those of a CME were observed to require a particularly nuanced and deeply collaborative partnership-working effort. Those characteristics emerged which were found to be particularly specific to CMEs are outlined here:

#### 5.25.1. Care in setting out, communicating, managing, and understanding expectations at the planning stages

CMEs, as outlined, most often involved a diverse range of hopes and expectations at individual/local partnership level. One coordinator explained that to effectively manage the wide range of hopes and expectations, the aims and intentions of everyone involved must be very clear from the onset and must be understood by everyone involved. In her words, 'everyone must know what it is that they're getting into'. The response below from a primary school principal illustrates this point: firstly, he indicates his understanding of the spectrum of outcomes which could potentially be achieved for children (they range from the programme being 'just another good positive experience' to a programme that will 'make a real difference'), and secondly, he envisages that Music Generation would not have to do this in 'isolation' but as part of a process with others. While the tone of the school principal's comment may initially seem somewhat cynical, the context is important as he made his comments during a part of our interview where he outlined the range of

'flash in the pan' initiatives which had already come and gone to the school, with little or no impact on the children, in his opinion. This finding, in itself, highlights the care that must be shown to potential partners in areas who are weary of such short-term thinking:

*Is this going to be different or is it just going to be another one of those run of the mill programmes which ticks a box and makes themselves feel good about... makes Music Generation feel good about themselves and the kids get a couple of hours of light entertainment or is it something that actually comes in and... not in isolation... but can actually become part of a process that can make a real difference in kids' lives [...] I mean... is it just another good positive experience for kids or is it actually something that's going to make a real difference in these kids' lives and I suppose in their life outcomes? That's the question [...] I mean... I think that it has to come back to the parents and it has to come back to early intervention... now it's a massive... a massive piece of work and it can't... it won't just be achieved in isolation with just Music Generation... but I definitely think that when you look at the calibre of people involved... look at [names musicians]... the skill sets that they could bring to the table are remarkable and if you could engage Home School Liaison Committees and engage principals... and again I come back to the engaging the DEIS Schools... (Nathan, school principal, CS3SC1)*

### 5.25.2 Building and maintaining a wide spectrum of local partners

CMEs where children and young people were observed engaging meaningfully in music-making involved a diverse and complex spectrum of partnership-working. In some instances, coordinators collaborated with several local and national partners to ensure that all the appropriate conditions were in place for one programme to run efficiently and effectively – thereby achieving the MEP's aims which centred on meaningful music-making for children and young people in addition to achieving the aims of partner organisation(s). An example of this includes an MEP partnering with a) an ASD unit<sup>56</sup> whose primary hope for the music programme was to provide a therapeutic experience for young children, b) a local education provider to specifically devise and provide training for musicians working with children and young people with special educational needs, c) a music therapist to provide additional expertise to musicians, and d) a range of individual-level partners including childcare practitioners, parents/guardians, and the musicians themselves. The partnership-brokering role of the coordinator is therefore complex in the CME context as it can entail collaborating with a wide range of interrelated agencies which operate across health, education, justice, and community sectors. MEPs should therefore always be attuned to the potential of striking up new and meaningful partners who can add value and ensure that CMEs are sufficiently supported.

### 5.25.3. Sustainable and long-term thinking

Those individual and local-level partners interviewed in CME-aligned contexts alluded strongly to the need to nurture and maintain strong partnerships which could build trust between partners and support sustainable and long-term thinking. In their experience of establishing and maintaining partnerships with other organisations, funded 'interventions' were often accompanied by short-term and 'thin on the ground' thinking; this way of operating, a number of interview participants expressed, could lead to fragile partnerships and an underlying suspicion-of-sorts that once the funding was gone, the relationship would cease and expectations would be left unrealised. Ultimately, it became a damaging process for all involved. Therefore, rather than short-term thinking and being 'another cog in the wheel', it was conveyed that programmes which support CME require much longer-term goals due to the nature of partners' intentions for children and young people. Local level partners across several sub-cases (CS1SC1, CS3SC1, CS3SC2) described previous 'flash in the pan' interventions which had made them suspicious of initiatives, such as Music Generation, 'coming into' their school or community setting. A sense of this need

for long-term goal-setting (as well as the partnership-coordination required) was revealed by Nathan:

*It has to try to avoid just becoming just another cog in the wheel in term of you know appeasing the people... 'for example, the kids are getting a couple of nice sessions, we're ticking boxes but we're not really achieving very much'. It looks good in terms of your stats 'oh we've engaged this amount of kids in this amount of programmes' but what have you actually really achieved? I think that there are so many organisations that we work with and that's all that they're interested in... number crunching... what did they achieve? Very, very little! But again as I said to you, the poverty industry is a massive earner... it is massive the amount of money that's pumped into poverty in this country... and people don't want to upset the status quo. I go to meetings... say Child Protection conferences, where children are in case... I've been to meetings where there are 30 people sitting around the table and you're sitting around the table and there's 30 people here... how can this family possibly have problems? And they're all there and they're all writing their reports and they're all ticking boxes and they're all going back to their management and they all love their reports and they say 'I did this, that, and the other'. They're just greasing the wheels of the industry. And it's not about creating this picture of 'oh Music Generation's going to solve all of society's ills', but it can't just... it can't just be another cog. It has to do something different and I think how it can do something different is by engaging the calibre of people that it has on staff... but engaging them in programmes that intervene at the appropriate time and at the appropriate age where they can actually make a meaningful difference... and that they're sustained programmes... they're not just 'one hit wonders'.*

[...]

*I don't think that [the programme] is going to make a transformative difference in any child's life in its current guise, but I think when you look at the calibre of people that are involved in the MEP, I think that there's huge potential. But, it's where the interventions go in and how coordinated they are and how sustained they are. Are you just going to be another organisation coming in and doing your six weeks or your nine weeks or even your nine months? Because that's not going to... it'll give the kids positive experiences and they'll remember their experience, but, is that what this is about? Is it just another good and positive experience for kids or is it actually something that's going to make a real difference in these kids' lives and I suppose in their life outcomes?*

*(Nathan, school principal, CS3SC1)*

#### **5.25.4. CME process linked to and underpinning the aims of Music Generation**

Once appropriate partnership structures and ways of working have been embedded and the aims of all partners communicated and understood, the CME area suggests that children and young people with additional needs require particular and compatible expertise and attention from musicians. That is, as one MEP coordinator described, 'there needs to be a process linked to and underpinning the aim'. In observations, this process involved musicians having a combination of specific musical skills and experience alongside approaches to facilitate the process in diverse contexts. Veblen (2008a) alludes to this necessary expertise where she states that 'the CM worker's role is typically adaptable or 'elastic' (p.6). Such processes were required to ensure that attempts to meaningfully engage those children and young people in music-making could be made, and their possible selves repertoires extended, made vivid, and accessible. In other words, it is suggested that musicians should have a combination of specific musical skills and experience alongside approaches to facilitate the process.

There were a number of examples across MEPs where coordinators responded robustly and purposively to the perceived needs of groups of children and young people. In one MEP where the coordinator was in the process of developing a programme for children and young people with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), the coordinator explained that she was initially aware that the musicians were lacking the necessary skills to work with children and young people with ASD, and that 'it wasn't right to ask musicians to go in somewhere where they weren't fully prepared'. In response, she sought appropriate training and supports for the tutors and on the recommendation of a partner training organisation, the musicians focused on ASD training as this would give them the skills to work with children with other special educational needs:

*Conversations with autism centres kept leading to the question 'well how are we going to look into proper training?' and I realised that there was more work and there was more demand from autism centres and to me it wasn't right to ask musicians to go in to somewhere where they weren't fully prepared. The musicians would say, 'yeah I will and I'm happy to but they need to know that we're not trained up and that we haven't gotten training'. So, I always make that clear. When we went down the route of trying to look into formal training there had been growing demand coming in between the crèches and the autism units and even just different disability groups asking 'what can you do with us?' and I would have always have felt... there needs to be... it's a skill-set that our teachers don't have yet and there aren't actually tutors in our MEP... apart from a music therapist who travels up from Kerry for a run of two or three days.*

*So we linked in with a college that has a centre for special educational needs in inclusion and diversity... we approached them with a view to entering into a partnership where we'd look at... well 'what would we look at under the area of special education?' And what we needed... what our MEP needed was some training and supports for our tutors to go and work with those children. And what they wanted was to see how music is going to... how this will work with music because they haven't ever done that... it's a new area for them. So we had our discussions and they came up with proposals as to what we would do and we've started with two days training and we desired to focus on autism with their recommendation because if tutors can work with children with autism or ASD... that's the whole spectrum... they are then well equipped to work with children with other special educational needs because working with a child with autism is the most difficult and if you can understand those approaches you can apply them anywhere*  
(MEP coordinator)

In Laois MEP where musicians were involved in facilitating *The Music Box*, a music tuition programme for children and young people with special needs, musicians involved in facilitating this programme undertook a site visit to *SoundOUT* in Cork and received Soundbeam training from a highly experienced *SoundOUT* musician.

There are therefore many potential pathways to designing the process. They include: firstly, developing a common understanding amongst partner-organisations/individuals of what the aims of the programme are; secondly, understanding the children and young people with whom MEPs are working to reveal their specific needs; and thirdly, devising CPD strategies for musicians to ensure that they develop the necessary skills and expertise to engage with those children and young people.

### 5.25.5. Drawing on ideas from community music to enhance musicians' practice in CMEs

A number of observations which I made during the research can be usefully framed by the work of Higgins (2012) who presents perspectives on interventions and approaches to community music practice which community musicians have long relied on in order to activate meaningful music-making. These perspectives are potentially valuable to Music Generation in terms of how they could enhance, with ideas from community music, the practice of musicians who work with children and young people with additional needs.

*Unconditional hospitality:* As an underpinning concept for those musicians who work with children and young people with additional needs across Music Generation's infrastructure (or in fact, as an underpinning concept for any musician-educator), acknowledging what Higgins describes as 'unconditional hospitality' could encourage those musicians to bravely 'venture into the unknown' and embrace those unexpected changes, unforeseen circumstances, unpredictability, and unknown outcomes which can often accompany their work. Higgins reimagines the status of community music as a hospitable act of welcoming where though a community musician's 'gesture' or 'invitation' towards another, 'the welcome becomes a preparation for the incoming of the potential participant, generating a porous, permeable, open-ended affirmation of and for those who wish to experience creative music-making' (2012, p.137).

*Relationships and friendships:* One of the most prominent approaches by musicians who were observed facilitating effective music workshops with children and young people with additional needs was their focus on building and nurturing trustworthy and respectful relationships with the participants; additionally, this striving to nurture relationships at individual-level was viewed as complementing and enhancing the partnership building which was simultaneously occurring at local level. Of course, relationship-building was much more difficult where large groups were concerned. Higgins emphasises the value of nurturing relationships in community music contexts where he says that 'through an openness and focus towards relationships, the workshop can become a touchstone through which diversity, freedom, and tolerance might be achieved' (Higgins 2012, p.160). However, his caution that 'the relationship between facilitator and participant cannot be equal' and that such relationships can 'challenge the boundaries of the music facilitator's role' is an important reminder for any musicians whose actions may sometimes blur the lines between facilitator and participant. The relationship between facilitator and participant cannot be equal, Higgins explains, and 'it is the facilitator's responsibility to ensure some boundaries and as such they hold some power' (Higgins 2012, p.160). This is not to say that the relationship between facilitator and participant precludes friendships from forming, and across a number of subcases, friendships were realised between musicians and children/young people through a mutual understanding and awareness of the strong bond that musicians and children/young people develop through the music-making process. Nowhere was this more evident than across those subcases observed in Case Study 3, where musicians and young people often spoke about one another in ways which demonstrated their emerging musical friendships. Trustworthy and respectful relationships were then observed as leading to friendships, and linking the two ideas, Higgins describes how the 'face-to-face [CM] encounter emerges as a friendship, an open, committed, and respectful relationship'.

*Facilitation:* According to Higgins, community music facilitators are 'able to find a comfortable balance between 1) being prepared and able to lead and 2) being prepared and able to hold back, thus enabling the group or individuals to discover the journey of musical invention for themselves' (Higgins 2012, p.148). This strongly aligns with the active dialogical and quasi-autonomous modes outlined in this research, and as an approach to facilitation it can assist in developing trust and respect with children and young people, and nurture opportunities for creative and meaningful music-making. Very

often, in those observations which were identified as having intentions towards CME, the challenge for the musician(s) was to leave space for the child/young person's voice to be heard – this was perhaps a reaction to the generally accepted view that children and young people with particular additional needs very often do not have their voices heard.

### 5.26. Presentational PME: Introduction

What were invariably described across Music Generation's PME infrastructure as concerts, shows, gigs, recitals, performances, showcases, as well as live, studio, and home recordings have been conceptualised in this research within the presentational PME mode. Such presentational PME phenomena involved the performance and reception of the widest range of musical genres/practices by young musicians of all ages. These experiences threaded Music Generation's rich PME fabric and had the capacity to elicit profound musical, personal, and relational meaning-making for children and young people. Across Music Generation's infrastructure presentational PME experiences were considered 'part and parcel' of the music-making experiences of children and young people. The research revealed that they were deeply valued and incorporated in some way within the vast majority of MEPs' PME programming.

On research field trips, presentational performance was a type of PME engagement observed in diverse contexts such as community centres, school halls, childcare settings, festivals, classrooms, public spaces, concert halls, live music venues, as well as in diverse recording contexts (for presentation on CD, YouTube, SoundCloud, and other online fora). While this PME mode is deeply entwined with the other modes, it is separate and distinct from the other PME modes in many observable ways, but it is also separate and distinct with respect to the type of meaning-making potential it harbours for children and young people. A spectrum of encounters was also identified within the presentational mode and these are outlined and illustrated throughout this section. The four areas of the presentational PME spectrum are:

- a. Presentational PME experienced as musician – this area includes the experiences of children and young people as they performed in the role of 'artist' to audiences across a range of contexts.
- b. Presentational PME experienced as audience – this area includes the experiences of children and young people as they listened to and observed the presentational performances of others across a range of contexts.
- c. Presentational PME experienced as recording – this area includes the experiences of children and young people as they captured and presented their music-making through the use of various media.
- d. Presentational PME experienced as musicking – this area includes the experiences of children and young people as they engaged in a wide range of valuable (and often necessary) tasks associated with experiencing presentational PME-as musician (for example, arranging practice sessions, promoting their music, engaging with audiences, organising a concert, setting up a stage, etc.)

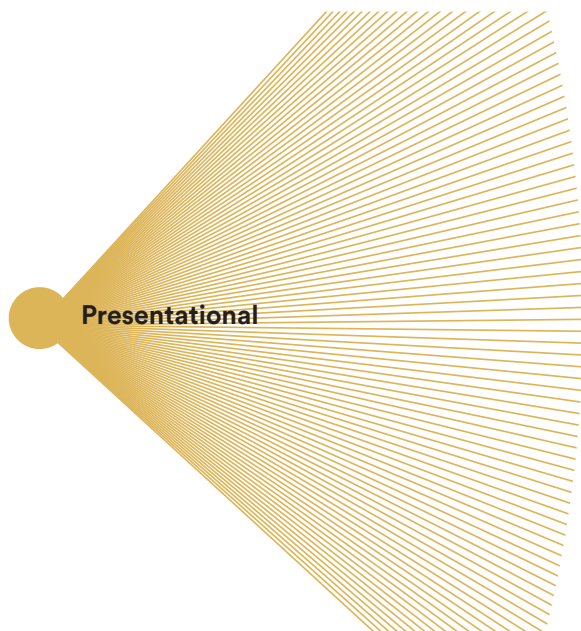


FIGURE 31: PRESENTATIONAL PME MODE

Presentational PME experienced-as-musician is considered the primary area within the presentational PME mode, and the three other areas are broadly conceived of as secondary areas which lead to and support children and young people in meaningfully experiencing presentational music-making as musicians. The four presentational PME categories were reflected in the 'happy memories' of young children (CS1SC2 and CS2SC1) who recalled 'playing the piano for my sister' (FIGURE 32), and 'playing the ukulele for my teacher' (FIGURE 33); that is, they recalled experiencing presentational PME as musicians. Other children fondly remembered 'listening to the street musician playing the guitar' (FIGURE 34), attending the One Direction concert (FIGURE 35), when they got to listen U2 with their Dad (FIGURE 36), and when they were watching '1D music on YouTube' (FIGURE 37); that is, they recalled experiencing presentational PME as audience.



FIGURE 32: PLAYING THE PIANO FOR MY SISTER (AGE 7, CS1SC2)



FIGURE 33: PLAYING THE UKULELE FOR MY TEACHER (AGE 8, CS2SC1)



FIGURE 34: LISTENING TO THE STREET MUSICIAN PLAYING THE GUITAR (AGE 8, CS2SC1)





FIGURE 35: ATTENDING THE ONE DIRECTION CONCERT (AGE 8, CS2SC1)



FIGURE 36: LISTENING TO U2 WITH MY DAD (CS1SC2)

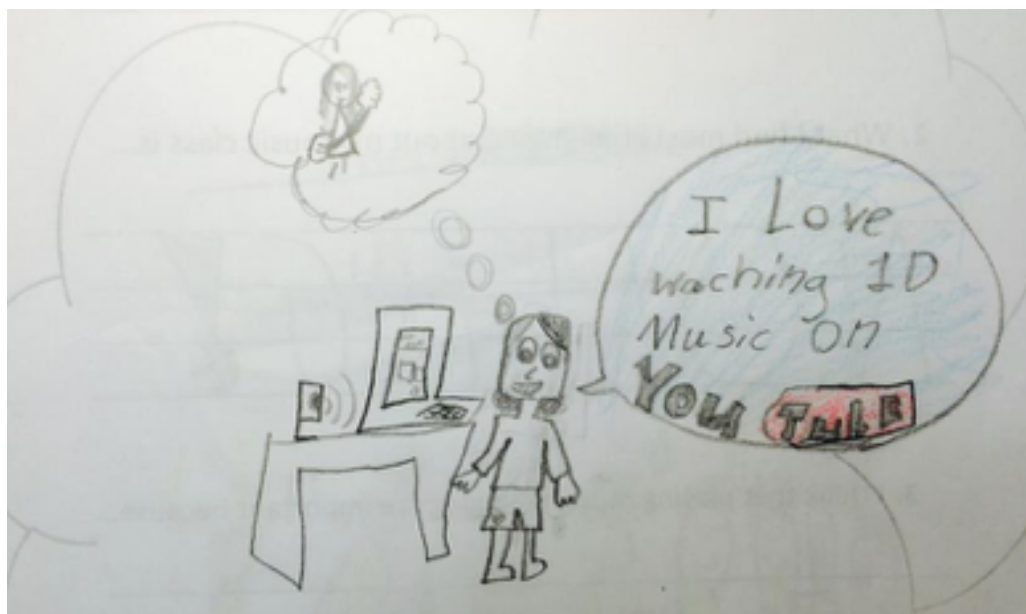


FIGURE 37: WATCHING 1D MUSIC ON YOUTUBE (AGE 7 AND A HALF, CS1SC2)

### 5.27. Musical memories, meaning-making, and possible selves

Presentational PME is a powerful mode from a meaning-making and possible selves perspective. To illustrate this, many of those meaningful music-making memories recalled by musicians, coordinators, and others in focus group conversations were presentational in nature (rather than dialogical or participatory). These memories were imbued with the meaning that the research participants ascribed to their past musical selves in presentational PME contexts. Interestingly, their meaningful memories of presentational music-making were similar to the experiences of children and young people across the subcases, and their memories also aligned with the future possible selves (musical, personal, and relational) that they envisioned, articulated, and now worked towards for children and young people. For example, the memories of focus group musicians encapsulated the following presentational PME themes:

- » Personal, musical, and relational meaning can be experienced through presentational performance with close relatives and others; concerts are unique and powerful experiences which can elicit wonder and awe in children and young people; the concert is a means of eliciting pride in the achievements of others:

*The earliest musical memory is probably my dad as a singer-song writer... the first time that my parents brought me to a concert by him. I was about four or five and I think that I fell asleep after about two songs, but I loved it, the bit that I saw. I was just fascinated by this... the stage... the light... this person singing and playing guitar. It was my dad and I was very proud!*

*(Ailbhe, cello/banjo/mandolin player, musicians' focus group)*

- » Personal meaning-making in presentational PME leads to feelings of joy; dialogical PME can lead to and prepare for presentational PME experiences.

*It was through performing when I was about 7 and it was part of a school performance [...] I was doing a solo on the stage of the parish hall and sure look I thought it was the Albert Hall. It just seemed like there were thousands of people there but there was probably not, and it seemed like there were hundreds on the stage but there was probably not, but it seemed massive to me, and I just remember being delighted with this. I don't remember having any anxiety, I just remember*

*thinking 'yeah, I'm happy'. But I've no memory of the process before, whether there was anxiety or... I don't think that I had any resistance to it. I think that I just loved that. And there was the group performance thing that was very significant at that stage.*

*[...] There's something about maybe the level of preparation that was involved in making say that performance happen. I must have felt very secure about that. Maybe we were very well prepared and I never at any moment thought 'I don't know what I'm doing'. I knew exactly when I was doing so at some stage along we must have been very well prepared for it.*

*(Trish, classical singer/choral practitioner, musicians' focus group)*

- » Presentational music-making is powerful in eliciting feelings of discovery and in expanding the worldviews of children and young people; musical meaning can be achieved through experiencing the music of others; the inherent qualities of the music can elicit meaning-making responses.

*I remember when I was very young being accompanied by the piano and I didn't realise that you could do anything other than melody so I just remember thinking, 'what's she doing?' It was the chord that really seemed to affect me when I'd hear her harmonising the hymns or whatever we were doing. I just remember that quite clearly, as well as everyone singing together. It was the fact that she was playing chords on the piano.*

*(Damien, fiddle/piano/organ/choral practitioner, musicians' focus group)*

- » Presentational performances can create opportunities for young musicians to meet and connect with one another (relational meaning) and they can nurture pride in children and young people (personal meaning).

*When I was older we had a youth choir in the parish that I'm from and I was probably one of the youngest in the youth choir at the time. I had only hit 13 and there was an awful lot of them that were say 16 or 17 or 18 and I just loved this youth choir but my biggest experience in it was when they asked me to play the keyboard for the choir so that was... I was an extremely shy person... you wouldn't hear me behind a newspaper when I was growing up but to actually be asked to play keyboard on a Sunday morning at mass! And I did, and that was lovely.*

*(Marie, classical piano/singer, musicians' focus group)*

- » Presentational performances are sometimes of a spontaneous nature; there are benefits to children and young people experiencing presentational performance in the early stages of their musical journeys (that is, presentational performance does not necessarily have to take place at the end of a programme, or term, or workshop series, etc.); and presentational performance experiences have an immense capacity to elicit confidence in children and young people.

*My first meaningful moment as such would be performing for the first time I think. [...] My sister was in the same primary school as me. She was a good few classes above me and she had a performance for her recorder ensemble that she was doing and she had been practising at home and I was sort of handy enough on the guitar when I was small so I was accompanying her on the guitar. But I wasn't supposed to be in this concert at all, but the person who was accompanying didn't turn up that day. So my sister went, 'oh my brother might be able to do it', so I got a knock on the door in the classroom... I think I was in senior infants, and I was dragged up to this room and there were all these older girls and I was there with my guitar and half an hour later I was on stage in front of the whole school playing. And I just found that... the amount of positive reinforcement that was given to me after that by all*

*the different teachers. So it just gave me confidence and took the nerves away from performing basically after that. I was 5 maybe or 6 and it was really unexpected. And what was nice about it was that I wasn't... I didn't know that it was coming, so I didn't have any time to get nervous or to get fearful it was sort of an instant, and my sister had faith in me and knew that I could do it. I mean I was playing two chords on the guitar but it was a big moment and just the fact that it took away the nerves from performances later in life I think having got over it then. I suppose I just knew that I'd done it before and it took the edge off getting up in front of a big group of people and playing. As a teacher now I'm very conscious of that and I'm very hesitant to ask someone to perform if I think that they might not be ready or you know because I think that it can go wrong too... and it can increase fear if it goes badly it can backfire and you'd never get them to stand on a stage again.*

*(Conor, electronic music, musicians' focus group)*

### 5.28. Setting the stage: a literature review

Thomas Turino's (2008) classification of performance types usefully frames and informs the presentational PME mode with respect to the experiencing as musician and experiencing as audience areas of the spectrum. However, this research makes a departure from Turino's ideas in order to reflect the richness of what was observed across Music Generation's infrastructure and include the meaning-making and possible selves dimensions of those areas of the presentational PME mode. With respect to experiencing presentational PME as recording, the use of recordings in terms of learning music has been the focus of previous research (for example, Green 2008; Johnston 2013). It has also been considered from an ethnomusicological perspective (for example Turino 2008). However, it seems that less has been written from the context of the personal and meaningful experience of children and young people in using recording as an expression of their own music-making and in terms of listening to the music-making of others. In terms of the fourth area along the presentational PME spectrum – experiencing as musicking – Small's (1998) concept of musicking informs an understanding of all those other activities which children and young people were actively engaged in while preparing for presentational performance experiences.

From an ethnomusicological perspective, Turino (2008) describes presentational performance as 'a field involving one group of people (the artists) providing music for another (the audience) in which there is a pronounced artist-audience separation within face-to-face situations' (2008, pp.51-52). Turino effectively paints a picture of a type of performance called presentational performance which has been redefined in this research as presentational PME as musician and presentational as audience and includes the meaning-making which children and young people can experience as they engage in each spectrum area. On this basic level, Turino's presentational performance reflects the most defining feature of the presentational PME mode which has been conceptualised for Music Generation; that is, children and young people experiencing music-making as musician and as audience. According to Turino, presentational music is prepared by musicians for others to listen to, and the social responsibility differs from that of performers in participatory contexts. For instance, in presentational performances musicians must provide a performance that sustains the interest of an audience that is not participating in making the sound or dancing, and the audience 'has its own responsibility of granting more or less attention to the performance depending on the genre frame (ibid.). That is, performances are diverse across genres, and in the case of Music Generation, the diversity observed in presentational PME contexts extends beyond genre considerations to include: age range of children and young people; intentions for and motivations behind presentational performance; the physical presentational performance space; the type of responsive programme that the presentational performance is a component of; the role of children/young people/musicians/others, etc.

Turino continues that the music must be interesting and varied for an audience which leads to a greater amount of attention to detail and arrangements. The complete programme to be presented tends to be planned and rehearsed in advance, and the programme generally offers both coherence and internal contrasts to keep the audience attentive. With this, we can see how potential distinctions between the experience of children and young people in presentational PME encounters, as opposed to dialogical and participatory PME encounters are beginning to take shape. Turino also points to the different 'head' or mind-set among musicians who habitually operate in the presentational field, and describes how musicians performing in presentational contexts 'think about and prepare what they are doing in a different way' (ibid., p.55). This would corroborate the assertion of this research that children and young people experience meaning-meaning differently depending on the mode of PME within which they are engaging.

In terms of the contextual features of presentational performance, Turino remarks that the most common element for all musical genres is the social aspect, where presentational events can connect individuals and where 'the presentation of a given musical style creates a fulcrum around which given identity groups can form or be maintained' (2008, p.61). This leads to cultural cohorts forming or in terms of this research, communities of musical practice often forming around particular presentational styles. With this in mind, he presents 'style features' that he has identified as being characteristic of presentational performance:

*Closed, scripted forms; organised beginnings and endings; extensive variation available; individual virtuosity emphasised; repetition balanced with contrast; variability of rhythms possible; transparent textures/clarity emphasised; varied textures and density for contrast; piece as a set item.*  
(Turino 2008, p.59)

A useful theoretical underpinning to support the final area of the presentational PME spectrum is Small's (1998) concept of musicking. Small (1998) discusses performing, listening, and composing (and rehearsing) not as separate processes but all aspects of one great human activity he calls musicking. He states that the fundamental nature and meaning lie not in objects but in action – in what people do. Small explains that 'it is only by understanding what people do as they take part in a musical act that we can hope to understand its nature and the function it fulfils in human life (2008, p.8). He proposes a concept of musicking which is 'to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practising, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing (ibid. p.9). He also extends the meaning of musicking 'to what the person is doing who takes the tickets at the door [...] or the roadies who set up the instruments and carry out the sound checks or the cleaners who clean up after everyone else has gone' (ibid.). They too, he explains, 'are all contributing to the nature of the event that is a musical performance' (ibid.). Small's concept of musicking allows us to expand the concept of presentational PME for Music Generation to include those activities which connect to and enhance children and young people's experience of presentational PME as musicians.

### **5.29. Connecting across the presentational PME spectrum areas**

The four aforementioned presentational PME areas are closely entwined and children and young people were often observed engaging in two or more of the areas in close succession in the context of live performances and recording sessions. For example, consider the following scenario: a group of young rock musicians record their music to listen back to it and improve it, before uploading it to YouTube and SoundCloud in order to promote their music and receive feedback from their growing fan base (experienced as recording). These young musicians are then invited to play for their peers and a public audience at a local band showcase event (experienced as musician). On the day of

the showcase, they need to make sure that they liaise with the sound engineer and have a good sound check, set up the stage with their equipment, communicate effectively with their mentor musician and MEP coordinator, and think about how they are going to interact and communicate with their audience (experienced as musicking). Before the event, they also need to source advice on the best ways to reach their listeners to promote the event as well as increase awareness about their upcoming EP launch (experienced as musicking). When they have played their set, the young musicians have a chance to join the audience, listen to, and enjoy the other local bands from their area that are also showcasing (experienced as audience). This account, while brief and representing just one slice of a much broader music-making experience, displays the potential diversity of a presentational performance experience for children and young people. Each area describes a distinct presentational PME context which facilitated meaning-making experiences for children and young people. It provides a glimpse into the various ways that musicians, coordinators, and others can think about designing and embedding a range of presentational PME opportunities for children and young people, and it reveals the interconnectedness of each area of the presentational PME mode.

### **5.29.1 Presentational PME as musician**

In essence, the area of presentational PME as musician includes all those performance contexts where there was a clear separation between musician (child/young person) and audience (others) in the presentation of their prepared musical material. The presentational performances encountered in the research in which children and young people engaged as musicians ranged from the more spontaneous and informal – such as those that happened after a lesson/workshop or amongst peers – to what were described by musicians and young people alike as ‘high stake’ performances – such as those which were organised in advance and often took place at a mid-point or the end of a programme with invited guests in live music venues.

Each research subcase had rich examples of children and young people performing in presentational contexts. The classical strings programme participants (CS1SC2) were particularly aware of presentational PME as a mode of performance, and examples of participatory performance rarely entered our conversations. In focus group conversations with the children, presentational performances were regularly referred to, most often with regard to the children’s experience performing at a local feis and the Christmas concert which was to take place in the local church. During the early-years music programme (CS1SC1) there was less focus on the presentational PME mode, and only on one occasion did I observe the children performing as musicians in front of an audience. This, in fact, occurred outside the context of the programme when the children performed Christmas songs for their parents and other teachers at the end of the school term. This said, it is suggested that instances of presentational PME occurred within the fabric of the primarily participatory PME programme (for example, where children were asked to sing a particular line of a song or perform an action on their own in front of the group). The response of the child when this happened (an increase in excitement/enjoyment or display of shyness) suggests that different meaning-making was occurring across participatory and presentational PME modes.

The performance contexts and spaces observed across the research process were incredibly diverse and included those which took place in primary, post-primary, and community settings; performances by groups of young children to parents/guardians in early-years settings; large-scale cross-MEP choral ensemble performances in public spaces; a strings performance by a group of children at a competitive Feis Ceoil context; a young jazz trio performing at a National Conference; band showcase events which gave young musicians an opportunity to perform their new material live; concert hall performances which arose from cross-MEP musical collaborations; and open air festival performances to discerning public audiences. Their musical material (usually that which had been prepared in dialogical PME contexts) was unsurprisingly diverse in terms of instrumentation involved, musical genre, arrangement, duration, etc. Also diverse was the

spectrum of musical, personal, and relational meaning which presentational performances elicited for children and young people.

Four sub-areas are considered within the presentational PME as musician area:

- (i) Presentational PME as musician and meaning-making
- (ii) An integrated approach across PME modes
- (iii) Presentational PME as an extrinsic motivational tool
- (iv) Presentational PME as 'Destination'

#### (i) Presentational PME as musician and meaning-making

The research revealed that presentational performances were rich sites for the nurturing of children and young people's meaning-making potential and the ultimate realisation of musical flow experience. By inhabiting the role of performing musicians in real-world performance contexts, presentational performances provided children and young people with a musical, physical, and social space to intrinsically connect with, experience, and share their musical endeavours as solo performers or through collaborative group efforts. The meaning-making experienced by children and young people arose from the fact that these performance opportunities generally required prior dedicated practice and commitment, they required the development of a range of skills in order to perform confidently and proficiently, they were risk imbued endeavours where children and young people's meaning-making experiences were heightened in terms of what could possibly 'go wrong', they facilitated the co-creation of meaning with children and young people's peers, and they were opportunities where children and young people could affirm their musical identities and abilities, experience musical agency, and directly express their music-making to others.

The multitude of ways of experiencing meaning-making was observed in presentational PME contexts. Presentational performances provided an opportunity for young musicians to experience musical meaning in performing for listening, observant, critical audiences. They provided opportunities to connect with their music-making in a different way, to test out musical ideas, and to gauge audience reactions. Children and young people understood that audiences were reacting to them – that attention was on them and that they were being listened to. Presentational performances were heightened experiences where those conditions of flow were often present – for example, feedback was always immediate from attentive audiences. Presentational performances were interpreted by one musician as the continuation stage of a musically creative process which allowed children and young people to completely focus on experiencing their own music-making:

*I think that performance and maybe especially public performance is another stage of the creative process with a piece of music and I think that we've to get away as musicians and maybe enable our students to get away from their fixation with themselves sometimes... it's a good exercise to think of the music as something objective and that in some way they're a vehicle for the music and that if they can think of that as a concept that they're a vehicle for the music and performing it then they're part of the creative process and it's not just about them being up there with everybody looking at them. I think that it just brings it along to another stage. And I think that something happens in that process that is transformative and I think that mostly it's positively transformative I think mostly and I'm not saying always but I think mostly.*

*(Maureen, choral educator, musicians' focus group)*

The personal meaning experienced when performing for audiences was alluded to by children and young people. In each sub-case, parents alluded to the presentational PME mode, most often with reference to the increase in confidence that this mode of performance would afford their children. Well-being factors alluded to by children and young people included feeling confident, proud, happy, 'believing in yourself', and 'wanting to do it all over again' after a presentational performance had occurred. One young person revealed that 'it kind of makes you feel good because you're able to show other people what you can do' (CS1SC2). Other focus group interviews with children and young people revealed that a sense of accomplishment, fun, success, self-esteem, psychological health, and self-identity also accompanied children and young people's engagement in presentational performance activities. Presentational performances also created opportunities for children and young people to experience relational meaning through interacting and working closely with one another and/or with an experienced musician in preparing for and 'executing' the performance. Presentational performances were often large-scale public sharing endeavours where children and young people were attempting to elicit meaning-making amongst diverse audiences. This meaning-making experienced through interacting with others traversed those previously discussed dialogical contexts, into rehearsal spaces, and on to the stage itself.

Presentational PME was observed to be closely integrated with dialogical and participatory PME and the meaning-making that occurred within each respective mode. Moreover, as well as providing the conditions for musical, personal, and relational meaning to occur, presentational PME contexts functioned as either extrinsic motivational tools or musical destinations for children and young people to strive towards.

#### (ii) An integrated approach across PME modes

The prior preparation of children and young people for presentational performances was key for musical, personal, and relational meaning-making to occur. This musical preparation usually took place in dialogical PME contexts and in terms of children and young people's self-directed practice, although participatory PME contexts were also creative and safe spaces where the skills required for presentational performances were tested and honed. That is, it was revealed that there were flexible pathways between the presentational PME mode and the other PME modes. One musician described how performance is a ritual, and a 'formula for putting what they've learned [in dialogical contexts] into practice'. While dialogical PME has its own meaning-making potential and purpose, as previously discussed, this musician believed that the experience of presentational performance cannot be taught, and as she explained 'you have to go through it and you have to do it and that's why I think that it's important that they do it'. It is important therefore that musicians do not think of dialogical contexts as ends in themselves, but as meaning-making experiences which should ultimately lead to and prepare for extended meaning-making experiences in presentational contexts.

Musicians also spoke about their responsibility in dialogical contexts to adequately prepare children and young people for presentational performance encounters. One musician emphasised the importance of such preparation to avoid potential barriers to meaning-making for children and young people who 'weren't yet comfortable within themselves' to engage in presentational contexts:

*I can see the benefits of it and it's our job to really try and encourage young people to do it and prepare them properly for it because preparation is a big thing. [...] I wonder about letting every child... I think that there's an opinion that every child should be allowed to perform and I wonder is there a danger around that if they're not properly prepared or if they're not practising are you setting a child up for a big knock... a creative monster.*

*(Dympna, piano tutor, musicians' focus group)*



The links between meaning-making in dialogical contexts and meaning-making in presentational contexts were not always clearly and strongly aligned however. In one subcase (CS3SC3), a young person described the extent to which she enjoyed the relationship and interactions that had developed with the musician facilitating her guitar programme (i.e., within dialogical PME), yet the musician indicated that while relational meaning was certainly being achieved, the musical process of engaging the young person in developing skills and practising for the end-of-year presentational concert was proving considerably challenging. This young person revealed that she had not previously had the opportunity to perform in a presentational ‘concert’ context, so realistically, she could perhaps not envisage the musical effort or the ‘sufficiently cued strategies’ that were required to sufficiently prepare for a concert performance. From this, we could read that a useful window on children and young people’s motivations (or lack thereof) for presentational PME is the degree to which they are perceived to be experiencing musical and personal and relational meaning in preparation for presentational PME. Moreover, the balance of meaning-making which is facilitated for children and young people by the musician(s) is an important consideration. For instance, it could be argued that the young musician mentioned required a greater degree of extrinsic guidance towards musical meaning-making in her dialogical PME contexts, accompanied by relational and personal meaning-making, in order for her to reach the goal of being intrinsically motivated to participate in a presentational PME context.

### *(iii) Presentational PME as an extrinsic motivational tool*

Presentational performances, regardless of whether or not they took place in private or public arenas, were often the most powerful and motivational extrinsic goals for which many children and young people were determined to prepare and ‘work hard’ in the months, weeks, and days preceding a gig or concert. With this effort came the anticipation that they would experience musical, personal, and relational meaning as they engaged in the moment in presentational PME contexts. Children and young people’s effort during this time was often motivated by the inherent satisfaction which accompanied preparing for performances – most often in dialogical PME contexts – and children and young people anticipated experiencing these intrinsic benefits during their presentational performance. Of course, as in all contexts, there were children and young people in dialogical contexts who required greater external encouragement and motivational goals, and presentational performances were regularly employed by musicians as a motivational strategy to encourage those children and young people to practice and improve on their instrument/voice. One musician (CS2SC2) in fact indicated the young people’s level of engagement significantly deepened when they became aware that there was a concert on the horizon. He described how the young people’s concentration and awareness of what was happening increased:

*They concentrated more than ever today when I said it [...] and they definitely became much more aware of what was happening... they took it much more serious*  
(Martin, jazz guitarist/guitar tutor, CS2SC2)

Presentational performances were also perceived as useful motivational strategies for children and young people given the simple fact that they anticipated ‘getting up’ in front of and performing – often in public – to an audience of familiar and unfamiliar faces. Interestingly, with regard to audience composition, one group of children interviewed who were participating in a classical strings programme (CS1SC2) strongly indicated that they would be more motivated to perform in front of a group of other musicians or children/young people who understood ‘how hard it was to get there’ rather than a group of non-musicians who did not necessarily understand the previous effort involved. This suggests that a diverse audience composition – including other musicians and young music learners – would have the effect of further motivating children and young people to prepare for presentational performances.

A number of musicians described their process of using group performances as motivational tools to encourage and increase a child/young person's confidence in presentational performance. One musician explained how he would encourage a child or young person to engage in group performance until the child/young person becomes 'closer to that group' and eventually they 'push themselves' to perform. In this way, the group dynamic and associated relational meaning becomes a motivational tool for a child/young person's engagement in presentational performance:

*If it's an individual performance... if you're getting up to play, that's a different thing to a group performance as well. You might feel... that young person that's nervous let's say getting up in an individual performance might actually feel completely different if they were getting up to perform with 20 others... you know... and I always put it down to a football team or soccer team. If you join a club and when it comes to getting out there to play for your team you know that you are going to go out there and play for them. Are you going to be part of that team that makes this happen... in a sense... but if a person doesn't want to perform... I'd have no problem in keeping that person with me and I'd encourage them to the best of my ability to get up there and perform with the others and what eventually happens is that you see them getting closer to that group and then they push themselves to perform solo  
(Roland, electronic music artist/hip-hop tutor)*

It must also be said that in some cases, while presentational performances were used as motivational tools by musicians, the opportunity to perform in concerts had to be earned through hard work and effort. As one coordinator pointed out, it was not always a given that children and young people would have the opportunity to perform:

*The kids talk the talk and they want to do this and they want to do concerts but they don't turn up some of the time. The school principal wanted the kids to do a concert at the end but the tutors were saying 'no, the kids haven't been here'. That's like rewarding them for something they haven't done [...] and they can't do the gig because they haven't learned anything.  
(MEP coordinator)*

There was also awareness amongst some musicians that children and young people may not always be at the stage where they are 'ready' to engage in presentational performances. Given that there are often 'risks' involved, it was indicated that each child and young person needs to be considered individually in terms of their readiness and willingness to perform. The following are interview extracts from focus group musicians where this was indicated to be the case:

*I think that everyone needs to be treated as an individual really and each individual has their own needs and they're all different so for some people it works and for some people it doesn't. Performance is sort of high risk... like your football analogy... where you either win or you lose a performance... it either goes well or something goes wrong but there's not really very much middle ground. Like a certain percentage loses and sometimes it's not even their fault because it's like this microphone that they're singing on keeps feeding back the whole time and it's completely out of their control and they're standing there and feeling really bad about themselves... those sort of risks.  
(Joan, flautist/early-years musician, musicians' focus group)*

*I agree with it in saying 'If you want to' because there are some kids there that we have in our MEP and if you literally put them on a stage they would melt into a million pieces because they're not there yet but you know that they will get there because I think that it's just that knowing if they're ready to do it or not because there's one guy... but all his songs are about how he's a horrible person and no one*

ever likes him... and that's why in a few years' time all the girls will like them... he'll be 'so sensitive and so deep'. He's a very, very, good song-writer and he's only 16 but we couldn't put him on stage for the best part of 10 months because he just wouldn't have been able for it and then just two months gone he played his first gig and he was beyond nervous but we knew that he would be fine and he went up and he was 'that was amazing... that was brilliant... that was excellent' so I think there's the knowing of when to do it.

(Paul, guitar player/singer/guitar teacher, musicians' focus group)

I can think of examples where kids mightn't sign up to particular music programmes because they know they will have to be involved in a performance which is a pity whereas if they didn't have to do that they might have signed up for it if they knew that it was going to be in the privacy and in a safe environment. Others thrive on it so you can't say.

(Roland, electronic music artist/hip-hop tutor)

#### (iv) Presentational PME as 'Destination'

Many children and young people had not previously had the opportunity to engage meaningfully for/within presentational contexts, or did not internally realise what they were working towards and striving to achieve. These children and young people had not yet developed the strong self-desire or intrinsic motivation to work towards presentational performances and the reasons for this were manifold and complex. They were, in effect, living the intention of the musician in a dialogical context, a coordinator, or other partner. In these instances, children and young people had to trust in the intention of the musician for them to reach the destination of a presentational performance. As an example of this, Marie (classical piano/singer, musicians' focus group) described her experience of facilitating a cross-primary school choral programme where each group of primary school children was tasked with learning a different part of a song. At the end of the programme, each school was to come together for a 'mass' performance which meant that the children were unable to envisage the final musical 'destination'. Marie describes the 'stepping stone' nature of guiding the children on their journey towards the presentational performance and the trust which she had to build with them despite the fact that they could not see the 'bigger picture':

*On the choral programme that we had last year, the idea was the tutors had so many schools that they were involved in. It could be town schools or it could be country schools or whatever. Some schools performed on a regular basis and some schools never performed in their lives and we had a set repertoire [...] Now, we didn't start with them until September, so coming up to Christmas we had a set repertoire and the whole idea then was that over a period of five days we had five different performances. So we'll say the schools were geographically put together so that it didn't matter about their experience or anything else but they were geographically put together to do this mass performance and then to do an individual performance. Now, it was very challenging because the repertoire was not easy at the best of times [...] I had five schools and I had two schools doing one part and another school doing another part so in a sense the kids didn't really understand what was going on at the time. They had individual performances to do as well. So my hopes for them [...] I kept trying to reiterate to them that 'come with me... go with the flow... do what I'm doing... try and take it on board... try and learn it... try and enjoy the experience and when you come together as a group you'll know what I'm talking about and you'll see the bigger picture... you'll understand what the performance was about and the experience which you should get at the end of that should be something of 'wow... I did it' or 'wow... did you hear us all singing together it was just amazing'. So we did a workshop with them just before they did the performance but it was hard and... Because the kids didn't know me from Adam and you're going*

*in there and you're straight in and you want them to trust you straight away which is an awful expectation from a child and to take on board that what you're doing is bringing them on a journey and it was a journey from day one but they wouldn't see where they were going until they actually got to the destination. That was my hope – that they understood that when they got to the destination the experience that they got was fulfilling. The whole process... it was built over a period of time so that it wasn't a case of 'you have to learn this to get to here'. It was like just stepping stones and they were stopping off on their journey to finally get to where they were going but they were stopping in different areas and you know... they had their own group performance to do as well.*

*(Marie, classical piano/singer, musicians' focus group)*

### 5.29.2. Presentational PME as audience

In every context that children and young people were observed engaging in presentational PME as musicians, the great likelihood was that other children and young people were simultaneously engaging in presentational PME as audience. This observation was made across numerous subcase contexts – for example, at band showcase events, in school gymnasiums performances, at festivals, and at large-scale choral ensemble performances. While this area of the presentational PME mode is perhaps less of a focus in the research to that of presentational PME as musician, it does have certain significance in the context of meaning-making and the construction of possible selves for children and young people. The value of creating those conditions which allow children and young people to experience the presentational music-making of 'real world' musicians and construct future possible musical selves in the process has already been spoken about in the context of Section 3: Possible Selves. In fact, a Go See initiative by Sligo MEP is designed to specifically support young people and the music sector 'by encouraging attendance at music events' and encouraging young people 'to support and experience the best of live music performed in Sligo throughout the year'.<sup>57</sup> 'Live Experiences', a programme strand in Limerick City MEP, engages children and young people in 'exciting, energetic and interactive live performance experiences in schools across Limerick city featuring the Music Generation Limerick City Backline Band. These are two of many initiatives across Music Generation's infrastructure which encourage children and young people to experience the presentational performances of others musicians.

The impact of such experiences on children and young people emerged over the course of the research. Young people in one subcase spoke about feeling inspired to continue and develop their own music-making upon seeing other young people in concert. In another subcase, the residual feeling for one child was that of 'I could do that!'. Presentational PME experiences as audience are therefore important motivational tools to encourage children and young people in their own music-making. In this vein, a focus group musician suggested that children and young people who may not be comfortable within themselves and have the confidence to perform on stage could observe their peers performing and eventually come to the realisation that they can also perform.

*I think that we should definitely encourage but then 'if you want to do it' because some kids just literally will not want to do it right now because they won't be comfortable within themselves to do it but then when they see all their mates doing it they'll say 'well actually I wouldn't mind doing it because I'm just as good as them'.*  
*(Paul, guitar player/singer/guitar teacher)*

Similarly, a musician in one subcase (CS3SC2) stressed the importance of creating safe and informal presentational spaces for children and young people to perform; a first step for those who do not yet wish to perform could be to see their peers perform in these informal environments:

*Next week now we're doing the Christmas thing... and it's just like a little party... it could be anything... and if they don't want to get up and do something they don't have to but I think that they all nearly will. Once they see... most of the girls I'm doing the singing with they're all doing stuff... they want to because they've been working the last few weeks and they want to show off what they've been working on... and some mightn't and that's ok too but I think that if they see their other peers doing it in that kind of an environment where it's not kind of 'this is the stage you have to get on it and sing this now'. It's just a relaxed thing. And once they see then, 'actually it's not that scary'; you know... that the next step then they might go and perform at a little concert...*

*(Sara, singer/song tutor, CS3SC2)*

There are perhaps then occasions where musicians should take into account the needs of the child/young person and encourage them to participate in presentational performances as audience until they have developed the confidence to engage as musician.

### 5.29.3. Presentational PME as recording

Another means by which children and young people presented their music-making to others was through various forms of media – CDs, YouTube, SoundCloud, electronic media, and other online fora. Of course, recording is a strong and central component of several musical genres such as DJing, hip-hop, rap, and electronic music. Across all musical genres and practices however, recording as a way of capturing and presenting music-making had several important functions:

- » musicians employed recording as a motivational tool to encourage children and young people to perform at their best and capture their music-making as a marker of where they were currently 'at' with their music;
- » recording was useful as a tool for children and young people to listen back to their own music by themselves or with other young musicians to critique their own music as 'their own audience'. In this way, recording for presentation was a safe means by which children and young people could present their music before a more 'high risk' live presentational performance;
- » recording was a means by which children and young people could share their music with others without having to organise a concert or perform on stage in front of others;
- » recording allowed children and young people to attempt to play a particular piece of music or song many times to 'get it right'.

The following quote from a focus group musician encompasses many of these points:

*I'd use recording quite a lot for them to... sometimes they might want... to get the best results from a recording so they'd keep at it and at it until they get it right. And then that way they get to share their music without having to 'perform' it as well so they still get to share it on the internet with everyone they know but they don't have to stand there in front of everyone. [...] With recording you get lots of tries at it and you're allowed to get it wrong lots of times before you get it right. They're hearing where they're going wrong and they do it again and fix that... they are their own audience until it gets to a point that they decide that they're willing to share it which is when it's finished. Sometimes they want to share it before it's finished and you're*

*like 'no no, we should wait and work on it a bit more'.  
(Roland, electronic music artist/hip-hop tutor)*

There was also a great deal of recording which took place but which was initiated and led by musicians, coordinators, and others beyond the children and young people themselves. These recordings, audio and audio-visual, were often used for promotion, raising awareness of the activities of local MEPs, and engaging the wider community in the children and young people's musical doing. It is important however that the intention of recording activities align with the meaning-making of children and young people in music, and that children and young people are consulted and 'have a say' insofar as is possible with respect to how and why recordings are conducted.

#### **5.29.4. Presentational PME as musicking**

For any presentational performance as musician, there are diverse activities which take place in and around the performance – activities described as musicking which children and young people can become involved in to ensure the coming together and success of the presentational performance. For children and young people across Music Generation's infrastructure, this could include promoting the concert on a local radio station, efficiently sound-checking their instrument and/or band, confidently introducing their musical material in-between sets to the audience, composing new songs or music, creating promotional materials for their presentational music-making, or dealing with the logistical issues which arise in the context of live performances. These activities, while they do not encompass the act of music-making itself, are valuable and meaningful for children and young people and are entwined with the experience of presentational PME as musician. They are recognised and valued as an area of the presentational PME spectrum insofar as they lead children and young people to experiencing presentational PME as musicians.

This area is inspired by Small's (1998; 1999) conceptualisation of music as social action, where 'to music is to take part in any capacity in a musical performance, and the meaning of musicking lies in the relationships that are established between the participants by the performance' (1999, p.9). Presentational PME as musicking extends and reimagines Small's concept to align with the diverse activities that children and young people were observed engaging in while pursuing music-making as musicians in presentational PME contexts. That is, during research observations of presentational PME contexts, there was generally another layer of dynamic and meaningful activity in which children and young people engaged. Those activities that define this area were very much connected to the performance of the music itself, were quite distinct however from the music-making that was taking place, yet the occurrence of the music-making often relied on these activities taking place. The type of activities that inform this area and associated implications include but are not limited to:

- » children and young people's music rehearsals. For example, how do children and young people rehearse effectively? Where and from whom do they learn these skills?
- » children and young people's communication and interaction onstage. Is it the responsibility of musicians to educate young musicians in the art of presenting? To where can children and young people look for advice and expertise?

- » the organisation of presentational PME events. What are the major considerations that a young band must take into account when organising their own concert? Where do they look to for help, guidance, and support?
- » the recording of music for albums/EPs, radio play, online streaming, etc. Where can young people learn the necessary skills required to navigate the music industry as professional musicians? Where do they look to for expertise in management, digital marketing, PR, licensing, copyright, and record labels, etc.?

As young people become more proficient in music-making and enter the often complex world of presentational performance, there are other needs which must be met beyond those of instrumental/vocal teaching and learning. The major implication of this area of the presentational mode is that there is a growing need for young people, in particular, to be educated in many aspects of the real world of presentational music-making.

## Chapter 6.

# An ecological model of partnership for Music Generation

### 6.1. Introduction

Partnership is the underpinning principle on which Music Generation was established, the modus operandi, and the core means by which it continues to strive towards achieving its goals. Emanating from ideas espoused in Music Network's *Report on a feasibility study* (2003) and embedded in Music Generation's policy document, Music Generation believes that 'working in partnership with individuals, organisations, agencies and government departments is critical in achieving a long-term, sustainable infrastructure for the future development of performance music education in Ireland' (Music Generation Policy & Priorities 2010-2015, p.2). Music Generation's vision statement encompasses the principle of partnership as a way of working, where through partnership, Music Generation aims to:

*establish a national music education service of international excellence, where every child and young person in Ireland has local access to high-quality music education.*  
(Music Generation Policy and Priorities 2010-2015, p.2)

The development of a national 'non-mainstream' performance music education infrastructure through partnership has roots in conversations which occurred at the beginning of Music Generation's journey. At this time, many questions were raised as to the type of national programme that could potentially be designed, and the most important consideration at the time, according to Music Generation's National Director, was that of an 'open partnership structure' which would 'help to create a shift in how people operate and think' and 'ensure that any national programme that was developed would respond to local needs and contexts'. The philanthropic nature of the funding also strongly influenced the 'open structure' approach to partnership in terms of leveraging others to work in new and unfamiliar ways.

Although the focus on partnership is positioned towards the end of this report, it is in many ways the first part of a conversation which leads to a consideration of the modes of performance music education through which children and young people have meaning-making encounters, and ultimately construct associated future possible selves. In theory and in practice, different types of partnership-working enable this meaningful music-making possible selves continuum. Of the range of partnerships that the research witnessed, some were emerging, some were in the process



of finding ways of working together, and some were effectively achieving their aims. From a macro 'bird's eye' perspective of Music Generation, its partnership infrastructure is complex and continually evolving. To mentally navigate this terrain, the research has developed a way of thinking about Music Generation's partnership infrastructure. Each aspect of this should remember that the *raison d'être* for all partnership-working across Music Generation's infrastructure – from a music school's relationship with an MEP's Lead Partner organisation, to a musician's relationship with a parent/guardian, to the Arts Council's relationship with Music Generation's National Development Office – is to put in place those diverse conditions which can enable and support children and young people's meaningful music-making and their striving towards their musical, personal, and relational possible selves. That is, the experiences of children and young people are at the heart of what Music Generation sets out to achieve and it should never be 'partnership for partnership's sake'. This intention can get lost in the day-to-day negotiations that are part of partnership-working, and partners can sometimes lose sight of the ultimate purpose of their work. Rather, partnerships for Music Generation only have purpose when they stay focused on the meaningful music-making potential of children and young people, and when they assist individuals, groups, and organisations in getting to the centre of what Music Generation sets out to accomplish. Currently many partners understand this, but equally, there are those who have yet to come fully to understand this way of working. This was the broad perspective that grounded Music Generation's approach from the outset, and Music Generation must ensure that it keeps this grounded focus and that it brings along all others within this focus. It was also the perspective that guided and advanced the thinking for this aspect of the research, and it ultimately led to the development of the ecological model of partnership.

The initial focus of the research, as discussed in the meaning-making and performance music education chapters, was on investigating and capturing the experiences of children and young people as they encountered diverse music-making experiences across Music Generation's MEPs. As the research progressed, layers of partnership-working began to reveal themselves. This are linked by their common goal. It should be possible to follow a 'golden thread' – from the relationships of children and young people with others in their immediate music-making environments, to those partnerships which were revealed at local, national, and philanthropic levels which support strong positive outcomes for children and young people. Radiating from the experience of children and young people in each context are layers of partnership-working that are wide, diverse, and take many different shapes. It is a living system which functions, for the most part, to develop and embed an infrastructure which could achieve the overarching vision of Music Generation's donors. It is this living system that is described in this research as an ecological model of partnership across six levels. Each level, rather than being hierarchical, radiates outwards in all directions to support the music-making of those children and young people at its core.

Throughout this chapter, the consequences of establishing Music Generation as an 'open structure' are considered in terms of the six-level ecological model of partnership that emerged. The concept of partnership itself is also interrogated in terms of how it reverberates through each and every aspect of Music Generation, and the implications of partnership-working for the future direction of Music Generation are suggested. The following are synopses of the six levels of partnership which were identified within an ecological model of partnership for Music Generation (FIGURE 38):

#### Level 1: Interaction-level

This level involves children and young people's music-making interactions with others. These interactions are meaning-making partnerships which support children and young people in striving towards their future possible selves. As an example, consider a 14-year old young person's interaction with her saxophone teacher in weekly lessons and in other contexts along the PME-spectrum.

### Level 2: Individual-level

This level of partnership supports children and young people's music-making at an interaction-level. Individual-level partnerships are nurturing and fortifying partnerships which foster and strengthen the engagement of children and young people at an interaction-level. An example might be the relationship between a hip-hop tutor and youth worker which supports a young teenager as he engages in hip-hop workshops at his local community hub.

### Level 3: Meso-level

These are partnerships between local and individual levels. They are gatekeeper partnerships which facilitate engagement between the MEP and children/young people. They also work to develop trust and accommodate relationship-building between those at local and those at individual/interaction level. As an example, consider a choral composition project which happens with Transition Year students in a post-primary school. The school principal and classroom teacher act as gatekeepers between the local Music Generation initiative and the young people in their care.

### Level 4: Local-level

Local-level partnerships are symbiotic and synergetic partnerships where partners come together to achieve more than – and add value beyond – what could have been achieved separately, where resources and expertise are pooled and shared in order to achieve the partners' often diverse aims and intentions, and where collaborative efforts are encouraged in planning and implementing programmes and developing the roles required for such collaborative work. As an example, Na Píobairí Uilleann has worked with two MEPs to establish uilleann pipes programmes. With this partnership, Na Píobairí Uilleann can achieve its aim of promoting the uilleann pipes and generating and nurturing an interest in playing the uilleann pipes amongst children and young people, and MEPs can achieve their aim of providing access to high quality instrumental tuition to children and young people who may not otherwise have had such access.

### Level 5: National-level

National-level partnerships within Music Generation's ecological model of partnership are transformative, advocacy, and/or governing partnerships which have the potential and capacity to influence the direction and efficacy of local-level operations in line with the wishes of the donors. The partnership with the Department of Education and Skills is an important national facilitating partnership. Other partnerships include Music Generation's partnership with the Arts Council which has objectives shaped around the strategic aims of each organisation. Interesting extensions of national-level partnerships are the international partnerships which have been forged, including those partnerships with the CME Institute for Choral Teacher Education and another with the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus.

### Level 6: Philanthropic-level

Philanthropic-level partnerships within Music Generation's ecological model of partnership are visionary and catalytic funding partnerships which productively and positively use their power and influence to challenge the status quo, shift thinking, and enable capacity building in performance music education on a national level.

**A** An Ecological Model of Partnership

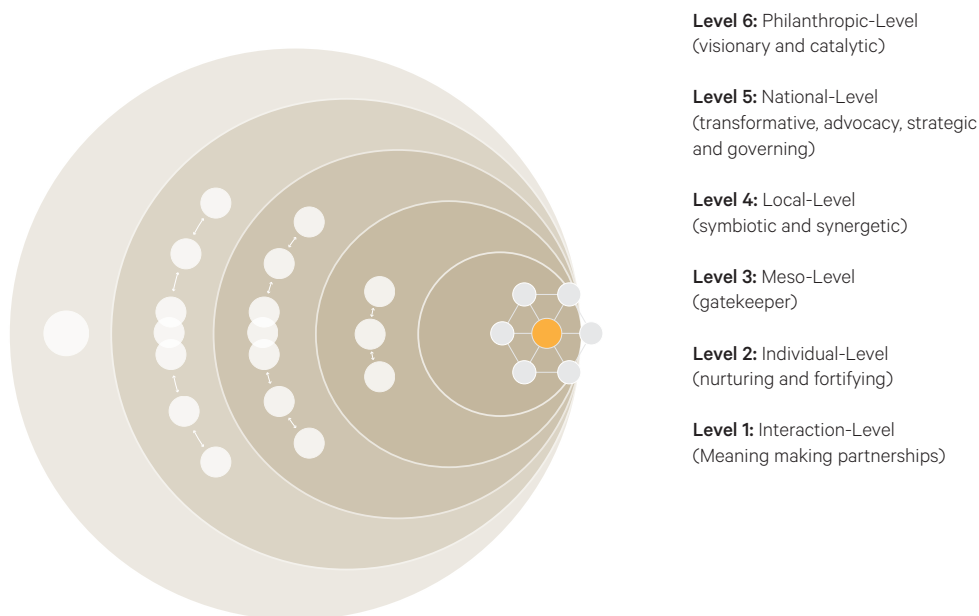


FIGURE 38: AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP FOR MUSIC GENERATION

**6.2. What's the point of partnership? A literature review**

The concept and practice of partnership is, of course, relevant and of interest to a vast number of organisations, fields, and sectors beyond those of music and the arts; the breadth of research on the matter is helpful in orientating a broad concept of partnership for this research. Boydell (2007), for instance, has compiled a useful literature review on partnerships for The Institute of Public Health in Ireland and many of her sources serve to illuminate the nature of partnership revealed across Music Generation's infrastructure. For instance, she cites Stern and Green (2005, p.270) who provide a definition of partnership as 'a programme that has a high level of commitment, mutual trust, equal ownership and the achievement of a common goal', as distinct from networks which might 'involve sharing information or other resources but not for the explicit purpose of doing working'. Huxham's (1996) idea of 'collaborative advantage' is particularly relevant to many of those partnerships which were identified in this research in that it involves 'the creation of synergy between collaborating organisations' which refers to something 'unusually creative' being achieved that no organisation could have achieved on its own. This point echoes one of the principles of philanthropy which has shaped Music Generation's approach to partnership. This creation of synergy to achieve common goals was a central motivation of many of the symbiotic partnerships identified across Music Generation's local infrastructure in particular, but also at national level. From a social policy perspective, Craig and Tailor (2002) highlight the negative impact of new partnerships having to 'hit the ground running'; this urgency, they say, can work against full partnership engagement as it does not allow sufficient time for building relationships and trust. This perhaps reflects a concern and challenge for Music Generation as Music Education Partnerships were tasked with quickly implementing programmes alongside the need to simultaneously form and develop effective supporting partnerships. Also particularly pertinent to the way that Music Generation's local partnership structures have been setup is Craig and Tailor's reference to the way in which partnerships tend to be developed within existing structures, processes, and frameworks as 'new rhetoric poured into old bottles' (2002, p.134). According to Boydell (2007, p.8), Craig and Tailor suggest that public sector cultures are so engrained that power holders are often unaware of the ways in which they perpetuate unequal power relations through use of language and procedures.

This resonates strongly with the many challenges and obstacles which Music Generation coordinators have often faced in attempting to embed new ways of working in their Lead Partner organisation (local authority/ETB) – new ways of working which have the ultimate purpose of supporting children and young people’s meaning-making in music and their striving towards their possible future selves.

A number of studies have also considered the area of effective partnership working in music education and in the arts sector more broadly speaking. For instance, Hallam (2011) draws on evidence of effective partnerships to explore the qualities which partnerships between policy makers and deliverers, providers and recipients can harness and deploy to support young people in accessing more meaningful and worthwhile music education experiences. He describes different types of partnerships: this includes Mackintosh (1993) and Stewart (2002) whose types of partnership may be separate or simultaneously present in a particular partnership. Macintosh (1993), for example, identifies partnerships which focus on a) transformation, where the aim is to ‘convince the other partner(s) of your own values and objectives’, b) synergy, where partnerships work to produce added value and something greater beyond what would have been achieved separately, and c) budget enlargement, where partnerships generate extra resources. Stewart (2002) on the other hand, identifies a) facilitating partnerships, where trust and accommodating relationships is imperative to the attainment of partnership goals, b) coordinating partnerships, which oversee in strategic and practical terms initiatives which a wide range of partners have committed themselves to make a contribution, and c) implementing partnerships, which are specific in focus and time-limited in nature and function to deliver pre-agreed projects. Other models, Hallam explains, describe types of partnership-working that is sequential and developmental such as Griffiths’ (2008) cooperation model which involves mostly the sharing of information as organisations get to know about each other’s work, and his collaboration model where two or more organisations understand each other’s work and collaborate over events or programmes. There is evidence therefore that effective partnerships can demonstrate a wide range of qualities, depending on the purpose and function of that partnership; this is reflected in this research with those partnerships at each level of Music Generation’s six-level ecological model of partnership functioning as visionary, advocacy, symbiotic, gatekeeper, etc. partnerships, and having the purpose of enabling children and young people to encounter meaningful music-making and take initiatives towards their future possible selves in and through music.

Zeserson (2012) suggests that fundamental to effective partnerships in music education is to understand the needs of the musical learner, and for those involved in supporting music learners to have ‘shared and agreed goals’ and to respect what each brings to the partnership. This aligns with the findings of this research, and the role and intentions of individuals and organisations across each level of the ecological model of partnership. Zeserson explains that effective partnership working is a function of effective relationships, and they thrive on trust, mutual respect and cooperation. She describes various roles which the musician in a music education programme context can assume. These align with the actions of Music Generation musicians in what this research has described as the interaction-level of an ecological model of partnership for Music Generation. These include, the musician as guide, facilitator, knowledge provider, animateur, ally, trainer, beacon, role model, and manager. Zeserson’s description of a ‘constellation approach’ to partnership which recognises, accommodates, and values the ‘shifting matrix’ of relationships that lie at the heart of partnership working is particularly descriptive and illustrative of the ‘constellation’ of shifting relationships that defines the ecological model of partnership developed in this research.

Finally, *Music and the power of partnerships* (Coll and Deane 2008) provides rich insight into collaboration and partnership-working from a UK perspective. Among the contributions which resonate with findings for Music Generation are the perspectives of Howdle (2008), Casson (2008), and Price (2008). Howdle (2008, pp.4-10) describes a ‘health check’ for local authorities to use as an aid in developing their music plans and ensure the best possible outcomes for young people: this health check might contain 1) ongoing mapping of resources in an area; 2) setting standards which are inclusive of the diversity of PME providers; 3) sustainably building capacity and skill at all levels and in all settings; 4) consulting children and young people and giving them a sense of ownership;

and 5) giving children and young people the best opportunities to reflect their musical achievements. Casson (2008) discusses partnership between music services and schools and notes the importance of 'blue sky' thinking in the initial creative exploratory phases of partnership.

*[It is] essential that all potential parties spend time together looking at the challenge ahead, and experience has shown that ease of communication between parties is directly proportionate to the success of the partnership. It is essential, and of utmost importance, to present the opportunity for everyone to express their individual hopes and ambitions.*

Price (2008) reflects on the pitfalls and pre-requisites of partnership and articulates fundamental questions which he believes determine the success of partnerships:

*How transparent were the partners in dealing internally with difficult issues as they arose? How were the (inevitable) balances of power and responsibility handled internally? How democratic was decision-making, and how involved in the partnership were young people? How flexible was the partnership when innovations floundered?*  
(Price 2008, p.106)

He also cites a number of factors which he believes impede partners from creating the right environment for collaborative innovation.

*The first is the absence of a culture where honest, respectful but self-critical debate is actively sought and valued [...] The second innovation-blocker is inherent risk aversion [which is] seen most starkly in large government-led initiatives but the trickle-down effect seeps into many publicly-funded projects, initiatives and organisations throughout the system [...] The third is resistance to change – from a number of quarters [...] Even when a desire to embed innovation through collaboration is held by senior managers, it usually requires a strong and visionary leadership to persuade practitioners to abandon long-held practices and explore new, often uncomfortable, areas of professional development.*  
(Price 2008, pp.107-108)

To avoid these pitfalls, Price suggests that partnerships can develop certain qualities which include: an enthusiasm to share knowledge and findings, not simply within the partnership, but with an external audience; a willingness to be 'open' in attitude and in terms of being inclusive; and a commitment to establishing a 'no-blame/no-censure' culture of trust (Price 2008, pp.108-111).

The breadth of literature is helpful in orientating a broad concept of the meaning of partnership for Music Generation and in providing rich viewpoints for a number of the salient issues which emerged across the six-level ecological model of partnership. Each insight helps to illustrate the fact that partners can hold a range of diverse intentions and can work together in diverse ways towards achieving their shared goals. Throughout the literature (as well as throughout the findings of this research) there are qualities which seem to permeate through each type of partnership – these are important and useful to bear in mind as the reader navigates this chapter. Among these are the need for partnerships at all levels to (a) work on establishing trusting relationships; (b) listen to one another intently and communicate openly and honestly; (c) focus steadfastly on the needs of children and young people; (d) consult children and young people in the process which will in turn inform the process; (e) always be in learning mode; and (f) be flexible and open to compromise, change, and critical feedback from others. These ideas are further built upon through the explication of each level of the ecological model of partnership which shortly follows. Before bringing the ecological model to life however, we will outline a perspective which proved particularly valuable in terms of inspiring the development of the multi-level conceptual model of partnership. This is the 'bioecological model of human development' first developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1994).

### 6.3. Inspired by Bronfenbrenner: an ecological model of partnership for Music Generation

When a classical viola player meets a young ensemble on a weekly basis to rehearse for his upcoming recital, or a young drummer practices in a music room recently set up at her local youth club, or a community musician facilitates an after-school song-writing project with a group of teenagers, it can be difficult to visualise the often complex layers of relationships, resources, supports, and decision-making – at a local, regional, and national level – which support and sustain these children and young people in their music-making endeavours. To construct a partnership framework for Music Generation which usefully and adequately reflects this complexity, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development has proven valuable. Bronfenbrenner's theory broadly argues that to understand how humans develop (in Music Generation's case, how children and young people experience meaning-making through PME and strive towards their future possible selves), one must consider the developing individual within the entire ecological system in which their growth occurs – both immediate and more remote. In other words, one must consider the interrelatedness of and bidirectional influences between the developing child/young person with their entire surrounding environmental contexts.

The bedrock of Bronfenbrenner's most recent iteration of his theory is what he calls a Process-Person-Context-Time model, which is simply a model which includes each of these components. The components which proved most useful in informing the development of an ecological model of partnership for Music Generation were 'process' and 'context'.<sup>58</sup>

### 6.4. Process

It is important to firstly articulate the central position of children and young people within the model. This ecological model of partnership for Music Generation was conceived of as wrapping around children and young people to support them in their meaningful music-making. The model of partnership includes diverse partnerships which effectively surround and 'look in' towards those children and young people who are their primary concern. To capture this, the research took Bronfenbrenner's proximal processes – the first proposition of his bioecological theory and re-conceptualised it in this research as proximal meaning-making processes. This is a useful concept in shaping this idea as it affirms that the progressively more complex meaning-making experiences of children and young people as they engage in music-making should remain at the nucleus of the ecological model of partnership. It also helps to align the focus of all partners in a child's/young person's immediate and more remote environments on their musical, personal, and relational meaning-making and their striving towards their possible selves. In this way, Bronfenbrenner's concept of proximal processes helps to effectively situate the child/young person's 'progressively more complex' experience within a much broader ecological model of partnership. On proximal processes, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) state that:

*[H]uman development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over an extended period of time. Such enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment are referred to as proximal processes.*

*(Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998, p.996)*

This is a good description of the types of music-making interactions for which Music Generation plans.

58 While the 'person' component of P-P-C-T which considers the physical, mental, and emotional characteristics of the developing person, and the 'time' component which considers developmental changes over time are potentially interesting directions for investigation within an ecological model of partnership (and in fact, are considered elsewhere in this document), 'process' and 'context' were of most relevance for the purposes of developing an ecological model of partnership.

Proximal processes also contains a second central proposition which, interpreted for Music Generation, refers to the link between a child/young person's proximal processes and their 'immediate and remote' environments – or context. That is, it includes their interactions and the contexts of these interactions.

*The form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes effecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person; of the environment – both immediate and more remote – in which the processes are taking place; the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration; and the social continuities and changes occurring over time though the life course and the historical period during which the person has lived.*  
(Bronfenbrenner and Morris 1998, p.996, emphasis in the original)

A child's/young person's proximal processes, in accordance with Bronfenbrenner's theory, cannot be separated from a consideration of their context. This interrelation between proximal meaning-making processes and context is the basis for the ecological model of partnership developed for this research.

### 6.5. Context

Bronfenbrenner developed a set of levels to describe this ecosystem. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, the child's/young person's immediate and more remote contexts involve several interrelated systems which impact on their development: 1) the interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person (microsystem); 2) the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (mesosystem); 3) the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives (exosystem); 4) the societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture (macrosystem); and 5) a final parameter which takes into consideration the impact of the passing of time on the individual in their microsystem (chronosystem).

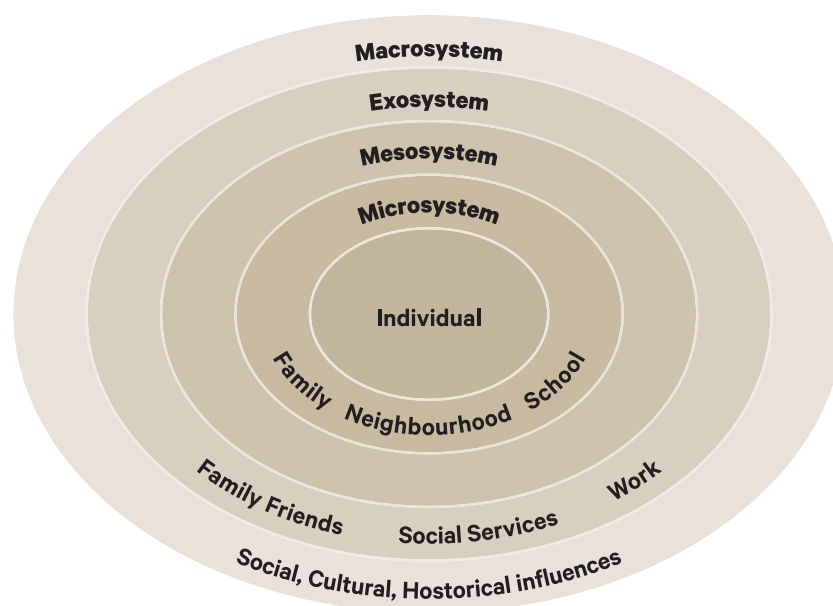


FIGURE 39: BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY.  
SOURCES: Bronfenbrenner, U. 1979. *The ecology of human development: experiments in nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Bronfenbrenner, U. 1989. Ecological systems theory. In: Vasta, R. (ed.) *Annals of child development*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, pp.187-249; Bronfenbrenner, U. 1993. The ecology of cognitive development: research models and fugitive findings. In: Wozniak, R. and Fischer, K. (eds.) *Development in context: acting and thinking in specific environments*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, pp.3-44.

This research was inspired by this model. In particular, the microsystem was found to be directly relevant to my interpretation of what comprises the nucleus of the ecological model of partnership for this research. This is the interaction-level (where children and young people engage in meaningful music-making with others). However, to capture the partnership ecosystem of Music Generation, significant departures from this model were made, in particular articulating the sub partnership ‘levels’ of the ecological model which are described as: 1) the interaction-level; 2) the individual-level; 3) the meso-level; 4) the local-level; 5) the national-level; and 6) the philanthropic-level. The background context and development of each level of the ecological model of partnership is considered throughout the remainder of this chapter.

### **6.6. Bringing the ecological model of partnership to life**

Throughout the following sections, each level of the ecological model of partnership for Music Generation is outlined and illustrated with salient examples from research. The intention throughout is to lead the reader along the ‘golden thread’ from the meaningful music-making encounters of children and young people across a diversity of contexts; to those supportive partnerships involving musicians, parents, and others in children and young people’s immediate environments; to those gate-keeper (meso) partnerships revealed in many contexts; to local-level partnership infrastructures; and finally, to the visionary philanthropic level. The issues, challenges, and implications inherent within each level are considered throughout. What is presented is a conceptualisation of what a partnership ecosystem for Music Generation could become; it is in many ways the ideal of what Music Generation is striving to achieve.

#### **6.6.1. Interaction-level: proximal meaning-making processes**

Interaction-level partnerships within Music Generation’s ecological model of partnership are those meaning-making partnerships between children/young people and others – through music-making – which support children and young people in striving towards their future possible selves.

Imagine a young teenager who regularly meets with a musician to learn a new song, improve their technique, compose a piece of music, or work on new material. They might also meet up with other young people on a daily or weekly basis to sing or play music in a participatory context, or practice their instrument solitarily at home or elsewhere. Another young boy might sing the songs that he has learned during his music workshop at home with his grandmother, or a classroom teacher might play an important role in musically engaging with the group of children in the days following their instrumental lesson. These young people are at the nucleus of an ecological model of partnership and they are regularly engaging in ‘progressively more complex reciprocal interaction’ through music-making with musicians, with other children and young people, and with other individuals. The ‘proximal processes’ which occur at what I have described as the interaction-level of Music Generation’s ecological model of partnership are deeply resonant with how children and young people’s musical engagement has already been described in this research across each PME-spectrum area. They have particularly strong parallels with the concept of flow as described in Section 4, where challenge and skill intersect to construct musical meaning, and they are inclusive of those music-making processes which lead children and young people to personal and relational meaning. There is a problem if this type of interaction is not happening, if it is stagnant, and if children and young people are not encountering music-making in progressively more complex ways.

The interaction-level for this research can be understood through Bronfenbrenner’s microsystem – the environment that influences the child most intimately. This environment comprises the interpersonal relations experienced by the developing child in a face-to-face setting, where the child is invited and permitted to engage in sustained and progressively more complex interaction with their immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner 1993, p.15). It is within the immediate environment of Bronfenbrenner’s microsystem that those aforementioned proximal processes operate. The interaction-



level of this ecological model of partnership for Music Generation therefore comprises the face-to-face interactions of a child/young person with those (musicians, friends, family, and others) in their immediate environments which invite and permit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex musical doing.

The experience of one young girl (Caley) in an early-years setting (CS1SC1) nicely illustrates the first level of the interaction-level and its fundamental concept of proximal meaning-making processes. Caley is 4-year old girl who met Lorna (the musician) each week with her friends and classroom teacher in the school's gymnasium. At an interaction level over the course of the programme, Caley directly interacted with four distinct groups of people who were perceived as supporting her meaningful music-making. These were: the musician, the other young children, the classroom teacher, and Caley's mother. The music-making interactions between Caley and those others in her immediate environment were revealed as being significantly meaningful in different ways for her. This suggests that those children/young people across Music Generation's infrastructure who have the opportunity to engage in music-making with diverse others in their immediate environments experience a richer and perhaps more dynamic spectrum of meaningful music-making compared to those who may not have access to such a range of music-making encounters.

While Caley's story is employed here as a means of illustrating each level of the ecological model of partnership for Music Generation for one child, the reader should remember that any child/young person who engaged in music-making across Music Generation's infrastructure could have been similarly considered in terms of their surrounding ecological model. That said, broader findings which consider the experiences of children and young people from across the research subcases are drawn upon where appropriate:

### 6.6.2. Interaction 1: Caley's relationship with the musician

Since week 1 of the programme, Caley built up a meaningful dialogical relationship with Lorna (singer/choral educator in early-years context, CS1SC1) who challenged Caley (and her friends) with new songs, accompanying movements, and a creative exploration of new sound materials; that is, through music-making, Lorna engaged Caley in progressively more complex reciprocal interaction (FIGURE 40).

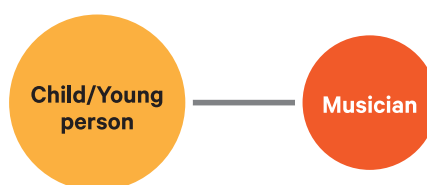


FIGURE 40: INTERACTION 1 OF THE INTERACTION LEVEL OF AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP

Interaction-level relationships occurred across each PME-spectrum area. Musicians across genres and practices were observed challenging children and young people in a range of contexts, from quasi-autonomous informal hangout contexts, to large choral ensemble contexts, to short-term composition projects, to electronic music workshops with smaller cohorts of young teenagers, etc.

### Considerations for Music Generation

This level of the ecological model of partnership stresses the importance of musicians connecting with children and young people in particular ways. This includes having the ability to musically challenge children and young people in a sustained manner, so that they can experience flow, and explore and construct vivid musical, personal, and relational possible selves through the interaction. There are implications which can be drawn out which relate to: a) the importance of designing and implementing longitudinal programmes, b) the need to increase the level of investment in the professional development of Music Generation's musician workforce, c) the need to design strategies which instil confidence in musicians that they can invest themselves in the musical lives of the children and young people with whom they are working, and d) the need to always consult children and young people themselves and involve them in shaping their musical journeys. From a pedagogical perspective, these findings also present a challenge to those musicians who may be required for various reasons to work with particularly large groups of children and young people; in these cases, musicians should strive to differentiate within such groups to ensure that the needs of individual children/young people are adequately met.

#### 6.6.3. Interaction 2: Caley's relationship with other children

Caley's reciprocal interaction was not limited to Lorna however, and she meaningfully engaged with her friends through music-making (FIGURE 41), taking turns passing the instrument (relational meaning), collectively helping one another to find a puppet, that Lorna had hidden in the gymnasium, through singing louder/softer (musical meaning through experiencing dynamics), and playing music rhythm games together. Concurrently, Caley's friends engaged in their own proximal processes and experienced meaningful reciprocal interaction with Caley and with one another. However, while it was observed that Caley had an opportunity to interact with the other young people in this way, these interactions in this instance were largely highly managed by the musician, with limited opportunity for free musical play and child-led interactions. As expressed in the context of autonomous participatory experiences, supporting such autonomous music-making would potentially expand children and young people's capacity to construct new meaning, to explore their own musical worlds, and develop new future possible selves in music.

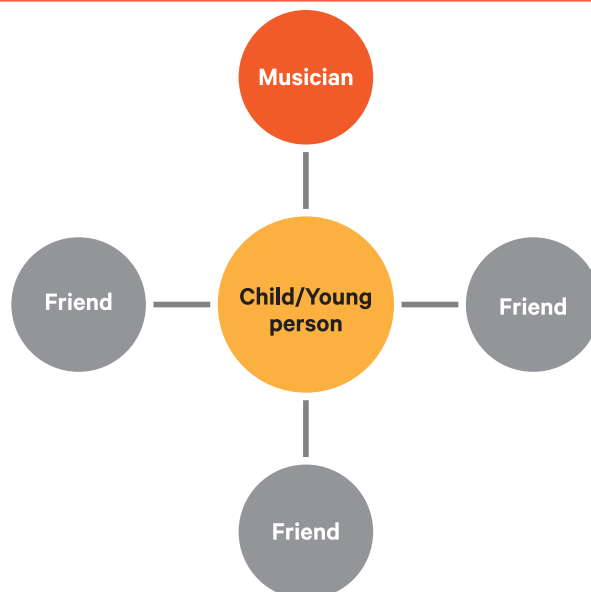


FIGURE 41: INTERACTION 2 OF THE INTERACTION LEVEL OF AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP

Across other subcases, there were observations made where it seemed that peer-to-peer interactions were not highly valued or facilitated (some musicians spoke of a lack of confidence in facilitating such interactions), and this immediately removed a potential path to rich meaning-making for the children and young people involved.

*Considerations for Music Generation*

From a wider Music Generation perspective, the findings at an interaction-level of the ecological model of partnership imply that peer-to-peer music-making opportunities for children and young people across Music Generation’s infrastructure should be further embedded and supported. Therefore, rather than focus solely on the musician-child/young person relationship in dialogical contexts, musicians in all genres/practices who work with young children and teenagers should be encouraged to provide opportunities for children and young people to interact independently of the musician. This could happen within the teaching and learning (i.e., dialogical) context itself, or it could occur in those encounters which have been previously described as quasi- and fully-autonomous. This then has implications for the resources (e.g. meeting spaces) and other supports which are put in place at local levels to facilitate these peer-to-peer music-making opportunities. It emphasises the meaning-making potential and value of children and young people’s creative music-making processes (for example, exploring invented song with young children) and suggests that music-making does not always have to strive towards an ‘end result’ or product. It also has implications for the strategies that are designed at national and local levels which bring together those musicians who have not developed the confidence and experience to facilitate such experiences with those musicians who have developed such group facilitation expertise.

**6.6.4. Interaction 3: Caley’s relationship with the classroom teacher**

Eilish, Caley’s classroom teacher, was very much fully engaged in the music workshop, sitting in the circle amongst the children, singing along with the songs, and being aware of the musician’s needs in terms of helping to guide and manage the group. Eilish was therefore the third significant individual at an interaction-level with whom Caley experienced progressively more complex musical interactions (FIGURE 42).

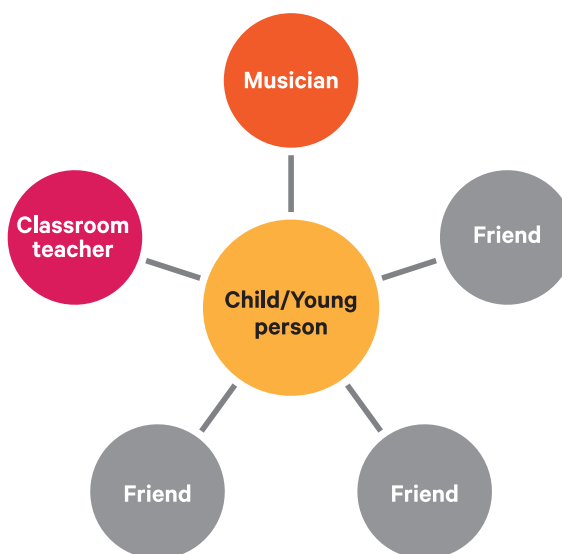


FIGURE 42: INTERACTION 3 OF THE INTERACTION LEVEL OF AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP

The musician (Lorna) was also very much aware of the important role that the classroom teacher could play in workshop contexts in participating and ‘leading by example’:

*Their role is really important. First of all, they are leading by example, I suppose, in everything that they do. They are doing this all day really. But especially in the workshop, the key thing is that they are participating, that they are not working [laughs], which sometimes happens. To be honest I haven't had that this year so I'm very fortunate. Because, if the children think that this isn't important for their teacher, their role model, that they see maybe more hours than they see their own parents... so if they think that this isn't important for them to participate in... then they don't concentrate as much. I think that's why all these programmes are working really, really well, like exceptionally well, because the teachers are heavily involved. They are really enjoying it. They are seeing how much their own children are getting from it, and they are responding to that as well, so it's a hugely positive environment that they are experiencing.*

*(Lorna, singer/choral educator in early-years context, CS1SC1)*

A significant percentage of Music Generation's programmes take place in primary school classroom contexts, and this means that generally speaking, there is a classroom teacher present in the room in these music-making contexts. Across the subcase observations, there was great variance in terms of the involvement of classroom teachers in music lessons/workshops – some classroom teachers, like Eilish, were proactive in their musical participation, others viewed the music workshop as an opportunity to continue on with their own desk work or converse with other teachers, others quietly observed from the side-lines, while a significant number of others were willing to get involved but seemed unsure as to the extent that they should or could participate.

To illustrate this issue, Catherine, a classroom teacher in another subcase (CS3SC3), raised some questions in relation to the role of the classroom teachers in a music lesson/workshop context. She clearly understood the value of her own participation in terms of supporting the children's educative experience, where she would be on-hand to explain something to the children that they may not have understood from the musician(s) explanation. Afterwards, when the lesson/workshop was over, Catherine explained that she would generally follow-up in discussing aspects of the music lesson/workshop with the children. However, she expressed the uncertainty which she felt around not knowing how much she should interact during the workshop, and indicated that this is something that could be teased out a little more with musicians (see individual-level which follows) with the potential outcome of reinforcing children's musical learning.

*From sport to music you're never quite sure about 'how much should I interact here?' or 'how much should we work together here?' And I don't know if that can be teased out a bit more even but I always interact... I nearly always interact... no matter who is in with us. And if I thought that the children weren't quite getting it the musician's way I'd rephrase the question another way or vice versa you know. So, I always try to interact and I always try to follow up a little bit afterwards so even chatting about what went on or what was expected you know...*

*(Catherine, classroom teacher, CS3SC3)*

Of course, a great number of Music Generation's programmes do not take place in classroom contexts, but they do involve the presence of other adults such as childcare practitioners, youth workers, healthcare specialists, etc. These individuals with diverse roles can potentially become involved in children and young people's music-making processes and support and enhance their music-making in workshops and other music-making contexts. However, they must firstly be invited to participate, and there needs to be an understanding between all involved as to the nature of their participation.

**6.6.5. Interaction 4: Caley’s relationship with parent/guardian**

The role of parents/guardians as a vital part of the young child’s music learning experiences in early childhood music programmes is widely agreed upon (e.g., Berrill 2013; Cooper and Cardany 2011). It is argued in the context of early-years programmes in particular that parents/guardians understand the developmentally appropriate practice of musical free play, would like to be engaged directly or indirectly in programmes for their children, and perhaps most importantly, that they often extend the musical activities of children beyond the timetabled workshop time and into the child’s home (Cooper and Cardany 2011, pp.104-105). As an example of the latter, a report (Berrill 2013) which documents the findings of *Tiny Voices*, a longitudinal early-years music programme, found that the musical experiences of the children travelled home with the children and were re-enacted in the home with the participation of the parents/guardians.

In focus group conversations, both Caley and her mother referred to Caley’s rich musical life beyond the context of Lorna’s early-years music workshop, and her mother (and grandmother for that matter) were evidently deeply aware of and supportive of Caley’s love of music and of singing in particular. With Caley’s mother’s interest and involvement in her music-making beyond the workshop space, Caley’s individual level music-making interactions were further enriched with musical, personal, and relational meaning (FIGURE 43). However, it became apparent over the course of my observations that there was little intentional crossover between the music programme and Caley’s lived musical experience at home beyond the context of the programme. In fact, many parents/guardians revealed in the focus group conversation that they were unaware that the programme was taking place in the first instance – on the one hand, this illustrates the trust that parents had developed with the school to only implement programmes which were in their children’s best interests (this was directly commented upon by parents/guardians as well as the school principal), but it also highlights the potential to involve parents/guardians to some, or in other cases, a greater extent. The argument here is not that programmes must crossover into music-making experiences at home, or must involve parents/guardians; however, the benefits of pursuing these opportunities are too significant and meaningful to ignore.

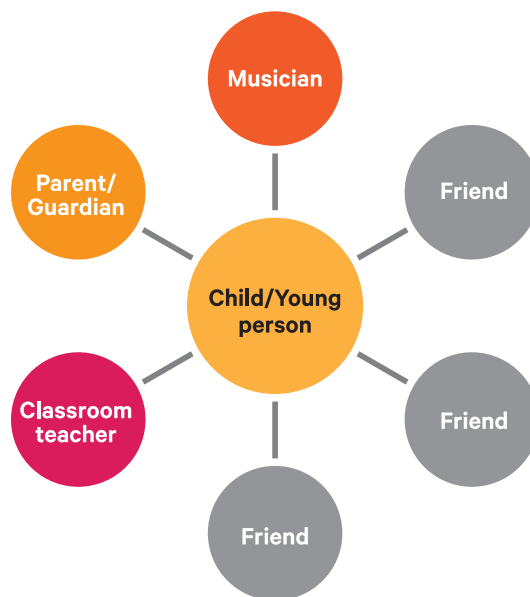


FIGURE 43: INTERACTION 4 OF THE INTERACTION LEVEL OF AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP

The mission to directly involve parents/guardians in their child's music-making, while perhaps often limited to a younger cohort of children can be hugely beneficial. There were many perceived benefits of nurturing the musical interaction between children and parents/guardians. Parents/guardians can help to motivate the child, they can help to explore and extend their possible future selves in music, they can help to resource their child's music-making (seeking out instruments or other opportunities to become involved in music), they can realise the value of investing time/money/energy in their child's musical lives (this includes those parents/guardians who take the time to drive their children to lessons every week), and they can become an integral part of the child's musical journey. The director of a community hub (CS3SC2) described a situation where the parent of one child commented after her son's concert performance that she didn't realise that her son was 'that good at music' – it was, she said, 'like the fog had moved from in front of his mother's eyes'. She continued to describe the impact that engaging parents/guardians in their child/young person's music-making can have:

*Even for the parents... it's huge... it's kind of like the secret weapon of music or a lot of the programmes. When you see parents' responses... to what their children can do... you suddenly see the fog lights disappearing out of the eyes and they go 'Jeepers I didn't know that they were that creative!', 'I didn't know that they could do that!', 'I didn't know that they were any good at anything!'. These are things that I've heard parents say. 'I didn't know that they were any good at anything' or 'I didn't know that they could dance' or 'I didn't know that they'd understand that'.*  
(Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)

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Encouraging parents/guardians to engage with their children/young people's music-making was not a priority in most subcases observed, but it is a layer of interaction that could certainly be explored to a greater extent than it currently is. Parents/guardians are potentially powerful partners in supporting and enhancing the musical lives of children and young people. The meaningful involvement of parents/guardians in the musical lives of young children is therefore an area worthy of consideration. Where possible, and with appropriate consideration of the wishes of the children and young people involved, parents/guardians could in the first instance be made aware of their child/young person's involvement in music-making. In terms of future implications, information sharing meetings could take place at the beginning of programmes to ensure that parents/guardians are included in the child/young person's musical journey, parents/guardians could be invited to attend presentational performances and other events to witness their child perform, music packs and other resources could be sent home in the case of early-years programmes and other programmes for young children to encourage parent/guardian involvement in music-making in the home environment – a valuable resource such as this would then have to be appropriately budgeted for in terms of recording/printing and remunerating the musician's time to compile such a resource.

#### 6.6.6. A sacrosanct space where meaningful music-making occurs

Findings suggest that opportunities to musically engage children and young people with a range of individuals beyond the typical child/young person-musician relationship could be sought out and encouraged. This could include designing strategies to meaningfully engage parents/guardians/other family members – potentially powerful partnership allies – across the PME spectrum areas; it could include more effectively engaging and communicating with classroom teachers/childcare professionals to support musicians in their music-making endeavours with children and young people; and it could include putting in place diverse conditions which 'open up' the spectrum of PME areas for children and young people to interact with diverse others at an interaction-level. Importantly, it also stresses the need to continually support musicians in developing their pedagogical practice so that they are equipped to engage in more complex musical endeavours over an extended period of time.

The relationships which children and young people forge in their immediate music-making environments are therefore dynamic, diverse, evolving, but most importantly, supportive of their ongoing music-making efforts. While the role of the musician is critical at an interaction-level, there are other individuals who can be welcomed into this sacrosanct space where meaningful music-making occurs. A wide and diverse tapestry of music-making across the spectrum of PME modes can support rich and meaningful interaction-level experiences for children and young people. There is however another partnership level – an individual-level – which ‘wraps around’ children and young people at an interaction level to support and strengthen their music-making engagement.

### 6.7. Individual-level

Individual-level partnerships, within Music Generation’s ecological model of partnership, are nurturing and fortifying partnerships which fostered and strengthened the engagement of children and young people at an interaction-level.

The individual-level of Music Generation’s ecological model of partnership is one ‘step’ away from the interaction-level in that it involves those previously mentioned individuals who orientate around the child/young person to support their music-making (e.g., musicians, parents/guardians, classroom teachers, and others). This research places significant importance on revealing and understanding the nature, value, and purpose of those partnerships which ‘wrap around’ or ‘cocoon’ the child/young person to support and sustain their music-making: for example, the relationship between a musician and parent/guardian, between a musician and classroom teacher, between a childcare practitioner and parent/guardian, between a youth worker and parent/guardian, or between a healthcare professional and community musician.

Caley, like the majority<sup>59</sup> of children and young people observed across the research had an individual-level context which comprised individuals who, through their facilitating partnerships, nurtured and supported the child/young person in their music-making. Caley’s individual-level environment is illustrated as follows, with the arrows between each individual demonstrating the bi-directionality of these partnerships (FIGURE 44).

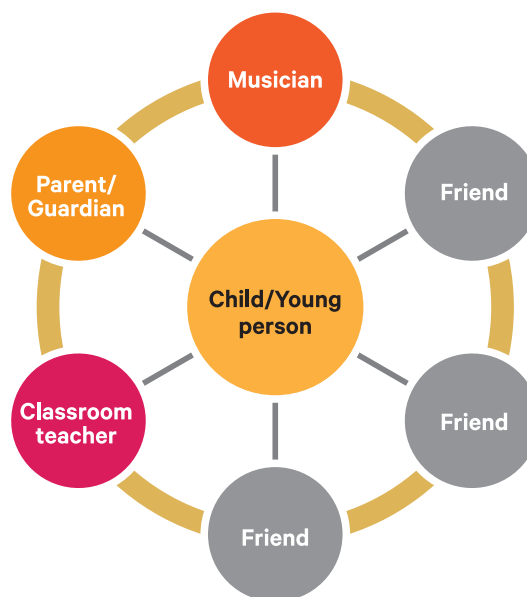


FIGURE 44: INDIVIDUAL LEVEL OF AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP

59 It cannot be stated conclusively that all children and young people had two or more individuals who ‘partnered’ with one another to support children and young people’s music-making; that is, it is feasible that some children/young people engaged solely with a musician in their musical endeavours, thereby negating this level of the ecological model of partnership.

### 6.7.1. Individual-level partnership 1: Musician and parent

The musician-parent/guardian partnership is a potentially powerful and perhaps under-explored individual-level partnership which supports the music-making of children and young people. The impact of effective working partnerships between musicians and parents/guardians in early-years contexts in particular has been previously documented:

*the involvement of [the young children's] parents is also of significant importance. The relationship between the parents and the managers, the childcare practitioners and the musicians contributed considerably to the stress-free and relaxed implementation of the programme.*  
(Berrill 2013, p.21)

Lorna, the musician, understood the value of connecting and communicating with parents to continue and sustain musical engagement with children, however she indicated that it was generally much easier to build relationships with parents/guardians while working with choirs in community contexts 'outside of school'. 'Then I would see the parents', she commented, before continuing that:

*That's something that does take a lot of work, especially on my part. It's not work, I just know that I have to be very conscious to make sure I create such a positive environment and impact on that school, so that it continues, you know... that there is that open relationship.*  
(Lorna, singer/choral educator in early-years context, CS1SC1)

In the context of another programme which Lorna had previously facilitated, she described how she had attempted to effectively communicate with parents/guardians, and extend music-making into the children's lives. This strategy, of sending words of songs, or a music-pack home to parents/guardians was one which I observed across a number of other research contexts (primarily early-years contexts):

*For me, it's trying to make as many connections to their life outside of that one workshop as possible. We're also trying to continue that impact when they go home. So, for the senior infants last year, we gave them a little print out of all the words of their songs. So that... hopefully they'll bring it home, they'll stick it on their fridge, they'll sing it to their mums and dads. That has such a positive impact for them that... if they get the opportunity to continue this... you know when they get older and older that they'll always relate it to something as simple as a 45-minute session that they had with me.*  
(Lorna, singer/choral educator in early-years context, CS1SC1)

### Considerations for Music Generation

While it is certainly challenging to engage parents/guardians with a view to supporting and enhancing music-making in the lives of children and young people, there are strategies which musicians could pursue. Musicians could draw on the knowledge and experience of others who have already established relationships with the children and young people's parents/guardians (youth/community workers, centre managers, classroom teachers, etc.). Parents/guardians could be invited to meet with the musician at the beginning of a programme, and this welcoming gesture would potentially a) bring an immediate awareness of the programme to the parents/guardians and b) communicate that the musician (and Music Generation) values their input and feedback. Beyond this, simple actions such as taking the time to meet and converse with parents/guardians before/after lessons, at gigs and concerts and other events could strengthen this layer of support at an individual-level for children and young people. To strengthen this individual-level partnership, an awareness of the value of involving parents/guardians should be communicated to and nurtured amongst musicians, coordinators, and other



decision makers. Developing these relationships takes time, and with time comes the requirement to adequately resource musicians (that is, beyond the typical hourly lesson) who would need to give of their time to develop such relationships.

### 6.7.2. Individual-level partnership 2: Musician and classroom teacher

At the previous interaction-level, Caley's relationship with both the musician and her classroom teacher were conducive to her experience of musical, personal, and relational meaning. At an individual-level, the findings from the research reinforce the value of the artist-teacher partnership in supporting children and young people's meaning-making musical experiences.

Gillian, the coordinator of the MEP where Caley's programme was based also recognised the often unexplored yet valuable role that classroom teachers can play in programmes which take place in classroom contexts. She felt that classroom teachers were 'very much on the periphery'. It follows then that the musician-classroom teacher relationship is a potentially valuable bidirectional partnership wherein each partner can work together in ways that can a) reveal potential barriers to children and young people accessing PME, b) enrich their own practice, c) ensure the smooth logistical running of a programme/workshop/concert or other event, and d) ultimately connect to and benefit the music-making experience of children and young people.

Lorna, the musician who facilitated Caley's music workshops, described how her practice of working with the young children had been positively impacted upon by observing and working more effectively with the classroom teacher:

*I think that I have definitely improved [laughs]... not that I've improved... but I've certainly... over this past few weeks... it's been a huge learning experience... and most of that has been from the teachers actually. Just with small things like management, and how to explain something, and how to demonstrate something. So, a lot of what I've picked up and because I'm at this stage now that things work much easier... it's certainly because of those teachers.*

*(Lorna, singer/choral educator in early-years context, CS1SC1)*

The classroom teacher, in return, explained how her participation in Lorna's music workshops had challenged and enriched her own pedagogical practice:

*Aw it's great! Like, I already take things that... you know the... some of the things that Lorna would do with them... I use them in the classroom now... you know that kind of way. Like, even just to get their attention... how to sing 'Hello Everyone' with them and they sing back, and then I have them engaged... do you know. And just ideas for rhythm and things like that that I might struggle with for infants where I would have found it easier to teach to older classes because I could teach it in a way that I've learned myself [...] I always go back to what I'm comfortable with teaching do you know. For music, I always go back to the same activities [...] So... it challenges your own practice I suppose in a way.*

*(Eilish, classroom teacher, CS1SC1)*

In another primary school-based subcase (CS2SC1) the relationship between musician-classroom teacher was not as strong and the classroom teacher spoke about a lack of clarity and some confusion around her role during the music workshop – 'maybe he's thinking that he's not supposed to ask me and I'm thinking that I'll leave him to it', she commented. She also felt from her conversations with the children from one music workshop to the next that they could have been challenged a little more by the musician in their music-making. Observations would indicate that these issues likely arose from a lack of communication and shared understanding at an individual-level.

On a more positive note, Lucy (the classroom teacher) also contemplated the ways in which the music programme could positively impact on her practice, and therefore on the experience of the children, beyond the timeframe of the programme itself:

*That's what's a little hazy for me... I'm going to myself 'I probably should be helping but I'm not officially supposed to be'. And is it a case that it continues like this, that somebody comes in, or should it be given that teacher continues themselves... especially in the younger classes? I see a lot of reasons why a teacher could pick up some of what the musician's doing themselves. Like, if I was properly engaged and learning from [the musician] for the whole year, I'd probably be better at teaching music now [...] I guess it's important to make sure that the music teacher that comes in and the classroom teacher themselves are aware of what each other's role is, because you don't know whether you're supposed to be involved or not basically... and maybe he's thinking that he's not supposed to ask me and I'm thinking that I'll leave him to it.*

*(Lucy, classroom teacher, CS2SC1)*

In another subcase (CS3SC1), the classroom teacher also suggested that conversations need to happen with the musician(s) prior to music workshops taking place, and she highlighted the fact that very simple solutions such as a 'five-minute conversation' can have far-reaching benefits for children and young people.

*It would be nice to have a conversation maybe with the musicians and just tease out around the interaction you know... you see I will interact but another might be quite happy not to interact [...] It's bringing people along [...] and there are opportunities to [achieve] that... it can be a five minute conversation but it reinforces what went on in the hall or it reinforced what you did today or you can prepare them better maybe for the questions the next day...*

*(Catherine, classroom teacher, CS3SC1)*

### Considerations for Music Generation

Musicians across Music Generation's infrastructure often work in contexts where there are other adults present who know the children and young people intimately and whose responsibility it is to care for the children and young people. When effective communication did not take place with these individuals, this resulted in those individuals often feeling isolated, confused, unacknowledged, unappreciated, and in some cases, ignored. Musicians (and coordinators) could take simple yet effective steps to ensure that this does not happen. Some of the responsibilities that could fall to musicians include: liaising with the individual before music-making takes place to communicate what is expected to happen, outlining how they can become involved if they so wish, appropriately involving them during the workshop/rehearsal/concert, being confident in communicating to those individuals when their actions are inhibiting/disrupting the meaningful music-making experiences of children/young people, and engaging in meaningful reflection after the workshop/rehearsal/concert/etc. has taken place. Their voices could be included in the design of the programme. Musicians could make sure to 'touch base' and communicate with these individuals on a regular basis to ensure that everyone is 'on the same page'. This strengthening of this individual-level partnership can have far-reaching consequences in terms of the sustainability of programmes and embedding support for programmes on the ground.

### 6.8. Meso-level

Meso-level partnerships within Music Generation's ecological model of partnership are gatekeeper partnerships which facilitate engagement between the MEP and children/young people, develop trust and accommodate relationship-building between those at local and those at individual/interaction level.

In several of the subcases, coordinators aimed to establish programmes in contexts where individuals and organisations had already developed, often over long period of time, ways of working effectively in partnership with other individuals and organisations. In other subcases, effective partnership-working was relatively uncharted territory and was a new phenomenon for many of those involved. In each situation however, there were key individuals within institutions and organisations who acted as (or assumed the position of) intermediary partners between those individual/interaction-level partnerships (musicians, children/young people, parents/guardians, etc.) and the local level partnerships (MEP coordinator, funders, local agencies, etc.) with responsibility for designing, resourcing, and supporting the programme.

Meso-level 'gate keeper' partners were often the first people that a coordinator would communicate and liaise with to discuss and initiate the implementation of a programme – they generally possessed a valuable bird's-eye view of their local context, intimately understood the inside-workings of their own more immediate context (school, organisation, festival, etc.), possessed a great deal of institutional memory and were willing to share this, had the welfare of those children and young people in their care as a primary concern, had clear intentions for why they wanted to bring music-making to their setting in the first place, had knowledge of and access to additional resources and funding, and were attuned to the qualities of effective partnership-working. Of course, there were numerous contexts where such individuals were not readily identifiable (generally in those contexts where partnership-working was perceived as an unfamiliar way of working), and coordinators and in some cases musicians were tasked with either a) locating that person, or b) identifying an individual who could, by default, assume this role. During one fieldtrip, a musician explained to me how he had almost completed facilitating a 10-week percussion programme in a post-primary school when he 'discovered' an individual in the school who was much more useful in addressing his needs than the individual that he had been working with all along. Coordinators and musicians should therefore always attempt to seek out the meso-level partner who can be most useful in facilitating their engagement with children and young people.

Those who were revealed by coordinators during a focus group interview and observed 'gatekeeping' at a meso-level across Music Generation's ecological model of partnership included: directors of community centres/organisations, youth workers, theatre/live venue directors, venue administrators, caretakers, crèche/preschool managers, school principals, HSCLs, school completion programme coordinators, school administrators, and wider school/venue/centre staff.

In Caley's context (CS1SC1), the school principal (Jean) and the Home School Community Liaison (Margaret) while not directly involved in the children's music-making, were key persons in the school who were central to the programme being set-up in the first instance (FIGURE 45).

That is, they were the individuals whose 'say' impacted on a programme in terms of it either happening or not happening. They were also highly influential in building initial trust amongst all parties involved and supporting the progression of the programme in various ways – in terms of logistical planning, communication, building awareness amongst parents/guardians, in-kind supports, etc. In terms of their role at a meso-level of an ecological model of partnership, Jean and Margaret as school principal and HSCL effectively functioned to a) act as gatekeepers to the space through which local level partners (including the coordinator) needed to pass, and b) listen to the feedback and concerns of parents/guardians and relay these to the musician and coordinator.

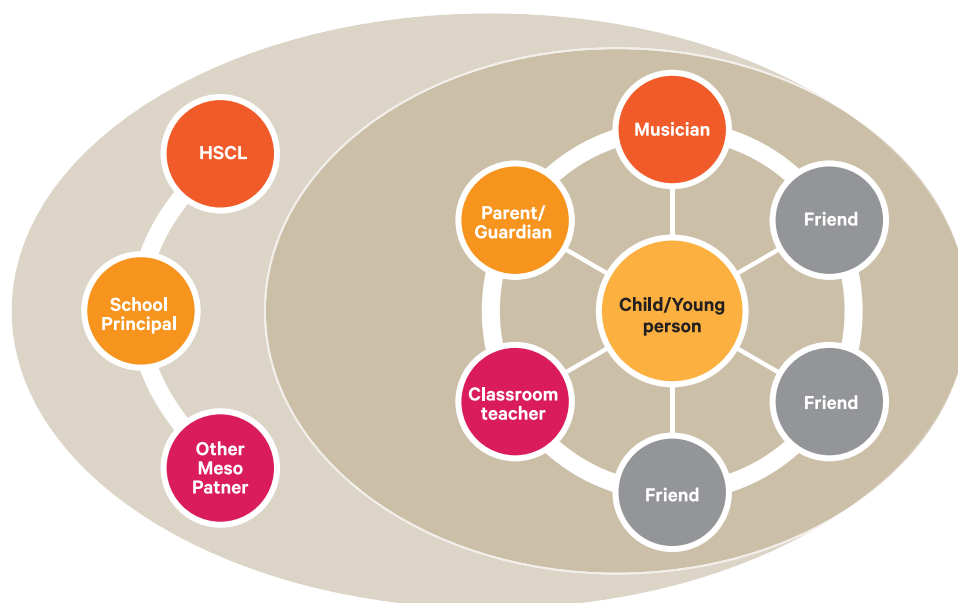


FIGURE 45: MESO-LEVEL OF AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP

The school principal explained the HSCL's central role in initiating the programme and engaging 'on the ground' with the coordinator, musician, and parents/guardians:

*Where we would be at an advantage is having Margaret as HSCL coordinator. She is the Home School Community Liaison coordinator. So she's in there in the middle between the programme and the parents. Now, I would have worked in the role myself and I would be very familiar with it... but if she hadn't... I mean if it had come to my desk and I didn't having a HSCL coordinator I could have run with it or not run with it. But, what I'm saying is that having a HSCL coordinator who was supportive of it, when the possibility came in made it very easy for it to run. She actually took a lot of the engagement forward and dealt with it. If I was here as the principal with the desk full of work, unless I was really committed to music maybe it wouldn't have run as well [...] As I say, in a school that hasn't a HSCL you might have a different outcome... now I really do believe in it... I hope I would have run with it... but it made it very easy for me when I have somebody working with me who was doing... there on the ground... engaging.*  
(Jean, school principal, CS1SC1)

The HSCL explained that she had a relationship with LEADER<sup>60</sup> who had initially approached her to raise awareness about Music Generation and to provide matched-funding for the project. She also regularly linked in with other HSCLs in the area to 'keep each other up to date with what's going on':

*I'm a home-school teacher in this school but I would have links to all the other home-school teachers in the area. We would have our own regular meetings where we keep each other up to date with what's going on. We might have shared families you know, where we would all need to be singing from the same page about particular families [...] we're very used to working together and looking at the whole picture.*  
(Margaret, HSCL, CS1SC1)

60 The LEADER Initiative (Liaisons entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale) was established by the European Commission in 1991. It was designed to aid the development of sustainable rural communities following the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy - See more at: <http://www.environ.ie/community/rural-development/leader/eu-rural-development#sthash.ziN6xC6z.dpuf>

Individuals who effectively operated at a meso-level generally possessed a great deal of expertise in managing partnerships with a range of local and national organisations, prior to their engagement with Music Generation. As Margaret (HSCL, CS1SC1) commented, they are familiar with 'the whole picture'. As a result of this, many of those meso-level partners interviewed had developed their own clear and informed understandings of the qualities and characteristics inherent in effective partnership-working. As one interviewee – the director of a community hub – expressed (CS3SC2), 'I'm working with 14 different organisations at the minute and can tell you so much about partnership-working'. She continued by highlighting the depth and complexity of engagement that effective partnership-working entailed in her community context, explaining that: (a) building relationships can only be done at local level rather than from a national perspective, (b) the challenge of engaging parents/guardians is ongoing, (c) there is a correlation between effective partnership-working and diversity in terms of the diversity of children/young people who access programmes, and (d) the need for effective partnership-working is particularly heightened in order to engage young teenagers at a time when, in her experience, parents/guardians are 'often switching off':

*It's a struggle that never ends here... to build relationships with schools, HSCLs, families, takes years... takes years. And that can only be done in a local context. There's no national programme that's going to force mums and dads to drive up here or walk their kids up here on a rainy Tuesday night for music. There's a relationship that happens between the hub and the school and the HSCL and parents and the tutors that makes that happen. It's not a big stick from anywhere else. It's an organic thing... we've already done a lot of donkey work. Without that you could fill all the places with very highly motivated children with very highly motivated families but you wouldn't get diversity in terms of who's accessing the programme. It takes so much longer to get parents to interact... it still amazes me... how hard you have to work and we have to go through the schools, we have to go through the HSCLs, we have to go through the youth workers, because the parents are often... especially by the time that the children are 11 or 12 or 13 they're switching off from that role. They're saying 'well they'll go if they like it'. There's no push... that doesn't happen.*

*(Noreen, Community Hub Manager, CS3SC2)*

### Considerations for Music Generation

Taking into account the findings of effective partnership-working observed and revealed at a 'meso' level of an ecological model of partnership, it is clear that there are widespread opportunities for Music Generation to sensitively and respectfully engage with those operating at this level in order to embed itself in already-existing partnership structures, and also to strengthen and deepen relations with those at a meso-level to effectively implement programmes and ultimately enhance the music-making experiences of children and young people at an interaction-level.

Meso-level partners, given the depth of their experience working in their own contexts, were often cautious of 'new' initiatives such as Music Generation. They had experienced the short-term 'flash in the pan' nature of other partnership 'interventions', and a number of individuals expressed a degree of wariness over what it was that Music Generation were promising to deliver long-term. They were therefore key individuals with whom trusting relationships could be built. Meso-level partners often brought their own diverse intentions to the table, and these should be sought and acknowledged in the beginning stages of establishing any partnership, and revisited to maintain strong trusting relationships between all parties. It is therefore essential that a dialogue involving all parties (coordinators, musicians, and meso-level partners) is established with meso-level partners at the seed stages of any programme to gain insights into their knowledge, experience, and expertise. The roles and responsibilities of relevant Music Generation partners (MEP coordinators, musicians, resource workers, etc.) should be communicated clearly to meso-level partners, and a shared understanding around communication, programme expectations, etc. should be developed between local and meso levels. Thereafter, meso-level partners should be consulted by local level partners (for example, by the coordinator who would then feed back to the working Steering Committee) to

gain insights into what they perceive to be 'working' or 'not working' from their intimate and close 'bird's eye' perspective.

Those 'gate keepers' who operate at a meso-level within Music Generation's ecological model of partnership therefore have much to offer in terms of building strong and sustainable partnerships. They are critical individuals for coordinators and musicians to seek out and build relationships with to ensure that trusting and accommodating relationships can be built and maintained between local and individual/interaction-levels.

### 6.9. Local-level

Local-level partnerships within Music Generation's ecological model of partnership are symbiotic and synergetic partnerships where partners come together to achieve more and add value beyond what could have been achieved separately, where resources and expertise are pooled and shared in order to achieve the partners' often diverse aims and intentions, and where collaborative efforts are encouraged in planning and implementing programmes and developing the roles required for such collaborative work.

The partnership layer beyond meso-level, and another step beyond the immediate music-making experiences of children and young people, is termed the local-level of an ecological model of partnership for Music Generation (FIGURE 46). Typically conceived of as the 'MEP', this layer of partnership within an ecological model of partnership for Music Generation is multi-layered, multifaceted, and constantly evolving. A number of distinct sub-levels have been identified through which the local level can be analysed and discussed: a) the MEP coordinator who holds a dynamic role in overseeing many aspects of the MEP at local-level, b) the MEP Steering Committee embedded within a local statutory agency (Lead Partner) as the entity that oversees the work of Music Generation locally, and c) local partner organisations (agencies/groups/bodies/providers/resource organisations, etc.). These sub-levels are the components of an effective local-level partnership structure – the reason that they 'exist' is not 'partnership for partnership's sake', they exist as a mechanism to get to the absolute centre of what Music Generation was set up to do. That is, to nurture and support meaningful music-making in the lives of children and young people. Their combined strength has profound influence on what can happen at those levels (meso-, individual-, and interaction-) which are more immediate to the music-making experiences of children and young people.

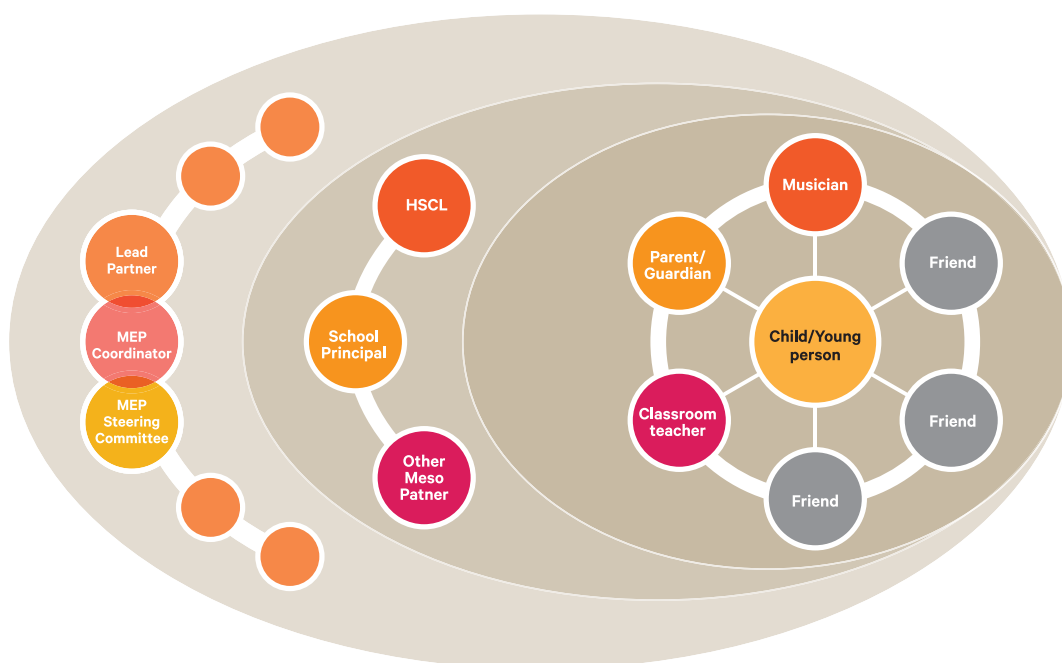


FIGURE 46: LOCAL-LEVEL OF AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP

When the question of partnership is generally considered in the context of Music Generation, it is usually the local-level that comes to mind. This association is likely due to the fact that for each of Music Generation's competitive funding rounds, an initial step was to bring together local partners to form Music Education Partnerships (MEPs) which could, amongst other goals and objectives, potentially see through the process of 'application to implementation'. This level of partnership was observed as being diverse across each of the MEP subcases. Before Music Generation was established, some local areas had already engaged in many years of developing local partnership working, while for others it was a completely new way of working – for all MEPs at local level however, partnership is continually evolving as local partners learn how to work more effectively with one another to achieve their often disparate aims. A great deal of learning has taken place since Round 1 MEPs established local partnership structures; those learnings which emerged from the research are presented in this section alongside implications for the future development of Music Generation at this local-level.

### 6.9.1. MEP coordinator

MEP coordinators<sup>61</sup> are those individuals employed by a Music Education Partnership's Lead Partner (a statutory agency, usually an ETB or local authority) to engage in a multiplicity of roles including those of leader, creative visionary, strategic thinker, artistic director, manager, and partnership broker. Their professional expertise is grounded in disparate areas and over the course of the research, they were observed undertaking a complex range of responsibilities including: fostering strong and effective partnership-working at local and individuals levels where it may not have previously existed; sensitively connecting in with existing landscapes of effective partnership-working; dealing with the history and legacy of ineffective partnership-working within a music education context; overseeing the design and implementation of diverse programmes; collaborating with and addressing the diverse needs and intentions of a range of stakeholders – from musicians, to funders, to local agencies, to Lead Partners; responding to the macro-level intentions of philanthropic donors in local systems and structures which often do not resonate with this way of thinking; seeking and revealing potentially symbiotic partners in their localities; navigating diverse issues around creative and logistical planning and budgeting (including requirements to raise matched-funding); overseeing the diverse engagements and complex needs of an evolving musician workforce; reporting back to the National Development Office and responding to other developments at a national level; designing appropriate communication and PR strategies; engaging meaningfully with their local Steering Committee; and always staying closely connected to what is happening 'on the ground'.

It was observed that from the onset, many coordinators took on a strong leadership role within their MEP. Even at the very beginning stages of establishing an MEP, the promotion of 'partnership' as a new way of working was an immediate, necessary, and often difficult task and required such leadership. For music-making to happen, coordinators had to first seek out prospective partners, they needed to talk to them in a language that they understood, and they often had to carry out the challenging task of generating collaboration while on the other hand sensitively yet pragmatically addressing partners' diverse interests and intentions. When leadership was working at its best in facilitating partnership, coordinators were required to have and encourage an openness to negotiating partnership, to try different approaches to partnership-working and be willing to change and admit that something was not working, to listen and take on board the opinions of others, and to have upfront and sometimes difficult conversations around partnership. This was the distinction between a coordinator leading within an MEP and the alternative top-down managerial approach to facilitating partnership. As a Steering Committee member commented in the case of the coordinator overseeing

61 What this research describes as the position of 'Coordinator' can be interpreted in different ways across the MEPs – other MEPs use a range of terms to describe this role including Programme Director, Music Development Manager, Manager, Development Officer, and Music Education Officer.

Caley's programme/MEP context – 'she is very inclusive and stuck in the middle of many partners... it's a very delicate balance in making sure that it doesn't become about any one partner'. Beyond this, the coordinator's role involved engaging with a range of stakeholders to set up programmes, coordinate and manage musicians, organise events, liaise with national/local/individual partners, engage in communication and PR strategies, present performances, etc. As one interview respondent explained, they had to 'keep their feet in the shoes' of local partners, national partners, and individual-level partners, especially musicians.

The nature of the relationships between coordinators and musicians across Music Generation's infrastructure was often the most complex to unravel in terms of how these relationships impacted on the experience of children and young people. The relationship between musician and coordinator was often characterised by the degree to which musicians felt that they were supported, valued, trusted, and respected in their role. There was a spectrum of ways in which musicians characterised their relationships with the MEP coordinators – as collaborators, as partners, as friends, as line managers. Musicians across Music Generation's infrastructure were very clear about what they valued in terms of their relationships with coordinators. They indicated several qualities which they felt were important in supporting their long-term engagement with children and young people. These include:

Having their expertise acknowledged and valued; experiencing space, autonomy, and ownership in their music-making engagements with children and young people; being trusted in leadership roles; consulting regularly and directly with coordinators on issues that affect their professional practice; having access to sufficient resources to achieve their music-making intentions for children and young people; having clear and open lines of communication with the coordinator; building a relationship with the coordinator based on a mutual respect, honesty, and openness towards one another.

Coordinators seemed to either lean into a facilitative or directive approach to leading, and each approach had consequences for the relationships which the coordinator was attempting to build. Crosby and Bryson (2005) explain that while an individual may exhibit talent in exercising a particular capability, an important meta-skill for a leader seems to be knowing when he or she is best suited to provide a type of leadership and when to turn that work over to someone else' (p.183). It is suggested that the same could be said of coordinators, who were generally observed attempting to lead across a wide range of contexts – this could potentially lead to a situation where coordinators' leadership activities and ambitions lose focus and are spread too thin. In this regard, coordinators should consider the efficacy of their time (especially as MEPs develop and expand), reflect on the impact of their leadership at local level and importantly, seek out and consider avenues to distribute this leadership. They should be supported in such endeavours through their relationships with the Lead Partner and National Development Office. These findings have implications for a) the types of professional development opportunities (workshops, seminars, etc.) which are designed by and for coordinators to continuously support them in their role as reflective, supportive, responsive leaders; b) the resources and supports which empower coordinators at local level to create positions to which leadership responsibilities can be distributed; c) the flexibility which is enabled from a Lead Partner perspective with respect to the creation of new leadership roles; and d) the willingness and openness of coordinators themselves to develop a more diverse layer of leadership at local-level.

It would be impossible, given the limitations of this research, to thoroughly represent the entire breadth of coordinators' activities observed and revealed during the research process; however, those salient findings which help to unravel the 'golden thread' from local-level to interaction-level, and illustrate the vital role that coordinators play at a local level of an ecological model of partnership for Music Generation are outlined.



MEP coordinators interviewed over the course of the research could each articulate a broad vision of what they were striving to achieve through partnership within their MEP, and Gillian, the coordinator of Case Study 1 was no different, explaining that she had ‘mini-visions within an overarching vision’ for her MEP. She understood that achieving these mini-visions would entail a strategic and longitudinal process. Over the course of one field-trip, a brief yet valuable insight was gained into the typically diverse daily practicalities of striving towards her overarching vision. In schools and community contexts, the types of activities and interventions included the short informal conversations she had with a range of meso-level partners to quickly sort out generally minor issues which had arisen. She engaged familiarly with musicians, children, and parents/guardians in a programme which was running for the first time on the night in question – signing children in, responding to parents’/guardians’ queries, placating their concerns, receiving payments, having informal yet important conversations, etc. This was followed by a trip back to her office to collect new instruments that had just arrived. These were loaded into a van and delivered to another programme’s location; Gillian explained as she drove ‘between’ programmes that she was communicating with another coordinator to discuss issues around instrumental progression. Among the areas discussed were her correspondence and engagements with her Steering Committee, the Lead Partner, and the National Development Office. The field-trip observation included her visit to a school-based choral programme to observe the musician as he directed the young children in singing a traditional Zulu folk song in four-part harmony. She also explained how she had been in the process of building an exciting new partnership with the local County Childcare Committee (which supported Caley’s programme) and discussed the invaluable role of LEADER in helping to financially sustain a number of programmes across the MEP. In short, over the course of one-day, the researcher had the opportunity to witness how the coordinator was meaningfully engaging with several levels of Music Generation’s ecological model of partnership.

Probing the coordinators role further, in terms of Caley’s programme, the meso-level partners (school principal and HSCL) acknowledged and highly valued Gillian’s role in initially establishing and strengthening the partnership between the musician, the classroom teachers, and others – the HSCL described an information meeting and pre-programme workshop for classroom teachers which Gillian had organised and which helped, according to the HSCL, to ‘thrash things out’ and dissipate any initial tension around the programme:

*At the initial workshops last year the teachers had an opportunity to go and train and to hear all about it and that was most useful because then there was no tension around it. [There was] no ‘what am I going to?’ ‘am I going to be put on the spot?’ or ‘I’m not going to know what’s to happen’. So, plenty of talk beforehand is very important! And in fact, previous to the training there was a large meeting with all the stakeholders of the DEIS schools involving the principals, the home-school liaisons, teachers, the coordinator from Music Generation and [the LEADER representative] and some infant teachers as well. And a lot of little things we thrashed out, little niggles so by the time it actually happened everyone knew Music Generation was coming, everyone was going to give it a go.  
(Margaret, HSCL, CS1SC1)*

Supporting the HSCL’s recollections, the coordinator spoke about her role in meaningfully engaging with and ‘setting up’ the aforementioned meso- and individual-level partnerships; in particular, with respect to nurturing the relationships between musicians and classroom teachers:

*I think that what we're learning is, if a tutor has a good relationship with a teacher, you can see that it makes a really good impact on their teaching the children. It's in the musician's interest to work well and work alongside the teacher where they can. And it's my job I suppose... it's my job to try and set that up so it's going to work. I need to be very clear about that.*

*(Gillian, MEP Coordinator, CS1)*

Lorna, the facilitating musician, also offered some insight into her professional relationship with the coordinator, highlighting the various reasons why she felt that it was a constructive and meaningful relationship: she felt that there was an equal amount of respect between her and the coordinator, she felt valued as a professional, and she sensed that the coordinator was invested in her programme and interested in the individual experiences of the young children involved. Of particular importance to Lorna was the fact that the coordinator regularly engaged in meaningful conversation with her to gain feedback on the programme and to offer practical advice and suggestions to the musician.

*Oh yeah, [my relationship with the coordinator] is very strong. Maybe that's why everything works so well actually. Because we... I think that we just know how to read each other really well and... there's an equal amount of respect you know there as well. Because I have the benefit of working for a few organisations I can see that there's definitely a lot more contact between myself and Gillian than perhaps myself and my other line managers or bosses. So, I feel, I really feel because of that contact that, you know, it's hugely important to her you know, how the whole programme goes, that you know, it's not just, for some people it's just a job. I don't like saying that but... maybe when they are doing the same thing for so long they can lose the passion for it and they don't see as clearly the impact for the individual child. But, with Gillian, because there's so much contact, and because she's asking, or suggesting as well, 'how did this go?', 'maybe you could do this', giving me suggestions as well that she really values everything and takes it very seriously. I think that that's really important.*

*(Lorna, singer/choral educator in early-years context, CS1SC1)*

It is clear therefore that the qualities of partnership between coordinator and musician include feeling respected, listened to, and valued. The brief excursion into Gillian's engagement with Caley's programme is one snapshot of a broad and rich spectrum of ways in which coordinators managed their diverse responsibilities across Music Generation's infrastructure. Their roles are complex, evolving, challenging, often difficult, and they are constantly liaising with a wide range of stakeholders – from national to individual levels – to address their needs through partnership so that children and young people can access high quality vocal/instrumental tuition, experience meaningful music-making, and strive towards their future possible selves.

### *Considerations for Music Generation*

My insight into Gillian's role as coordinator was valuable, and these findings when coalesced with those gleaned from other observations and focus group conversations led to a number of different learnings. These are presented here as springboard statements which will hopefully lead to contemplation, considered reflection, and ways forward in strengthening the central role which coordinators play within an ecological model of partnership:

Coordinators were tasked with considering a range of diverse voices and viewpoints within their MEPs – from Steering Committee members, to children/young people/parents/guardians, to the range of local organisations. It is important that these diverse viewpoints are sought and acknowledged by coordinators, so that all partners feel that

they are being listened to and their input valued. Coordinators, in devising an MEP's strategic plans should seek to filter and embed these viewpoints within an achievable strategy which reflects a shared vision and understanding of what can be achieved. Important in this process is a consideration of children and young people's voices.

At a local-level, the viewpoints of local agencies, Steering Committee members, meso-level partners, and/or musicians were sometimes in conflict with each other and did not align. Coordinators can play an important role in establishing meaningful communication between partners and resolving any such disputes.

Coordinators were often observed pursuing and assuming strong leadership roles within an MEP. The breadth of leadership responsibilities which they undertook was vast and diverse. It would be fruitful for coordinators to seek and encourage leadership elsewhere within their MEP. Also potentially impactful would be to reflect on the type of leader that they are and that they would like to become, and to consider the impact that their facilitative/directive leadership has on the practice of musicians and ultimately the experience of children and young people. A research finding also points to the need for coordinators to consider those times where they should 'let go' and trust others in leadership roles.

Coordinators play a valuable role in efficiently and meaningfully encouraging and managing reflective practice and feedback across the musician workforce. To enhance this aspect of their work, coordinators could ensure that professional networks are established for musicians and 'front line' musicians are empowered through continuous support in developing their professional practice.

Coordinators can both enable and disable meaningful conversations with musicians, local level partners, and other stakeholders. It is important that coordinators are aware of those conditions which create an environment where meaningful conversations can happen.

### **6.9.2. Steering Committee and Lead Partners**

Partnership, as previously explained, is the underlying principle on which Music Generation was founded. With its roots in Music Network's *Report on a feasibility study*, partnership was strongly perceived in the early stages of setting up Music Generation as a 'change agent' and the only way that the barriers to music-making could effectively and sustainably be addressed in local contexts. As part of the application process of each Music Generation funding round, it was an eligibility requirement that those agencies, organisations, and individuals who were interested in applying for funding would come together and set up 'Music Generation Partnerships' (MEPs). While the application process was intentionally open and flexible, the setting up of a MEP – an abstract and as yet evolving concept – was an unwavering requirement for all potential applicants. As Music Generation's National Director explained, 'In the early days of Music Generation, the whole phenomenon of a Music Education Partnership was new, and while partnership might have been talked about in practice, really, all of those interests and agencies, and organisations coming together to do something about music education had never happened before'. Strategically, partnership was a mechanism by which conversation and change at local (or indeed regional) level could be instigated, and the Steering Committee led by a 'Lead Partner' (to this date, either an ETB or local authority) was the governing entity which initiated and oversaw these 'conversations'. For those successful applicants, there was a shift-in-thinking across local/regional contexts as local organisations and other bodies and individuals came to realise that there was an expectation that they would now 'come together' and build effective working relationships with one another. This was very powerful, and it took time for an MEP to be formed, to build an identity, to understand and articulate its role, to construct a shared understanding of partnership, to understand shared ownership, and to understand

its relationship vis-à-vis the Lead Partners' function. While the qualities of these new partnerships were not easily articulated, the hoped for outcomes arising from their applications were clear – they included ambitions to a) reveal and address those barriers to high quality instrumental and vocal tuition in their local contexts and b) nurture and sustain children and young people's music-making in diverse ways across diverse contexts.

Within each MEP, Steering Committees, embedded within the structures of the Lead Partner, began to navigate this new way of working together. As governing entities across Music Generation's local-level infrastructure, they were (and are) comprised of a wide number of local representative bodies, led by the aforementioned Lead Partner representative (e.g., ETB CEO, Director of Regional Education Centre, or County Manager of Local Authority). The diverse membership of Steering Committees includes: representatives of Higher Education Institutions, healthcare settings, public library services, the media, and the music industry – for example, concert promoters/event organisers; existing music services/providers such as traditional music organisations, music academies, rock schools, orchestras, choral ensembles, community music organisations, and marching bands; as well as professional musicians and composers, social entrepreneurs, and those who work in various capacities in the primary, post-primary, early childhood, and other education sectors.

Interviews were conducted with a range of Steering Committee members representing a wide variety of local interests including Arts Officers, the principal of a primary school, a Community Arts Coordinator, the coordinator of a school of music, third-level representatives, and a representative from a county childcare committee. While Steering Committees played an important role in the early stages of setting up each MEP, the concern of this research was how these Steering Committees had functioned to continue to create opportunities for children and young people to engage in meaningful music-making and strive towards their musical/personal/relational possible selves. One Steering Committee member interviewed was very clear about their continuing purpose in seeding and nurturing change:

*It's about access – it provides young people with the opportunity... who can't access the type of tuition or the instruments that they have now grown into or they're in need of for their musical development to continue. The opportunity to be able to provide them with that experience or that opportunity as well is I suppose that's the kind of seed of the work that's been happening here.*  
(Steering Committee Member)

Findings gleaned from the focus group conversations suggest that while many partners 'at the table' had previously attested to working in partnership, in practice, it generally hadn't occurred to the depth and level of engagement that was now expected. In many cases, the partnership-building process for Steering Committees was and continues to be highly challenging, often difficult, and always complex. The practice of partnership-working within Steering Committees across Music Generation's national infrastructure is mixed and a spectrum of effectiveness in partnership-working exists; from those Steering Committees that have persevered to become truly enabling and collaborative entities whose members understand what it means to 'follow the golden thread' to the music-making experiences of children and young people, to those Steering Committees that are in some ways disempowering and restrictive in the ways in which they operate, functioning primarily as reporting mechanisms for the MEP coordinator. One coordinator explained this as 'the difference between a working committee and a formality'; for this coordinator, not every partner at the Steering Committee table was 'playing their part' and contributing, and in this context, the coordinator had discovered and nurtured partnerships outside the formal structure of the Steering Committee (spoken about in the next section) which had become much more valuable to her aims. Arising from the

findings across Steering Committees, there are implications for how Steering Committees proceed into the future in terms of sustaining, invigorating, revealing, and strengthening local level partnership infrastructures.

### *Considerations for Music Generation*

To achieve their often ambitious goals, Steering Committees could perhaps think about encouraging provision for term limits and retirement by rotation so that the Committee is constantly rejuvenated with fresh and relevant thinking from the local context. Additionally, the work of Steering Committees could potentially be further enhanced by engaging in facilitated discussion and action around what it means for the Committee to transition from a founding committee, which all committees were, to an achieving committee which has its sights firmly set on the meaningful music-making experiences of children and young people.

As representatives of local providers/groups/institutions, the default position of many Steering Committee members was to 'look out for' their own particular area of interest and practice – and it is vital that their voices continue to be heard in this way – however, their investment in a much broader vision for their MEP could be encouraged and facilitated. Arising from the interviews conducted with Steering Committee members, such restricted thinking amongst committee members could lead to a 'silo mentality' where the sharing of valuable insight and information does not consistently happen, where members are not clear about the expectations of their committee role, where decisions are not collectively made and the impact of those decisions 'seen through', and where the efficiency of the MEP's work is unfavourably impacted upon. Enabling this comprehensive and more involved vision at Steering Committee level could help to bridge the gap between the work that the Steering Committee does and what one interview respondent described as the 'important partnership happening outside the table of where the MEP meets'. Lead Partners are the crucial enablers of such potentially effective partnership-working, and the success of Music Generation inside Lead Partner organisations depended on the extent to which the Lead Partner embraced a culture of partnership-working, and engaged in an open, supportive, and strong process of partnership-building, and was willing to share leadership within the MEP. It follows then that for partnership-working to thrive within Lead Partner organisations, all parties need to a) embrace a culture of partnership-working, b) realise and accept that partnership-working will be challenging yet ultimately rewarding, and c) be open to sharing leadership when it has the ultimate impact of enhancing the meaningful music-making of children and young people. It was also expressed by one Steering Committee member that the Lead Partners need to ensure that they take into account the diversity of voices around the table, and ensure that access to high quality vocal/instrumental tuition for all children and young people remains a priority:

*The partnership model for me... it's really important for me that the partnership model is seen as something where the ETB is a partner but that they are a partner in bringing this to every child in the county as opposed to bringing it to every ETB child in the county [that is children who attend ETB managed/operated institutions]. You need people who are vocal from every sector to make sure that it doesn't become the Lead Partner's business and not Music Generation's business... I am listened to and I am heard and I am included. If there is to be partnership then it shouldn't just be token partnership.*  
(Steering Committee Member)

Clearly articulating the roles and responsibilities of individual Steering Committee members is also important, and Steering Committee members should have a very clear understanding of what the responsibility of their role entails. For example, one Steering Committee member explained that she had a particular focus on programmes in primary

schools contexts, and she worked to 'make sure that programmes become the fabric of the school's life' and that the schools 'get it'. With her support, this oversight then led to a geographical partnership amongst a number of schools – a 'cluster of schools' which was then one network of a 'matrix of networks' that developed.

The Steering Committee members and the coordinators spoke about partnership in very different ways – they were coming to it from very different places – and the coordinators with their strong insight into what was happening at meso/individual/interaction levels across the local MEP infrastructure could perhaps better inform the Steering Committee's understanding and interpretation of effective partnership-working. A common understanding of effective partnership-working should not be assumed – there is a need therefore to develop a language around what it means to work effectively in partnership and for all parties to have the conversation around what partnership-working means; this new language should embed itself in the workings of a Steering Committee, and should evolve as the needs of MEPs evolve.

A number of Steering Committee members spoke about the fact that they did not have a strong sense of what was actually happening 'on the ground' in their local areas – they acknowledged that they did not know what the music-making actually looked like. This implies some disconnect and it is an obvious difficulty in terms of the coordinator approaching the Steering Committee for informed guidance. It is suggested that the voices and music-making of children and young people should regularly be heard by Steering Committee members to 'keep them close' to the impact of their decision-making. In other words, Steering Committee members could gain rich and immediate insight into the 'on the ground' workings of the MEP by going out and seeing the work being carried out. One interviewee explained that 'Steering Committee members need to hear the stories, especially those [members] who may not be as engaged'. She continued by saying that 'parents or children don't see what we do [...] so, to get feedback from both those perspectives... that's really important and something that we would like to do more of especially with younger people'. To maintain close alignment between the Steering Committee's actions and the interaction-levels where children and young people experience meaningful music-making, Steering Committees should always ask: How do we listen to children and young people? What are we asking children and young people? What do we want to find out? How do we act on this? How do we partner with children and young people? It follows then that to maintain the vital close alignment between Steering Committees/wider MEPs and the needs of children and young people, local strategies should be put in place to: a) develop an understanding about what it is the Steering Committee/MEP wants to ask children and young people; b) capture the voices of children and young people; c) communicate to children and young people that their voices are important and are being heard; and d) ensure that children and young people's input is acted upon.

It was also gathered from a number of the Steering Committee interviews that the Steering Committees were functioning solely as committees to which the coordinator reported. In some cases, this was due to the fact that MEPs were considered by the Steering Committee to be 'up and running'. While it is important that coordinators have the opportunity to update and report back on developments, the research suggests that Steering Committee members could lean out of a reporting mode and into a learning mode to a greater degree than seems to be happening. This could arguably be said of all partnerships, where partners should listen to one another, be open to negotiating partnership, have up-front conversations, and be willing to change. Effective Steering Committees looked at how successful partnerships in their local areas were functioning, and had open, honest, and reflective conversations around what was working in terms of programming and what wasn't working. The following interview extract illustrates how one Steering Committee had evolved into a reporting mechanism for the coordinator; however, it was now facing and responding to new challenges as the programmes across

its MEP had matured, and the participating children had become older and their needs had changed:

*For us in some respects, because it's up and running, it's more of a reporting place. However, there is always space there for sharing of ideas and the reporting back [from the coordinator] will say things that are working well and things that wouldn't have had as much of an uptake as previously thought. So there's always an analysis of the current state of affairs and of anything that we can bring to the pot. So, there's always conversation and reporting back on ideas about other things that we could try out. We're also... we're very happy with how things have gone in the primary sector and now we're having a whole load of children who are leaving the primary sector and coming into the secondary. So that's the challenge that we're facing... how do you keep those children accessing Music Generation? So it's a really interesting time for us... you've had it running for several years and suddenly you want to keep those children involved so we're trying to bring it into the older bracket.*

*(Steering Committee Member)*

Seeking new partners is challenging, and one Steering Committee member explained their strategy of communicating to prospective local organisations that 'anyone can do this and anyone can take it on'. She said that it can be difficult for Steering Committees to think 'what can they [the potential partner] do?', and it would be great that those who have an interest say 'here's what I can do' – there are perhaps mechanisms that could be put in place to build an awareness that new partners can approach the Steering Committee with ideas, suggestions, and plans.

There is the potential for Steering Committees to perform as entities that can help to design and guide a MEP where innovation, experimentation, and learning can thrive. The formal structure of a Steering Committee brings the potential to bring representative of diverse interests together to pursue the common goal of creating meaningful music-making opportunities for children and young people through which they can strive towards their possible selves. For every question such as 'How do we do this?', an accompanying strategy should invite the input of each member irrespective of their own particular area of expertise. This would better ensure that the function of Steering Committees remains relevant to the pursuit of the MEP's diverse yet common goals.

### **6.9.3. Local-level partnership network**

Perhaps one of the most dynamic aspects of Music Generation's local-level and 'open' partnership infrastructure which enables the extension of meaningful music-making to diverse groups of children and young people is the proliferation of networks of other local organisations, providers, groups, centres, institutions, etc. that have 'come on board' since MEPs were established to partner with and enrich the fabric of each local MEP. While Steering Committees as governing entities were observed to carry out vital roles with representation from diverse local organisations, MEPs in many cases have grown and evolved to comprise much broader partnership networks made up of a diverse range of local partners. Across the Case Studies, this local-level of an ecological model of partnership for Music Generation included organisations such as: county childcare committees, local funding agencies, local festivals, live venues, Youthreach centres, Garda Youth Diversion Offices, healthcare settings, third-level institutions, disability services, public libraries, direct provision centres, individual schools, private music education providers, and support groups such as the HSCL group in Caley's context (CS1SC1), etc.

There were many different ways in which these partnerships were observed to operate across these local MEP networks – some were 'silent' in that they were happy to share resources and distribute funding without necessarily building relationships beyond this

transfer of resources/funding; others misinterpreted what Music Generation was 'about', viewed partnership as a potential resource injection, and needed to be guided in shifting their thinking towards an understanding of 'real' partnership; others looked to the MEP for direction, advice, and guidance; other 'hidden partnerships', as one coordinator described them, offered a 'huge amount of good will'; other smaller arts/resource/music education organisations wanted to partner with Music Generation but also wanted to make sure that they could keep their own autonomy and identity; others were unsure what Music Generation could offer, but they were willing to listen; others required more in-depth longitudinal engagement and collaboration; and others took a considerable amount of time, patience, and perseverance for the coordinator to 'get in the door' and begin to develop trust. Across the diverse ways in which organisations approached partnership, there were a number of common threads: 1) partners often had diverse intentions and motivations which resonated with but were quite distinct from the stated goals of each MEP and 2) the likelihood was that their organisation's aims could only be fully achieved through meaningful partnership with the local MEP.

That is, these organisations sought to achieve their diverse aims through creatively aligning in symbiotic and synergetic partnerships with each MEP, and each MEP could in turn, achieve its primary aim of engaging children and young people in meaningful music-making. It worked, both ways. As the director of a community hub explained, 'the other partner needs to be getting something out of it, or else it won't work' (CS2SC2). These partnerships added potential and enabled new things to happen for children and young people in their local areas. They were cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships where the combined efforts were greater than the parts – to use the phrase, 'the whole was greater than the sum of its parts'. This, of course, is Music Generation's original intention for partnership-working.

The diverse aims of others have been discussed elsewhere in the document in relation to the intentions of partner organisations such as Garda Youth Diversion Offices, Autistic Spectrum Disorder units, social inclusion focused community organisations, and healthcare facilities. Another illustrative example of a local partner includes a Youthreach centre where the foremost intention for partnership for the centre was towards achieving the social, emotional, and behavioural wellbeing of the young people involved, and music-making was one of many ways that the centre was attempting to achieve this. In the following quote, the music teacher – at meso-level – who was instrumental in setting up the partnership describes how the centre's modus operandi was to work with diverse partners to achieve these aims:

*We're under the auspices of the ETB... it's a second chance opportunity for young people who wouldn't have made it in mainstream education for a myriad of reasons. It could be that they were excluded for behavioural issues or maybe they worked with social workers or the previous schools work with us to reengage them back into education... some children would have just been out of school for a long time... maybe social problems or domestic problems or addiction problems or sometimes mental health issues that might have inhibited their attendance in other centres. So a high proportion of kids would have been engaged in other services you know... social workers or the Garda Diversion or any other services... and education welfare services would have huge contact with us all of the time because they would have young people who are falling out of mainstream education so they would be seeing how we could support them... so when you talk about partnership we have to be... that's one element of partnership [...] So in terms of the pastoral care of children and the welfare... the emotional, social, and behavioural well-being of the child we'd have an awful lot of partners in that.*

*We have to [partner like this because], because that's why children come to us for the most part. This is what I do [as the music teacher] and the PE teacher would*



*have partnerships with the boxing clubs and the sports clubs and we have to go out and find people to help us with facilities here because we don't have them here. We have to work with other people.*

*(Mia, classroom teacher, CS3SC3)*

To further illustrate this concept of local level partnership, it is worth revisiting Caley's context (CS1SC1) to reveal those partnerships which ultimately came together to support and make possible her programme. During interviews with the coordinator and those at a meso-level within Caley's context, three local-level organisations/groups emerged – these were: 1) the local LEADER funding body; 2) the County Childcare Committee; and 3) the local HSCL network to which the liaison in Caley's school reported. Each had its own intention for building relationships with Music Generation where that of LEADER was to aid the development of sustainable rural communities through linking in with DEIS schools,<sup>62</sup> that of the County Childcare Committee was to encourage the development of childcare locally,<sup>63</sup> and that of the HSCL network was to promote partnership between parents and teachers.<sup>64</sup>

### *Considerations for Music Generation*

The challenge for coordinators who generally facilitate local-level partnership networks is to identify them in the first place, and then establish the grounds for partnership to occur. This involves being open to listening to the needs and intentions of potential partners, and designing effective strategies which take into account and acknowledges the diverse intentions of others; intentions which may not necessarily align steadfastly with those of Music Generation. In this way, communicative, trusting, open, honest, and sustainable partnerships can be built. Moreover, local level partnerships are often unplanned and materialise in haphazard ways – these often end up being the most meaningful for coordinators for a myriad of reasons. There is therefore an element of always being 'switched on and ready' for partnership building when it happens, and not letting the opportunity of discovering an engine of new partnership opportunities pass. Finally, and drawing on what has been already said in relation to coordinators and leadership, coordinators could usefully designate leadership to musicians (and others) in maintaining local-level partnerships which are perhaps associated with their own musical practice – this could assist in building vibrant communities of musical and professional practice, and of course, lessen the responsibility for coordinators in managing partnerships at local level. Coordinators should always ask the question, 'who are the powerful actors that can help to facilitate effective partnerships in my area?'. Following from this, there are resource implications for musicians to support them in these roles, and it would be necessary for musicians to have developed the required skillset to allow this to happen.

### **6.10. National-level**

The penultimate level of the ecological model of partnership for Music Generation which has been developed through this research is described as the national level (FIGURE 47). The national-level is the level at which the vision of what can be achieved nationally, across all MEPs, is imagined, designed, nurtured, and overseen. It is at this level that the golden thread which connected through to diverse local-, meso-, individual-, and finally interaction-levels is spun. It is at a national level where the original seed for Music Generation was sown, and decisions and actions at this level continue to give growth to new developments at those other levels of Music Generation's ecological model of partnership.

The national level of the ecological model of partnership for Music Generation has a number of key

62 <http://www.environ.ie/en/Community/RuralDevelopment/EURuralDevelopment/> (accessed 14/08/2015).

63 <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2Fchildcare%2FCityCountyChildcareCommittee.htm> (accessed 14/08/2015).

64 [https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/DEIS-Delivering-Equality-of-Opportunity-in-Schools-/des\\_hscl.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/DEIS-Delivering-Equality-of-Opportunity-in-Schools-/des_hscl.pdf) (accessed 14/08/2015).

components. These are: the National Development Office (NDO) which is a subsidiary company of Music Network, those partnerships which are facilitated by the NDO at this national level – including those key partnerships with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Arts Council,<sup>65</sup> Music Network, and the Board of Music Generation.

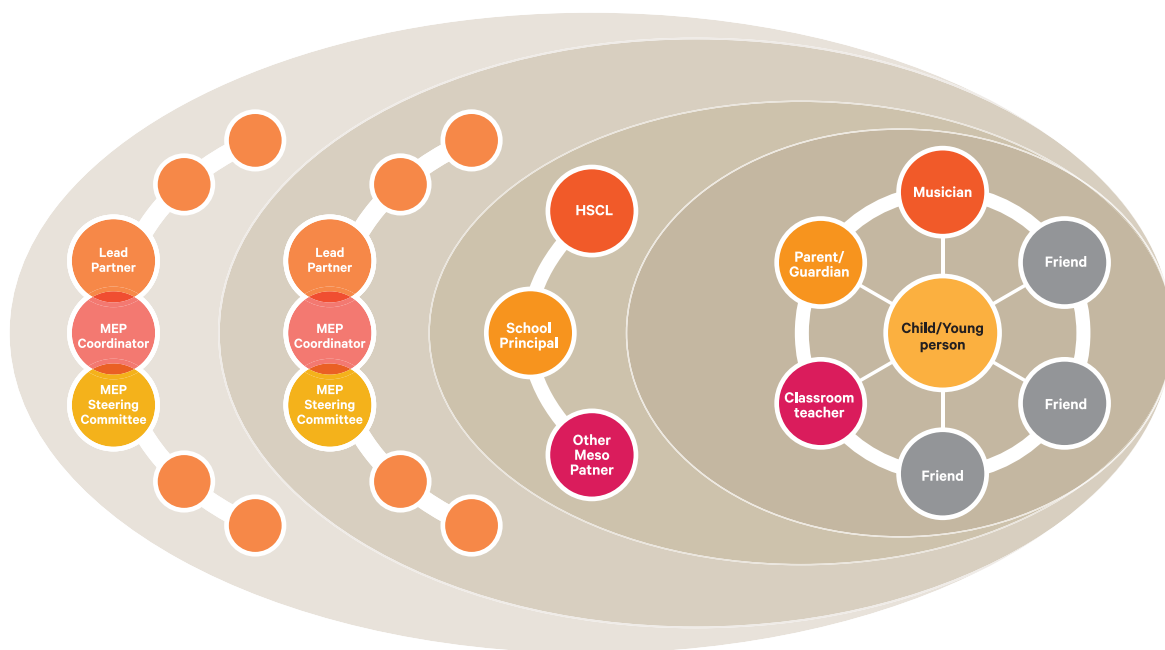


FIGURE 47: NATIONAL-LEVEL OF AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP

### 6.10.1. National Development Office (NDO)

An underpinning role of the NDO has been to interpret Music Network's Feasibility Study *A national system of local music education services* (2003),<sup>66</sup> and at the same time, respond to the thought leadership statements of Music Generation's donors; in particular, Bono's statement that 'what we want to do, is really simple – we just want to make sure that everyone, whatever their background, gets access to music tuition – that's the idea.'<sup>67</sup> In terms of Music Network's *Report on a feasibility study*, as spoken about in the Introduction to this report – it recognised the gaps within music education provision in Ireland, and it argued for a phased introduction of a national system of Local Music Education Services that would enrich and transform the musical and cultural lives of communities throughout Ireland. Music Network's *Report on a feasibility study* was also the original vision which Music Generation's donors originally backed - and interpreting and engaging with its recommendations for implementation has raised many implications for Music Generation's NDO. For the NDO therefore, its interpretation of Music Network's *Report on a feasibility study* married with the wishes of the donors comprised a 'future possible self' for Music Generation and led to the development of a Policy and Priorities document as a thinking framework.

The core goals of the *Report on a feasibility study* which relate strongly to the NDO's responsibilities around national and local partnership infrastructure are described in the study as the 'horizontal dimension' of a music education infrastructure. In that context,

65 The role of the philanthropic donors is discussed in the context of the philanthropic-level of an ecological model of partnership for Music Generation.

66 <http://www.musicnetwork.ie/content/files/publications/adminfeasreport.pdf> (accessed 31/08/2015)

67 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nD6VbffG\\_OY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nD6VbffG_OY) (accessed 21/09/2015)

the report recommends (2003, p.12) that Local Music Education Service Partnerships (understood today in the context of Music Generation as 'Steering Committees' and 'MEPs') should be established as working groups under the auspices of City and County Development Boards (understood today as Local Community Development Committees), and membership should include local statutory agencies and broader community representation. Following from this, it has been the responsibility of the NDO to instigate, nurture, and manage these infrastructural issues and effectively, to 'make it happen'. As Rosaleen Molloy, Music Generation's National Director explained, 'from the perspective of the National Development Office, we can see if there's a 'part' of the infrastructure missing, and then we try to create the conditions that work really well to address that'. Furthermore, and very importantly, the responsibility of the National Development Office has also been to 'ensure that the work nationally doesn't become about structures and systems' and that it 'always keeps close to the sacrosanct space of the child and young person's engagement in music' (National Director, Music Generation).

According to Music Generation's National Director, envisioning and 'keeping close' to the experience of the child and young person is at the core of what the NDO is tasked to do to, and to achieve this, 'infrastructure' is viewed as the 'enabler'. As MEPs evolve and the national picture continues to shift, managing this infrastructure becomes increasingly complex for the NDO. With a team comprising (at the time of writing) the National Director, Operations Manager, Communications Manager, Administrative Assistant, Arts Council Partnership/MEP Support and Development Manager, and Finance Manager, the NDO's responsibilities as they engage with national partners and constantly look to the local-level are expansive and include:

Reporting to Donors and DES; working in partnership with MEPs and other stakeholders/partners; working with the Board of Directors; running the NDO (operational, financial, statistical issues, etc.); resourcing and supporting MEPs; facilitating cross-MEP Learning Networks; monitoring MEPs and local developments; establishing team and management structures within the NDO and across the MEPs; consulting with external bodies; documenting learning and procedures; supporting the coordinators; governance; communicating what Music Generation does in different ways to different audiences; and other roles in advocacy, guidance, support, and development.

As Molloy explained, it is not a 'top down' approach, the NDO has 'learned so much from getting Music Generation off the ground and funding round on funding round we've come back stronger and we make it better and that doesn't mean that the pitfalls don't happen, but then that learning is constantly put back in'. It's a cycle, she explained, and 'it's a cycle that goes both ways'. Resonating with the six-level ecological model of partnership developed in this research, the National Director described how it is essential to maintain an understanding of the infrastructure and supporting conditions as 'building out' from the experience of the child and young person:

*If you think of the child or young person's experience as the sacrosanct space, the outer circle is also essential to make that happen because it creates the systems and the conditions and the supports. This can happen in an ad hoc way, on a once off basis, or in an unsustainable way, and this is what Music Generation is trying to counteract with the development of the surrounding infrastructure. It is never about the infrastructure and it can never be about the infrastructure. It must always be about getting to the heart of it. The infrastructure is only an enabler... the infrastructure just creates the conditions. Management and partnership create the conditions to get to what it's all about. The purpose of all of the structures that live 'outside' the sacrosanct circle is to enable the achievement of something long term and lasting for children and young people's engagement with music education.*  
(National Director, Music Generation)

The National Director also explained that in the management of a public-private partnership to develop and sustain the infrastructure for performance music education in Ireland, she never loses sight of that space by remembering ‘what it’s all about’:

*I never lose sight of that space and I work from that space. I've never lost my identity as a musician or as a music education practitioner because I believe that when you work in arts management or when you work in education or music education management or whatever it might be... it is your job to remember what it's all about... and what it's all about is the experience of music making. So, my approach is not to think in management terms downwards... everything that I do is rooted in and from the experience of music-making. Obviously you have to think in business and management terms also but it must all be rooted from the source. The source has to be what Music Generation's mission, and vision, and primary purpose is... and it's all about providing access and a quality musical experience and bringing children and young people and musicians together... and then you work out from that. Your thinking and decision-making and everything must come back to that sacrosanct space because that's what we're about.*

*(National Director, Music Generation)*

The NDO therefore plays an essential and fundamental role as the ‘outer layer’ of partnership which supports and sustains that which happens at local, meso, individual, and most importantly, the ‘sacrosanct’ interaction level. The NDO engages in a complex process of managing relationships, creating and nurturing partnerships, and essentially supporting local-level partnerships in building an infrastructure around children and young people which until this point historically, was patchy, weak, and in many cases, non-existent.

### *Considerations for Music Generation*

As MEPs evolve, and as the scale of Music Generation’s activities increases nationally, the NDO will need to be appropriately resourced to ensure that it can continue to focus on the areas of most need as they arise. To ensure that this can happen, it could be the case that new supportive ‘meso-level’ partnership structures between national and local-levels are required to engage with emerging and critical issues such as CPD, implementing learning strategies, research and evaluation activity, supporting the musician workforce, and other potential leadership needs which may arise.

#### **6.10.2. Music Generation Board of Directors**

A powerful component of Music Generation’s national level partnership infrastructure is its governing Board of Directors appointed by U2, The Ireland Funds, and Music Network. The National Director liaises closely with the Board of Directors, and they keep informed with what is happening ‘on the ground’ through various avenues and mechanisms. As such, the Board of Directors effectively holds the ‘golden thread’ between the NDO and the donors, and it strengthens the ecological model of partnership for Music Generation through its work in areas of strategy and policy. With strategic representation from across the fields of music education and the arts, media, business, third-level education, philanthropy, music industry, and ETBs and Local Authorities, the Board’s breadth of expertise and active work ethic has been key to Music Generation’s effectiveness at a national interagency level.

#### **6.10.3. National-level partnerships**

In addition to partnership-working happening from the local to interaction-levels of Music Generation’s ecological model of partnership, the research also revealed strong partnership-working at a national level, between the NDO and a range of diverse national partners. Over the course of the research process, the Department of Education and Skills (DES), key statutory bodies, and a number of well-established, respected, and renowned

organisations and institutions were observed as having established synergetic and symbiotic working relationships with Music Generation. The evidence would suggest that from the perspective of these organisations and bodies, Music Generation was perceived as being a positive, dynamic, and innovative new initiative on the Irish landscape, and one which these organisations felt could expand and enhance their activities and ambitions through partnership. Music Generation and those other partners were willing to work together for a myriad of reasons, including the attraction and logic of sharing expertise, experience, knowledge, resources, and other supports. For Music Generation, there was often an educative process associated with nurturing collaborative partnerships with other organisations. This process was to ensure that Music Generation's vision of providing children and young people with access to high quality music-making experiences was communicated and remained steadfast and focused, and importantly, that it connected with the intentions of other partners. As Music Generation's National Director explained:

*With other organisations – you sometimes have to educate and bring forward their thinking about what it is that Music Generation wants to achieve... and for Music Generation... it's never an option to compromise on our vision and intentions... on that goal or the kernel of the organisation... you cannot lose sight of what the purpose is. It's actually very simple. We have a very clear goal, we need to create the conditions, partnership and otherwise, to make that happen.*  
(National Director, Music Generation)

The broad characteristics of these new national-level partnerships were not dissimilar in nature to those which were identified at a local level of Music Generation's infrastructure. Firstly, each partner 'came to the table' with their own diverse intentions and mutually beneficial relationships ensued which allowed both partners, in collaboration, to work towards and achieve their own often disparate yet very much interconnected goals. Secondly, partnership-working allowed something to happen at a national level that may have been otherwise impossible, or at least considerably challenging to achieve. Thirdly, national partners could achieve much more through meaningful partnership than through striving alone towards their goals. Finally, the reason and purpose for establishing partnerships at this national-level was to achieve something meaningful at local-level, which could then impact on what happened at individual and interaction-levels. That is, the focus at each level – both national and local – was on children and young people's music-making experiences in those sacrosanct interaction-level spaces where children and young people meaningfully engaged with musicians and one another.

A most significant national-level partnership, and perhaps the primary partnership of the National Development Office, is with the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The intention of this partnership is to mainstream the model initially seed-funded through philanthropic donations. This partnership, in a sense, creates a permeable border between the national-level, with the DES as a funding-partner, and the philanthropic-level. It is truly an enabling and governing partnership which is essentially allowing and sustaining, for the first time, a publicly-supported performance music education service that can live beyond the initial seed-funding. This partnership has been transformative in that it has prompted a reimagining of the ways in which partnership can happen with national statutory bodies. That is, during the development of Music Generation, the MEPs – led by local statutory bodies – have changed from being perceived as funding receivers to acting funding partners who contribute 50% of the funding and therefore merit a role in governance. As the partnership was set-up between the NDO and the DES, significant time, energy, and resources were committed to establishing, developing, and maintaining the relationship. Agreed understandings of the scope and parameters of what it is they wanted to achieve together through partnership and collaboration were set out. Investment is being channelled to developing appropriate structures which can realise the partners' ambitions. And importantly, long-term partnership strategies are

being agreed upon by Music Generation and the DES to enable long-term planning at each other level of Music Generation's ecological model of partnership – where ultimately, at an interaction-level, children and young people can be supported in imagining and constructing rich constellations of future possible selves in music. These are notable and admirable achievements, and to sustain these developments beyond the initial seed-funding stages, these actions should be continued and strengthened.

Music Generation, through establishing partnerships with other national partners, has sought to achieve and gain a range of outcomes – each, importantly, having the experience of children and young people as its ultimate focus. The intentions for these national-level partnerships have included: increasing access to high quality instrumental tuition, establishing accredited professional development courses, and supporting a research dimension which focuses on the meaningful music-making experience of children and young people. The following are examples of these:

- » A partnership with St. Patrick's College Drumcondra, from which this report has emerged, demonstrates a strong partnership between the higher education sector and cultural/education sector. This national partnership was designed and established to underpin the activities of Music Generation with a robust research dimension, provide clear pathways for knowledge transfer, and ultimately inform the strategic development of Music Generation's infrastructure.
- » A partnership with the CME Institute for Choral Teacher Education, the Association of Irish Choirs, and DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama to develop an accredited Professional Development Course in Choral Music Education. This course offers an opportunity for musicians, music teachers, and choral conductors working with children and youth choirs to improve their choral conducting skills.<sup>68</sup>
- » A partnership with the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, a non-profit mobile Pro Audio and HD video recording facility that provides hands-on experiences of song-writing and multimedia production to children and young people. In 2015, the bus toured across each MEP and engaged over 100 young musicians.

A particularly developed and advanced national level partnership which informed the research was that of the Music Generation/Arts Council partnership. Established in 2013, the objectives of this three-year national partnership were formulated around the strategic aims of each organisation. That is, where the Arts Council was interested in a) further developing their arts provision for children and young people and b) extending the creative practice of musicians, Music Generation's congruent aims were to enable children and young people across the MEPs to actively engage with high-calibre professional musicians from all genres of music. Through this national partnership, the Arts Council aimed to provide funding which would facilitate a different kind of access and engagement at a level which complemented the day-to-day work being carried out across Music Generation's infrastructure; it wanted to support something else over and above and beyond the core activities of an MEP.

At one of the first partnership meetings which was attended by an Arts Council representative, Music Generation NDO, and each MEP coordinator, I observed first-hand a step in the process of national partnership-working. Previous meetings had occurred with the Arts Council and Music Generation's National Director, but at this very early stage of the process, the 'what' of the initiative, in terms of what it was going to look like, and the potential direction that it could take continued to be deliberated, debated, and discussed. Each organisation came together to brainstorm and to attempt to shape a vision for what could be achieved. Besides the strategic parameters of each organisation which framed the conversation's margins, the page was blank – the process was one of contemplation and consultation rather than direction. The Arts Council and NDO welcomed the input and opinions of those coordinators who would ultimately oversee potential Music

68 <http://choralmusicexperience.com/joomla/> (accessed 27/08/2015).

Generation/Arts Council projects at local level. There was a strong sense of openness from the Arts Council's perspective in terms of listening to the needs and concerns of MEP coordinators. There was an even stronger sense that this was new ground, so to speak, and that all parties were navigating this new territory together.

In the following interview extract, the Programme Manager of the Arts Council Partnership explains how the emerging partnership is enabling the Arts Council to realise its strategic priorities through partnering with Music Generation, and how Music Generation is similarly enabled to realise its aims.

*The Arts Council has a number of strategic aims and at that stage there were two main strategic imperatives that fitted for them. One of them was boosting their provision for children and young people and the other one was extending the creative practice of the musician. Funding Music Generation in this way allowed the Arts Council to address those two things and for Music Generation, it enabled them to address the issue of getting professional performing musicians in close contact with children and young people. That's not to say that all the musicians already working with Music Generation are not professional and performing because of course they are, but this is a way of getting another cohort of musicians who probably would have a different work pattern and they wouldn't usually be teaching on regular programmes. This programme enables us to bring in musicians who might be touring or who might have different working patterns in their lives so they're not going to be a regular tutor in a music programme... either because they don't want to or they're doing other kinds of work or they're in other genres. I always refer to this programme as sort of a 'middle ground' as it's not the regular programmes of Music Generation... it's not around musicians coming in and giving a performance... it's much more around a creative engagement where you can access the type of musician across all the genres that you wouldn't normally get to work with young people in the MEP. It's much more like a residency or a workshop and it's a very active engagement and I'm really passionate about changing that mind-set in all concerned... the mind-set that we've had for many a year... where you have a band of musicians and they're very good and they're touring the country and they go to a school and they do a lovely workshop for an hour or two hours and they love it and the children love it and the school is thrilled and then they go away... and then what happens? Usually nothing! That model became the norm...*  
(Programme Manager, Music Generation/Arts Council Partnership)

In the short time that the Music Generation/Arts Council partnership was established, a number of innovative initiatives have been designed, shaped, guided, and implemented by MEP coordinators and musicians, for and with children and young people, in close consultation with a dedicated Programme Manager.<sup>69</sup> These projects include:

**Music Generation Sligo:** The focus of Music Generation Sligo's project was a *Music Fusion Programme* where two professional groups, Dervish and the West Ocean String Quartet shared their 'trad and 'classical' worlds with young Sligo musicians culminating in a concert in the Hawk's Well Theatre. The first strand of the project was a Young Composers Week with established composer/musician, Neil Martin. This strand then fed into the second strand of the project which was a Young Ensemble Performance Week with West Ocean String Quartet and Dervish.<sup>70</sup>

69 €450K invested by the Arts Council (€40K for each of the 11 MEPs).

70 <http://www.musicgeneration.ie/blog/article/first-of-the-projects-under-the-new-partnership-is-underway-in-sligo/> (accessed 27/08/2015).

*Music Generation Limerick City:* The focus of Music Generation Limerick City's project was The Music Gen Express Bus and the *Limerick Voices Project*.<sup>71</sup> The Music Gen Express double decker bus was converted into a performance space, field recording studio and outside festival stage. Through *Limerick Voices*, a bus-based project, established musicians worked with groups of teenagers to help them to write songs, record their songs and find their 'musical voices'. The wider aim of this partnership was to create a culture of song-writing and self-expression within Limerick.<sup>72</sup>

*Music Generation Louth:* Children from four local schools worked with musicians Zoë Conway, Barry Hynes and composer Elaine Agnew on a project entitled *Re-imagining Songs and Music of Oriel*. County Louth was once part of the ancient kingdom of Oriel and this creative project delved into the rich musical tradition of the region, giving children the opportunity to learn the songs and tunes of their own local area, as well as creating their own songs and polkas. Inspiration for the project came from local sean nós singer Pdraigín Ní Uallacháin's book, *Hidden Ulster: people, songs and traditions of Oriel*.<sup>73</sup>

*Music Generation Cork City:* The Bold as Brass project saw jazz composer, arranger, saxophonist and musical director Jason Yarde working over a number of months with over one-hundred young brass, wind and percussion learners, in preparation for a large-scale outdoor promenade performance. The performance was part of Cork Midsummer Festival and also involved many of Cork's experienced musicians as mentors and performers.<sup>74</sup>

Crucially, and aligning this national partnership with the experiences of children and young people at an interaction level, the Arts Council Partnership Programme Manager outlined how this collaborative partnership has thus far: a) challenged and changed the way professional musicians had learned to think about their work with children and young people; b) challenged musicians to share their creativity and expertise in different ways, thereby extending their professional practice; c) supported children and young people in gaining an insight into and interacting with professional musicians in ways that were different in focus and intention to their weekly lessons/workshops; and d) achieved something new for children and young people that may otherwise not have been possible to achieve. Furthermore, a welcome finding from the first round of projects is that the musicians involved had indicated that they had learned from the children and young people. This national partnership process was also been revealing and valuable in that it has led to an emerging realisation for the Programme Manager, that unless musicians (and other 'grownups') engage with children and young people, and enter into a creative dialogue with children and young people, that we ourselves can potentially become the barriers to their creativity and musical meaning-making:

*It's not about musicians turning up and playing to the children or doing a 'show', this is about them collaborating with the children and young people in the room and it's challenging both to the children and it's challenging to the musicians, and when it works it's transformative for both parties. However, the difficulty in this role is shaping that and trying to figure out how to make this work in a way that makes sense and it works differently in different genres... the difficulty is usually because of the way that the 'grownups' think... the way that the grownups themselves have*

71 <http://www.musicgeneration.ie/blog/article/launch-of-mus-gen-express-and-limerick-voices-at-music-factory/> (accessed 27/08/2015).

72 For the culmination of this partnership, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3wDPnNr9M8> (accessed 27/08/2015).

73 <http://www.musicgeneration.ie/blog/article/music-generation-louth-re-imagining-songs-and-music-of-the-oriel/> (accessed 27/08/2015).

74 <http://www.musicgeneration.ie/news/article/cork-midsummer-festival-gets-big-bold-and-brassy-for-summer-solstice/> (accessed 27/08/2015).



been taught and the way that they've learned to think... so that's challenging but in a very creative way [...] So initially with the first ideas that were coming through... they weren't really the right kinds of processes and they really needed teasing out because they were too much that musicians X and Y would come in and they would 'deliver' something. We all in this country have come up through that model... so it was trying to turn that around. So the mantra that I keep saying to everyone is that the money must be spent in the room [...] that this scheme will pay musicians to be in the room with children and young people... 'now go back and figure out what you would like to do in the room with children and young people... and then we'll budget it'. [...] Once that thinking started to happen and once that thinking started to change... then yes... it was very challenging for the musicians but they did rise to it and when we did the feedback with them afterwards it was really amazing what they were saying because they were astonished from what they had learned from the young people and they were also very impressed by the standard that the young people were at... musically... on their instruments and just as musicians... and they were very impressed by the young people's ability to just latch on to something... a musical idea or whatever... and what that showed me... is that there are as many misconceptions on the side of performing musicians as there are on the side of, let's call them, music teachers... and all of us under-estimate young people all the time and in fact we can slow them up.  
(Programme Manager, Music Generation/Arts Council Partnership)

### 6.11. Philanthropic-level

The final and outermost layer of the ecological model of partnership for Music Generation is its encompassing philanthropic level (FIGURE 48). Music Generation, as has been outlined, was established in 2010 with a philanthropic gift of €7 million from Irish rock band U2 and the philanthropic organisation The Ireland Funds for the start-up phase of the programme. This, it is certain, has had the greatest impact on the design and implementation of the programme, as the scale of what was observed occurring at 'interaction levels' across Music Generation today would not have been possible had the donors not provided the private funding in the first place.

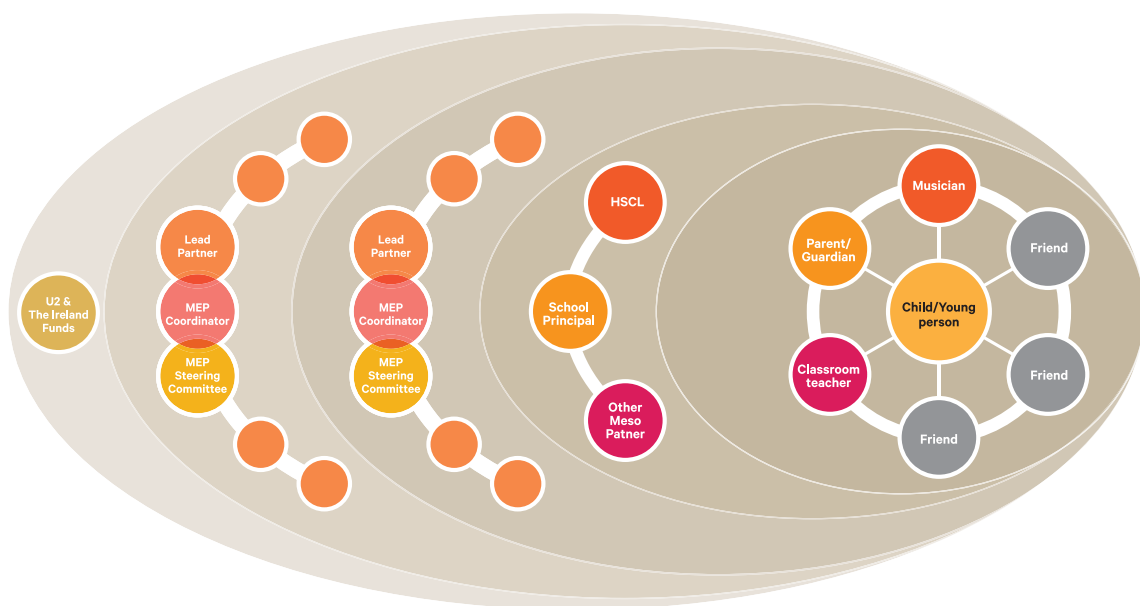


FIGURE 48: PHILANTHROPIC-LEVEL OF AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF PARTNERSHIP

Philanthropic giving as a philosophy is continually evolving. It is a philosophy of planned giving which emerged towards the end of the twentieth century in response to 'large-scale societal influences that included technological innovation, the creation of enormous wealth, new demographics, government retrenchment, and the (apparent) triumph of the market economy' (Cobb 2002, p.126). Historically speaking, arts and culture have been virtually excluded from philanthropic initiatives, receiving 'little support from traditional funders who combine business techniques with their grant making' (ibid., p.139). From an Irish perspective, philanthropy across the arts and cultural landscape has not been well developed, and Music Generation is pioneering in this sense as it is striving to achieve a national performance music education infrastructure established through philanthropic giving.

The philanthropic approach of U2 and The Ireland Funds to Music Generation can be usefully conceptualised along the lines of Cobb's (2002) 'new' venture philanthropy that emerged in the US and that has altered the philanthropic landscape since the final years of the twentieth-century. While a comprehensive consideration of the roots and characteristics of philanthropic giving is beyond the scope of this research, there are some useful ideas in Cobb's research which help to clarify the role of philanthropy in Music Generation's development, particularly as Music Generation enters into its publicly-funded phase. Cobb explains that the late-twentieth-century philanthropy grew out of capitalism ascendant in the United States and elsewhere and the entry of a new entrepreneurial class into philanthropy. This led to a reform movement within philanthropy that viewed venture capitalism as an appropriate model for charitable giving and often used its terminology (ibid., p.129). Thus, according to Cobb (ibid.) philanthropic grants are often called investments<sup>75</sup> and a programme officer may be called a managing director or partner. A comprehensive study was carried out by Cobb to examine the priorities and practices of nine venture philanthropists and assess the potential of venture philanthropy as a source of support for arts and culture. Cobb found that each fund studied emphasised accountability, focused on capacity building, desired to fund social change entrepreneurs, and closely connected to the findings of this research, tried to redefine the relationship between funder and grantee by creating a partnership and lessening dependency. This, of course, is characteristic of the donors position in the ecological model of partnership developed for Music Generation.

Cobb also cites Letts et al. (1998) who highlight the limitations of foundations who focus on innovation rather than capacity building. The result of that focus, the authors argue, is that traditional grant making by foundations is unable to solve social ills and has left non-profits trapped in a vicious cycle of dependency (Letts et al. 1998 in Cobb 2002). Aligning with the alternative approach of Music Generation's donors, venture capitalists in the philanthropic sphere have 'a comprehensive investment approach that sets clear performance objectives, manages risk through close monitoring and frequent assistance, and plans the next stage of funding well in advance' (Letts et al. 1997, p.7). The authors identify several practices that philanthropists use to turn grantees into successful enterprises – those practices that resonate strongly with Music Generation's relationship with its donors include: strategies of risk management based on greater accountability; a 'hands on' relationship between the funder and the start-up; the development of performance measures; sizeable and long-term funding; placing managing directors on the grantee's board; and the development of exit strategies (Letts et al. in Cobb 2002, p.130). Cobb's conclusions, which are reflected in the findings of this research, highlight many issues which can arise in term of a donor-grantee relationship – these include committing enough time to relationship development, developing agreed upon and appropriate performance measures, investing significantly in staff, raising new needs for management, and ensuring the continuation of investment in funding for the organisation.

In terms of Music Generation's philanthropic beginnings, Flynn and Molloy (2013) describe the roots of this philanthropic model and the 'novel characteristics' which have emerged. These include

75 An Irish Time article (14.10.2014) describes the 'philanthropic investment from U2 and The Ireland Funds (see, <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/over-80-million-to-be-spent-on-recruiting-1-700-school-staff-1.1963596> (accessed 31/08/2015) and Music Generation describes the Arts Council's 'investment... to support the work of professional musicians in a range of ambitious music education programmes' (see, <http://www.musicgeneration.ie/news/article/arts-council-investment-of-450000-in-music-generation/> (accessed 31/08/2015)

the requirement for MEPs to source 50% of their funding locally, an aspect of the philanthropic partnership which aims to promote sustainability (and not dependency), and the development of an exit strategy which involved seeking agreement from the Department of Education and Skills that it would continue funding into subsequent phases:

*Firstly, the reputational leverage of [U2 and The Ireland Funds] on government was critical in achieving something that had previously been strongly resisted. U2 do not normally put their name to such initiatives, preferring to do things quietly; in this instance they felt that it would help to achieve their aims and strengthen the likelihood that the Department of Education and Skills would agree to continue the funding after the start-up phase.*

*[...] It is highly unusual in Ireland for national public infrastructure to be funded by philanthropy. This is something novel but not unheard of, as in the example of the Carnegie Libraries built across Britain and Ireland funded by the Scottish American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who only gave to those who also made a financial commitment to continue the work. Music Generation has a comparable approach to ensuring that sustainability is built into the system [...] Music Generation offers three-year seed funding of up to €200,000 annually to local MEPs [...] in which their detailed and costed plans must show that the service can be sustained in the long term and includes matched resources. At the end of the three years, exchequer funding will replace the philanthropic donations.  
(Flynn and Molloy 2013, pp.49-50)*

The initial vision and thought leadership for Music Generation, intimated by U2, was inspirational and influential for the NDO in interpreting Music Network's *Report on a feasibility study* and devising the Policy and Priorities document which guides Music Generation's work today at each level of the ecological model of partnership. In short, the philanthropic level urged and allowed a certain kind of thinking to develop, and the donor's thought leadership in this regard has very much shaped the ways in which Music Generation has subsequently evolved. U2 and The Ireland Fund's donation was a catalyst, a seed fund, a once-off injection to kick-start the process, and it set the tone for what occurs today across Music Generation's ecological infrastructure. As Music Generation's National Director explains:

*The injection of funding was something that had to have a deep, long-lasting, ripple effect that would create change, but change that would be sustained – that's its intended purpose. The reason that it was set up in this way is so that it would be a catalyst and a stimulus.  
(National Director, Music Generation)*

A number of characteristics of philanthropy were observed at this level of the ecological model of partnership for Music Generation, each with implications for the future development of Music Generation. These are:

1. Philanthropy considers the head and the heart: Philanthropy is a type of giving which strives to create value and impact (social, cultural, educational, etc.); it is characterised by a compassionate consideration of others and often heart-felt belief in a particular issue or cause. At the same time philanthropy must consider an apparently competing objective of employing an entrepreneurial and business-sensitive approach to achieving its aims. This, for Music Generation's donors, is the relationship between 'head' and 'heart'. In considering the philanthropic underpinning of Music Generation, Molloy and Flynn (2011) characterise philanthropic giving as not just 'emotive giving' but 'strategic giving' with long term outcomes in mind.

U2 and The Ireland Funds gifted seed funding for Music Generation with the overarching vision that all children and young people, whatever their background, would have access to high quality vocal/instrumental tuition. This was a vision for transformation that the donors believed in and U2, in particular, were personally motivated to be a catalyst in achieving this vision. The donors also believed that such a programme could only be transformative for children and young people if it was sustained and continued on a long-term basis. As Molloy and Flynn (2011) explain, the donors understood that the gift could potentially lose its power and impact if it was given as a once-off charitable donation, and to ensure that this did not happen 'two types of partnership – local and national [were] put in place to effect planned and strategic giving' (ibid.). This entrepreneurial way of thinking in turn has informed the functioning of the NDO in terms of its work momentum, its efficiency, its integrity, and its ambition and ability to stay 'light on its feet'. That is, what Music Generation has thus far achieved has resulted from a philanthropic-imbued correlation of 'head' and 'heart' thinking.

2. Philanthropy is giving which attacks the cause of the problem rather than easing the symptoms: Through what has been described as a venture philanthropy approach, Music Generation's donors wished to engage in planned and strategic giving which would effectively and sustainably address the longstanding barriers to children and young people accessing instrumental/vocal tuition in Ireland. The main barrier and 'cause of the problem' to be addressed was the lack of a nationally embedded infrastructure which could support and sustain access to high-quality music-making experiences for children and young people. Since Phase 1 MEPs were established through philanthropic giving, with a requirement for MEPs to match-fund monies received, this infrastructure is gradually being realised. Resonating from the philanthropic level, external conditions beyond already established infrastructures have been put in place at each level of the described 'ecological model of partnership'. The donors have continued to address the cause of the problem through a) supporting the establishment of transformative national partnerships, b) influencing a new way of operating at local infrastructural level, and c) working steadfastly towards the continuation of investment in Music Generation via exchequer funding and the MEPs.
3. Philanthropy inspires new ways of thinking and encourages flexibility of approach: Philanthropy strongly influenced the way in which Music Generation was set-up. This is particularly true in terms of the requirement for MEPs to raise 50% matched-funding for programming, and in terms of the efficiency of delivery, accountability, and measurable impact which philanthropy encourages. Due to the nature of this philanthropy-inspired set-up, those at local-level have faced complex issues in attempting to respond to the implications which philanthropic-thinking gives rise to. Local MEPs are often challenged as they are bound by some of the constraints of public-sector working. Coordinators, in attempting to respond to the intentions of the donors, effectively operate and negotiate between the demands of philanthropic/national and local levels of Music Generation's ecological model of partnership. On the one hand, they work within long-established and often immovable local infrastructures and systems and on the other hand, they must respond to the philanthropic and entrepreneurial way of operating which defines and drives activities at a philanthropic and national-level. To ensure that coordinators are not slowed down by the systems within which they operate, relevant local and national-level partners should embrace change and flexibility of approach to a greater degree than has thus far occurred.
4. Philanthropy for Music Generation is a 'three legged stool': It is important to emphasise and highlight that although U2 and The Ireland Funds were among the original instigators of the Music Generation conversation, the initiative has evolved to where they are currently 'one philanthropic leg of a three-legged stool'. The other two key funders are the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Local Music Education Partnerships. Striving towards

this philanthropy-inspired model was a critical development for Music Generation in ensuring the sustainability of the organisation beyond the original financial injection from U2 and The Ireland Funds. Philanthropic giving cultivated a deep sense of commitment amongst all partners across Music Generation's ecological model of partnership. The donation of €7 million in the first instance brought with it a commitment from the DES to come on board as a key national partner. Although occupying a space at national-level, the DES is 'close' to the permeable border between national and philanthropic-levels, and this relationship would not have been possible had it not been for the leveraging power of philanthropy. Forging a national partnership with a Department of the Irish State to support an infrastructure for non-mainstream music education was ground-breaking.<sup>76</sup> The donors' gift was also powerful in terms of leveraging additional support at local levels; for instance, Local Music Education Partnerships have encountered and worked through the many challenges which the new PME initiatives have created, and they have committed to investing in local initiatives on a long-term and sustainable basis. At philanthropic-level therefore, there is also a powerful layer of partnership-working. At this level, the Department of Education and Skills and the Local Music Education Partnerships are impacted upon by the catalytic, visionary, and transformative donor partners who through their collaboration, are ultimately enabling and supporting what can happen at each other level of Music Generation's ecological model of partnership.

### 6.12. Conclusion and implications

Partnership-working is a complex process, and the ecological model of partnership developed across six levels (interaction, individual, meso, local, national, and philanthropic) illustrates that there are many different voices and perspectives to be considered – there are no 'incorrect' viewpoints only perspectives which should be listened to, considered, respected, and negotiated through meaningful dialogue. In this way, all partners across each level – from the Arts Council, to a local provider, to a parent/guardian, to a young teenager – can reflect on how they contribute to a shared vision; on how they occupy the viewpoints of others; on how they affect improvement, progression, and positive change; and ultimately on how they work together to build an inclusive and non-hierarchical ecological model for participation and meaningful music-making. Several implications for partnership-working emerged over the course of this chapter, and the most salient of these are highlighted here for consideration:

- » At an interaction-level of Music Generation's model of partnership, children and young people experience meaningful music-making and have the opportunity to explore and construct vivid possible selves through music-making. The design and implementation of longitudinal (as opposed to short-term) responsive programmes would strongly underpin and support their endeavours. Long-term multi-annual planning by MEPs, as opposed to shorter term-based planning, would also lead to more meaningful partnership-working with musicians, and allow for the possibility of musicians imagining more 'distant' possible selves for children and young people. For musicians to sustain children and young people's long-term music-making engagement in this environment, Music Generation needs to support the development of relevant professional development supports and learning networks through which musicians can further develop their skills and expertise. Furthermore, children and young people should be consulted on an ongoing basis at an interaction-level, and their opinions and insights should inform programme planning and development.
- » There is immense potential for meaningful music-making in those interaction-level encounters where children and young people have the opportunity to interact with other children and young people, independently of the facilitating musician. To support such meaningful music-

<sup>76</sup> At the time of writing, this co-funding partnership with the DES has commenced with the DES co-funding MEPs ~ on a phased basis.

making, musicians should a) attempt to create opportunities for such music-making at an interaction-level to occur and b) challenge their own practice to incorporate an element of participatory PME. Resourcing such encounters would require a) the creation of opportunities for musicians to share and learn from one another's practice locally and nationally, and b) the provision of physical space and other resources for young people to engage in quasi- and fully-autonomous music-making at an interaction-level.

- » Parents/guardians, classroom teachers, childcare educators, youth workers etc. can be valuable partners at an interaction-level where they directly engage with children and young people to support their music-making. In planning a programme's strategy, the involvement of these individuals should be discussed and understood amongst all parties, and if appropriate, measures should be put in place to support their participation.
- » The individual-level partnerships (between musicians/parents/guardians/classroom teachers/youth workers etc.) of the ecological model of partnership strengthen and fortify what happens at an interaction-level. The frequency of occurrence and depth of engagement of these individual-level partnerships was generally haphazard and down to chance rather than strategic forward planning. An awareness of the value of these relationships in supporting the meaningful music-making experiences of children and young people should be understood by coordinators and musicians. Consideration should also be given to how these relationships could be facilitated and resourced before and during a programme. These recommendations bring with them resource implications beyond a musician's regular workshop/lesson/performance 'contact time' with children and young people.
- » Meso-level individuals have rich and nuanced understandings of their own contexts. Engaging with meso-level 'gatekeeper' partners to inform the design and implementation of programmes is invaluable in terms of building trust, constructing shared understandings, and putting in place those conditions which effectively address barriers to PME and support individual- and interaction-level partnerships. Revealing and acknowledging gatekeeper-partners is an important first-step for any PME programme, and their insight and perspectives should be consistently sought out as programmes evolve and mature.
- » The local-level of the ecological model of partnership for Music Generation has profound influence on what happens at meso-, individual-, and interaction-levels. At a local-level, coordinators have complex and wide-ranging responsibilities, and as MEPs grow and evolve, it is important that coordinators have the opportunity to reflect on the nature of their leadership and the impact that their leadership is having across the local context. Coordinators should seek to build and maintain open, trusting, facilitative partnerships between all parties within their MEP, in particular with musicians. Achieving these aims requires time, energy, a clear prioritisation of responsibilities, and the resourcing of local management and administration structures which can effectively support coordinators in achieving their vision. A revisiting and affirmation of the role and responsibilities of a Steering Committee as an MEP expands and evolves would: a) bring forward and deepen a Steering Committee's collective understanding of 'partnership-working'; b) open up the Steering Committee to other relevant partners; c) further challenge the 'silo' mentality which persists in some contexts; and d) ultimately ensure that coordinators are supported by an achieving and responsive committee which has its sights firmly set on the meaningful music-making experiences of children and young people. Partnership-working at a local-level can never be taken for granted, it requires preparation and care, and its effectiveness should always be measured on its resonating impact at an interaction-level where children and young people experience meaningful music-making and strive towards their future possible selves in and through music.

- » The national- and philanthropic-levels of the ecological model of partnership, given their unique bird's-eye national perspectives, have the potential to create and nurture the diverse conditions which facilitate a truly joined-up approach to non-mainstream music education in Ireland. Music Generation's donors and funders –including U2, The Ireland Funds, and the DES – hold the 'golden thread' and the ongoing strengthening of their relationship makes possible the future possible selves of children and young people in and through music. Music Generation's national-level are the interface between the visionary philanthropic-level and local-level operations. While interpreting and responding to the wishes of the donors, Music Generation's national-level partners must continue to allow for space and time at local-levels for change, innovation, advances in thinking/partnership-working, and reflection to occur. In particular, the NDO, in responding to the research findings and implications, should ensure that the learnings embedded in the conceptual model can begin their journey from theory into the practice of partners across the ecological model.

# Part C: Conclusion





## Chapter 7.

# A model to guide the future directions of Music Generation

Since Music Generation was established in 2010, it has envisioned the creation of a vibrant and diverse national performance music education infrastructure which can have a positive, transformative, and lasting impact on the lives of children and young people in Ireland. As Music Generation works towards achieving and sustaining its ambitious vision, it has aimed to strategically embed and create spaces for itself as an 'open structure' within and beyond already existing local and national systems and structures in Ireland. While Music Generation has experienced and continues to experience some challenges along the way – as would be expected with any fledgling and complex national organisation – the organisation's commitment to its core values of inclusion, quality, partnership-working, diversity, creativity, and sustainability has ensured that increasing numbers of children and young people across its MEP infrastructure have access to meaningful music-making experiences.

Responding to the wishes of the Board of Music Generation that a change in thinking would accompany and guide Music Generation's future developments, the overarching purpose of this research was to move thinking forward in the wider field of performance music education, and to develop and advance the relevant understandings, frameworks, and ways of thinking that would be useful in charting and informing the future directions of Music Generation.

From the outset, the research focused on one of the strongest characteristics of Music Generation – that is the diversity in all aspects of its workings, structure, organisation, participation, and provision. A seminal moment happened early in the research process when we asked the question 'diversity, to what end?' We realised that diversity was not a 'good' in itself, only in what can be achieved through diversity. Such an interpretation of diversity – what the research calls critical diversity – describes the ways in which Music Generation is working to put in place diverse conditions which address a) existing barriers to instrumental/vocal tuition provision, b) the lack of an effectively embedded infrastructure, and c) the diverse needs of children and young people within each MEP. This realignment of the meaning of diversity led the research to focus on the transformative potential for children and young people of participating in a performance music education service based on principles of diversity. It firmly positioned children and young people at the heart of what it is that Music Generation wants to achieve, and by default, the experiences of children and young people across Music Generation's infrastructure became the starting point for the research. What has resulted is an overall framework for Music Generation that models how each part of Music Generation might be aligned to support the ultimate goal of putting in place those diverse conditions which can support children and young people in a) experiencing meaningful music-making and b) striving towards their future possible selves.

The conceptual model which has been developed in this research operates as a thinking tool for questions such as: What does it mean to have possible selves in and through musical doing? What are the many ways music is significant and meaningful for children and young people? What are the breadth of ways through which children and young people engage in performance music education given the variety of contexts, genres/practices and functions of music? And what are the nature of the partnerships that can support meaningful engagement in a range of performance music education modes and that nurture the development of children and young people's future possible selves in and through music? Each of these areas gave rise to new understandings that are relevant to all performance music education initiatives. They also provide a thinking tool for those engaged in every layer of Music Generation to understand the diversity within its strategic and structural organisation, its processes, music practices, contexts and among its participants. At their best these work to achieve the common goal of meaningful music experience for children and young people.

## **7.1. Implications of each component of the model**

### **7.1.1. Striving towards possible selves**

The possible selves component of the model developed in this research acknowledges, includes, and values the range of future possible selves that children and young people imagine themselves becoming in and through music. With this comes a responsibility on Music Generation and all those involved in the provision of PME across its infrastructure to put in place the necessary conditions which allow children and young people to construct and strive towards their possible self-goals. This responsibility includes the need to design and support longitudinal responsive programmes which facilitate children and young people's long-term engagement with music. Key challenges for musicians across Music Generation's diverse music-making contexts include: a) guiding children and young people's behaviour in ways which provide a roadmap which connects their present to their future, b) nurturing a sense of motivation amongst children and young people to behave in ways which support their possible self-goals, and c) modelling their own diverse 'real world' musical possible selves – as educators and as musicians.

### **7.1.2. Engaging in a world of meaningful music-making**

Children and young people's diverse meaningful experiences through music-making incorporated three different types of meaning: a) musical meaning, which includes children and young people's meaning-making relationship with the music itself, b) personal meaning, which is concerned with the meaningful impact of music-making on children and young people's personal wellbeing and c) relational meaning, which is musical meaning-making inherent to the relationships forged between children/young people and others.

To support those conditions which enable children and young people to construct musical meaning, musicians across all PME contexts should reflect on and question the musical materials/repertoires/approaches with which they work to ensure the greatest possible potential of meaningfully connecting with the experiences of children and young people; whether this is through working with familiar musical genres, through shaping the unfamiliar in engaging ways, or through creative composing activities where children and young people construct their own inherent musical meanings. Additionally, musical meaning can be achieved for children and young people by ensuring that the necessary conditions are in place to support children and young people in experiencing musical flow. Moreover, it is important that children and young people are encouraged to set clear and immediate musical goals to pursue across a diversity of PME areas, and to seek a range of ways of receiving immediate feedback on their musical progression. Also important is the nurturing of children and young people's sense of agency and ownership in constructing their own musical meaning.

Music-making has potentially powerful personal meaning outcomes for children and young people. For musicians, promoting a sense of well-being can include getting to know children and young people, responding appropriately to them, communicating positively with them, encouraging children and young people to take initiatives, reacting positively to their endeavours, and enabling them to become independent in their musical doing. Additionally, nurturing children and young people's sense of wonder and curiosity about music and their musical worlds, and encouraging them to act on their curiosity and take risks could also enhance their self-confidence, self-worth, creativity, sense of emotional well-being, sense of purpose, and sense of personal identity in/through music. It is important that those across Music Generation's infrastructure do not focus on the 'group' to the extent that a meaningful consideration of the experience of the individual becomes lost. It is also important that musicians, coordinators, and others consult with children and young people to reveal the depth of personal meaning-making which is occurring.

Relational meaning highlights the role of others in children and young people's musical engagement. Features of relational meaning include the role of meaningful music-making in promoting broader social connections for children and young people, in widening children and young people's cultural understandings, in contributing to a sense of collective well-being and belonging, and in building supportive and trusting relationships with musicians. Supporting the conditions for relational meaning to emerge necessitates placing music-making in the wider context of children and young people's lives, and nurturing those opportunities for children and young people to interrelate and build relationships through music-making. Through this, relational meaning – embedded with musical and personal meaning – will surely thrive.

### **7.1.3. A spectrum of Performance Music Education**

The development and articulation of a spectrum of Performance Music Education modes is one of the most significant developments in the research, both for its application to the wider field of performance music education as well as the particular shared understanding it provides for Music Generation. In creating a culturally and musically inclusive and diverse service, Music Generation has brought together somewhat competing ideologies, approaches and orientations to performance music education. The acknowledgement that there is no one single way is a vital aspect of Music Generation achieving its vision. Two particular challenges face Music Generation. The first is how to authentically represent and encompass these different orientations while ensuring that children and young people gain the best experience in all of the approaches, purposes, practices and genres provided within each MEP. The second challenge is to guard against the danger of having an innovative and richly diverse 'set-up' phase but settling down into something less complex, more homogenous and systematisable – in the process losing the richness, the flexibility to innovate and respond, and perhaps become a service only for very particular groups, rather than strive to achieve the broad ambition set out in Music Generation's initial strategic plan and the strong wishes of the philanthropic donors.

In order to address this, the research developed a way of capturing a spectrum of interconnected performance modes that young learners move through. These were broadly categorised as: 1) Dialogical performance music education; 2) Participatory performance music education and 3) Presentational performance music education. These were conceptualised across a spectrum of 11 areas, as in a spectrum of light where the one entity is composed of an array of colours and these bands of colours, while distinct, meld into one another at the edges making it unclear where one ends and the next begins. In this way the PME modes are fluid categories and are not associated with any defined genre. Rather they are connected to an approach to music learning that children, young people and musicians can move through, sometimes in the one

lesson. Alternatively a dialogical and participatory approach may move over time to a presentational approach in preparation for a performance.

The Dialogical approach typically found in instrumental or ensemble music lessons has intentions that are active where the children and young people became critical co-investigators in dialogue with the musician-educator. Children and young people's imagination and creativity were celebrated, their voices were included in the conversation, they learned in partnership and dialogue with the musician, and had the opportunity to teach as well as to learn. The musician's pedagogical approach was flexible and individual to meet the needs of the children and young people. At the other end of the spectrum, a latent dialogical approach includes those encounters which align to a greater extent with a master-apprentice model. Each approach had value, each had meaning-making implications for children and young people, and each potentially presents choices for musicians in terms of how they engage with children and young people.

The Participatory approach included festive celebratory happenings, which included the many festivals, musical celebrations, street festivals and musical, choral or brass extravaganzas that MEPs have initiated, that go beyond mere performance and whose primary intention is participatory. The community music encounter area of the participatory mode captures how musicians engaged with and supported 'hard to reach' children and young people which the research identified as having 'diverse additional needs in challenging circumstances'. In these, musicians were responding to the often complex barriers which prevent access to meaningful music-making and drawing on intentions and practices of community music to do so. Communities of music practice included participation in the cultural practices of a music tradition such as engaging in Irish traditional music sessions and learning to make musical meaning within such a context. Fully and quasi-autonomous encounters arose through witnessing children and young people engaged in self-directed participatory and peer learning with a strong level of personal and relational meaning making. In one case a musician also facilitated this autonomous space.

The Presentational mode was found to be an integral part of most Music Generation programmes. They were deeply valued and had the capacity to elicit profound musical, personal and relational meaning for children and young people. The spectrum ranged from presenting as a musician in the role of 'artist' across a range of contexts but also the area of musicking or tasks associated with experiencing presentational PME as musician. This could include arranging rehearsals, rehearsing with an accompanist, promoting their music, engaging with audiences or developing programmes. The reception of music as an audience was also part of this mode and the meaning-making experienced with the preparation and presentation of their music making as recording in various media or electronic formats through video, sound cloud and other media.

#### *Some implications of the spectrum of PME Modes*

- i. Articulating performance music education in this way allows otherwise hidden, overlooked, and perhaps undervalued approaches to become visible. It identifies what is best about these approaches. For example, that an effective instrumental/vocal lesson is actively dialogical rather than a routine series of instructions.
- ii. Acquiring a language to discuss these modes is an important part of developing an understanding and awareness of their distinctive role and strengths. It also helps to avoid assumptions about the status quo that avoid further critical consideration. The resultant modes of performance music education and those areas included within each mode provide a framework to understand, encompass, and account for the range of purposes, approaches and practices that are a significant and relevant part of music education in the 21st century.

- iii. This articulation is useful to MEPs in assessing the balance of their programmes. For instance, it would be a concern if an MEP found that most of their programmes were participatory and that there were few or limited opportunities for children and young people to learn through dialogical or presentational modes, or equally, if most programmes were dialogical in nature.
- iv. Any future articulation of standards or exploration of 'high quality' across Music Generation's programmes should take account of the spectrum of PME Modes in order to ensure that it is inclusive of these orientations, values and approaches.
- v. The spectrum of PME Modes represents a way for musicians and others to understand one other's work, where it is coming from and how it has validity. As a framework, PME therefore attempts to provide a space for musicians, regardless of their musical background, their motivation, or intentions to situate what they do and reflect on why they do it in a particular way, and consider the impact of this. It is thus a thinking tool for further development in musicians' work.
- vi. The spectrum of PME Modes also supports Music Generations' decision to describe the music educators who work in each MEP as 'musicians' rather than 'teachers.' This decision was intended to accommodate the widest possible range of practices from across music genres and to respect and include genres that may not have a formal tradition of 'teachers' but would have a tradition of passing music on. It sought to ensure that it could move out of a conventional model of a music school into something quite new and innovative. The focus is on the child/young person's encounter and exchange with a vibrant practising musician who has the skills and expertise required to pass their music on to the next generation.

For Music Generation, the concept of modes of Performance Music Education aligns an understanding of music education with an evolved concept of performance. It provides a theoretical framework within which the 'musical doing' of children and young people, facilitated by musicians and the wider community, can be situated. It provides a means of understanding the spectrum of musical routes by which children and young people can engage meaningfully with music and develop a sense of their possible selves in or through music.

#### **7.1.4. An ecological model of partnership for Music Generation**

Partnership is the operating principle of Music Generation. Partnership enables all aspects of Music Generation to work towards the common goal of facilitating children and young people to realise their possible self in music. However a number of different levels of partnership were identified in the research: those that are directly in the learners' environment who have a direct engagement with children and young people; those who facilitate or support that engagement and are a little more removed; and those from a further distance who facilitate the conditions for that relationship to happen. Partnership can often be a euphemism for funder. While this is sometimes the case in Music Generation there are an array of partnerships that are also based on collaboration and facilitation by in-kind support rather than funding. In considering the different types of partnerships in Music Generation, this research described six levels of partnership and represented these on a model loosely drawn from Bronfenbrenner's (2005) model of ecological human development. This model was useful as it represents the proximate and distant influences on a child's development, with the child at the centre. In this case the focus is also on the child or young person and the types of partnerships that support meaningful music activity across the three modes of performance music education. Ignited by the level of philanthropic partnership, which acts as a catalyst in this model, each level is at its best when focused on facilitating meaning making experiences

in music for children and young people, regardless of whether the role is structural/organisational or directly engaged with participants.

Partnership is such an expandable term that it is sometimes difficult to identify the shared goal that it refers to. Aspects from the literature describing partnerships that are not based on a funding role included the characterisation of partnership as actually working together rather than just sharing information. This, it is noted, calls for demonstrated commitment, mutual trust, equal ownership and agency, and the achievement of common goals. Partnership is often motivated through collaborative advantage, a synergy where partners can achieve more together than they can on their own. Two difficulties with partnerships noted in the literature were that time to build the relationships that are the hallmark of effective partnerships was often missing. Also that partnerships set up within existing structures can lead to the assumption that an existing culture will prevail. This is described as 'new rhetoric in old bottles' and to be avoided. Both of these are a consideration for the types of partnership working that are part of Music Generation. Awareness of the role of language and procedures in perpetuating unequal power relations was also noted. The special nature of partnerships between policy makers and policy delivers and also between providers and participants was acknowledged as requiring particular attention to ensure a true partnership. A range of functions and purposes for partnership were articulated in the literature: 'transformational' partnerships seek to convince the partner of values and objectives. Straying back into the financial area – 'synergistic' partnerships work to produce added value and 'budget-enlarging' partnerships to produce extra resources. Practical partnerships included 'facilitating' partnerships that develop trust and accommodate relationships as well as 'co-ordinating' partnerships that oversee actions in strategic and practical terms. 'Implementing' partnerships deliver pre-agreed projects and 'collaborative' partnerships are where partners get to know one another's work and as a consequence agree to work together. It is clear from the literature that effective partnerships can demonstrate a wide range of qualities, however across all there must be a shared understanding and shared ultimate aims.

Six levels of partnership were found in this research each listed below and each with a different characteristic role:

1. Interaction-level (meaning-making partnerships)
2. Individual-level (nurturing and fortifying partnerships)
3. Meso-level (gatekeeper partnerships)
4. Local-level (symbiotic and synergetic partnerships)
5. National-level (transformative, advocacy, strategic and governing partnerships)
6. Philanthropic-level (visionary and catalytic partnerships).

#### *Issues for consideration*

The continual development of partnerships based on trust, integrity, a shared agency and an understanding of the shared common goals are overall considerations for Music Generation in this area. Further issues for consideration that relate to particular levels of partnership are raised below.

### *Musician and children and young people: interaction and individual level*

1. The question of who are considered to be partners is raised by the findings.

*a. The most vital level of partnership is at the individual-interaction level. This is where the music making, learning and musical growth happens. What is the role of the musicians in this partnership? Are musicians in fact partners or simply deliverers and employees? If partnership working is fundamental to Music Generation it would seem that such a role is appropriate and should be further developed. The implications of working with musicians as partners might address some of the concerns raised by them in the research and also have a bearing on their future working practices.*

*b. Are children considered partners in their own learning? If this is the perspective there are implications for developing autonomy, voice and independent music action on the part of children and young people and this has been highlighted in the research. This needs to be carefully balanced so it is not interpreted as 'anything goes'. Far from it, partnership is a two way process that requires joint listening, joint endeavour and relationship building. In a learning context it requires growing and supported independence, based on confident growth in knowledge, skill and expertise that allows musical independence and judgement.*

2. Time is an important element of the above points. Relationships are not built on short-term programmes and it is difficult to plan for continual progressive complexity in a repeatable six week programme. While one-off and short-term programmes have an appropriate context there should also be some programmes that are annual and that continue progressively from year to year.

3. There are a number of other partners in learning who may be present with the musicians, especially with young children, such as parents/guardians, classroom teachers, childcare educators, youth workers. Clarity about their role in supporting children's music making is important especially as they also act as role models at this stage of learning.

4. Music Generation is a very recent development in Ireland. Musicians are taking on complex multiple roles, some for the first time, and working out how to do this. Some consideration should be given to continuing to build partnership capacity in professional development and learning networks. In keeping with Music Generation's role as 'change-agent', an innovative approach to the types of support developed which put musicians in touch with new approaches and models and ways of thinking should be considered.

5. The term 'musician' for music educators within Music Generation is an encompassing rather than an excluding term but it is also a valuable means of aligning the intentions of Music Generation. While musicians occupy multifaceted and evolving roles they represent the world of music to children and young people and support them in envisioning and constructing musical possible selves. An active and vibrant musician identity and practice is a valuable resource for Music Generation's goals and some consideration should be given to the type of partnerships with musicians that enable them to continue to nurture their professional musical lives.

6. Together with longitudinal programmes, investment in musicians and in time for partnerships, the research suggests that musicians should develop an understanding of the musical lives of children and young people, creating agency for children and young people in the musical journey, creating a connection with individuals and ensuring children are involved in constructing meaning in their music making and have the opportunity to construct vivid musical, personal and relational possible selves.

### *Meso – gatekeeper partnerships and local/regional synergetic partnerships*

1. Meso-level individuals have rich and nuanced understandings of their own contexts. Engaging with meso-level ‘gatekeeper’ partners to inform the design and implementation of programmes is invaluable in terms of building trust, constructing shared understandings, and putting in place those conditions which effectively address barriers to PME and support individual- and interaction-level partnerships.
2. Synergetic partnerships are where other partners recognise that they can achieve their aims (not necessarily musical) through Music Generation’s aims. Examples might be the probation service’s Garda Diversion Programme or a summer festival programme. These are valuable partnerships but care should be taken to avoid mission creep, however worthy, and retain the focus on children and young people’s meaningful music making.
3. One of the most dynamic aspects of Music Generation’s local-level and ‘open’ partnership infrastructure is the significant range of other local organisations, providers, groups, centres, institutions, etc. that are willing to work in partnership with the local MEP. These include: county childcare committees, local funding agencies, local festivals, live venues, Youthreach centres, Garda Youth Diversion Offices, healthcare settings, third-level institutions, disability services, public libraries, direct provision centres, individual schools, private music education providers, music organisations and arts centres as well as support groups such as the HSCL. Where viewpoints of local agencies, steering committee members, meso-level partners, and/or musicians are sometimes in conflict with each other and or do not align there is an important role for the coordinator in mediating this.
4. Diversity of provision, access and multiple approaches to music learning is a hallmark of Music Generation. A shared understanding of this is vital when working through existing structures. The comment by one Steering Group member that they sometimes need to be reminded that their goal is to ‘Bring Music Generation to every child not just every ETB child’, is case in point.
5. The local-level of the ecological model of partnership for Music Generation has a profound influence on what happens at meso, individual, and interaction-levels. At a local-level, coordinators have complex and wide-ranging responsibilities, and as MEPs grow and evolve, it is important that coordinators have the opportunity to reflect on the nature of their leadership and the impact that their leadership is having across the local context. One way of strengthening partnership and engagement is to source leadership roles from within the musicians of an MEP or the Steering Committee of the MEP and so complement, share and lighten leadership roles.
6. Coordinators should seek to build and maintain open, trusting, facilitative partnerships between all parties within their MEP, in particular with musicians. Achieving these aims requires time, energy, a clear prioritisation of responsibilities, and the resourcing of local management and administration structures that can effectively support coordinators in achieving their vision.
7. A revisiting and affirmation of the role and responsibilities of a Steering Committee as an MEP expands and evolves would: a) bring forward and deepen a Steering Committee’s collective understanding of ‘partnership-working’; b) open up the Steering Committee to other relevant partners; c) further challenge the ‘silo’ mentality which persists in some contexts; and d) ultimately ensure that coordinators are supported by an achieving and responsive committee which has its sights firmly set on the meaningful music-making experiences of children and young people.



### *National and philanthropic partnerships*

1. Leadership requires leading by example. The National Development Office have a continuing role in demonstrating Music Generation's values by being visibly engaged in ensuring a powerful positive impact on the lives of children and young people through access to a vibrant and diverse performance music education. All other parts such as the development of structures, the work with and of musicians, the partnership building and consultations with communities, the strategic alliances and the initiatives of the National Development Office should continue to be seen as a support to their focus on achieving this aim.

2. As Music Generation grows and becomes ever more complex this must remain fundamental. Future planning for structural or personnel change should consider how this focus will be sustained.

3. As an organisation with a visible transformational agenda the NDO of Music Generation has the power to attract partners and to leverage further resources that provide high level and enriched experiences for children and young people's music making. It has already done this in partnering with the Arts Council and the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus.

4. Music Generation has already gained integrity and trust because of its focus on outcomes for children and young people, its strong communication of achievement, its light resource, central organisation and the belief (hard won) that it is here for the long-term. However it has had to very quickly establish itself and in shifting from a foundation organisation to a development organisation some consolidation may now be necessary. This is particularly so with musicians who although at the forefront of Music Generation can feel a disconnect and a clash between their own approaches and philosophies and structures they are working in. The NDO needs to create an effective connection with musicians and develop a listening and learning relationship so that their concerns are heard and so that musicians are fully aware of and share its principles.

5. Music Generation is changing the ways we think about performance music education. The setting of a vision that goes beyond music lessons and addresses children's self-actualisation in and through music is one case in point. The breadth of what is included and its agenda for inclusion is another. Careful consideration of how to reflect this breath in recording and reporting on MEP programmes is essential to ensure that Music Generation's broader vision of music education continues into the future.

6. In doing its work Music Generation benefits from its existence as an independent entity with its own Board that is also strongly connected to government agencies and can act as a co-connector and honest broker between sectors. At the same time it effectively combines a supportive and development role with a role in accountability for the MEPs it works with. As Music Generation grows some consideration should be given to the structures that will continue to facilitate this.

7. The philanthropic engine of Music Generation is a resource and a catalyst that should be returned to frequently. It has the potential to changes ideas, create new possibilities and ways of working and open other connections. The reputational leverage of the donors should not be overlooked as a powerful part of the ecosystem of partnership.

### **7.2. Final thoughts: a framework with transformational potential for children and young people**

The concept of possible selves in music as the goal of performance music education is congruent with the vision of Music Generation for children's personal growth and self-actualisation in music. It is an open concept that can accommodate a diverse range of aspirations for music: from an enriched life with music to a professional life in music. It includes within it the idea of growth and continual progressive complexity, it is inclusive of diverse genres, musical practices and relevant to all music learning contexts. Furthermore it is an overarching way of bringing together the multiple aims and intentions that the various music traditions and musicians that are part of Music Generation have for children and young people. It therefore has a role in articulating shared intentions that all can subscribe to.

Similarly the awareness that there is a spectrum of performance music education modes and that these represent different intentions for music students allows those from diverse traditions to locate themselves and to relate their priorities and values to others within the broad family of Music Generation. It creates the terms needed to have a shared conversation about differences. It also provides a reflective measure for musicians in terms of the balance of their programmes as they move between dialogical modes to presentational modes to participatory modes (whether autonomous or festive). The categories included act as a probing and thinking tool that makes visible otherwise overlooked aspects of performance music education that are part of the practices of professional musicians such as writing a programme note, the marking up of a score or learning how to rehearse with an accompanist.

The orientation of partnerships towards the shared goal of achieving the best musical outcomes for children and young people anchors them and provides a filter for priorities. The understanding of the texture and diversity of potential partnerships in terms of collaborative, nurturing, gatekeeping or symbiotic partners provides further ways to address barriers to meaningful music making and supports the development of partnerships that can facilitate initiatives through shared concerns.

In planning for the future development of Music Generation, the alignment of all parts of Music Generation to focus on supporting children and young people in developing vivid possible selves in music, as well as supporting the multiple ways in which they can realise these, creates a strong transformational intention at the heart of Music Generation. This not only has the potential to transform the lives of children and young people but radically change the ways we think about the provision of high quality, inclusive, accessible, diverse, creative and sustainable performance music education.



# Appendix 1

## Methodological design

### *An embedded multi-case study approach*

The Music Generation landscape was a complex research environment. To meet the broad aims of the research, the research process needed to take into account:

- » the structural complexities of participants involved (children and young people, musicians, parents/guardians, classroom teachers, childcare practitioners, coordinators, Steering Committee members, local partners etc.);
- » the diversity of research settings (community centres, preschools/primary/post-primary schools, live performance venues etc.);
- » the physical distances between MEPs etc.;
- » the content complexities of the research.

To this end, a methodological approach was designed which would address each of the research's aims, and allow an investigation into each layer of Music Generation's infrastructure. This approach is termed an embedded, multi-case study, guided by a critical theory paradigm. Each element of this design is outlined below.

### *Multiple case study approach*

The multi-case study method employed in this research involved selecting three case study MEPs, with one MEP chosen from each of Music Generation's initial application/funding phases. This multiple case study approach was employed for several reasons:

- » it permits greater opportunity to generalise across several representations of the phenomenon;
- » it is more compelling to the reader than results from a single case and the overall study is therefore regarded as more robust (Herriott and Firestone, 1983);
- » it allows the research to establish the range of generality of a finding (Borman, Clarke et al 2006, p.123) and to pin down the conditions under which that finding will occur (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p.55);
- » it allows the chosen MEPs to be located within their larger Music Generation context.

### *Embedded design within case studies*

Within each of these MEP case studies, a number of representative programmes were selected by taking into consideration a wide range of factors: musical genre/practice; context; age of children/young people; urban/rural setting, etc. This broad methodological approach is called an embedded multi-case study design (Yin 2006, 2009) which allows for the potential of having embedded subcases within an overall holistic case. A 'formal case study screening procedure' (Yin 2006, p.115) was carried out in choosing each case study and intrinsic subcases. This embedded approach was particularly resonant with the context of Music Generation and was attractive as a means of

managing what is a complex and continuously evolving research environment. The embedded multi-case study approach framed the disparate performance music education programmes as subcases within each MEP (i.e., each case study). It was felt that this embedded multi-case study approach would allow for a deep investigation into a) the complexities of Music Generation as a whole, b) the three representative MEP case studies, and c) each case study's sub-cases.

### **Timeframe of the research**

The fieldwork aspect of the research was conducted over three phases. Each phase involved the investigation of one MEP (case study) and a number of programmes (embedded subcases).

| PHASE   | DATE         | CASE STUDY         | SUBCASES   |
|---------|--------------|--------------------|--|
| Phase 1 | Sep-Dec 2013 | Case Study 1 (CS1) | Subcase 1 (CS1SC1) and Subcase 2 (CS1SC2)                  |
| Phase 2 | Feb-Jun 2014 | Case Study 2 (CS2) | Subcase 1 (CS2SC1) and Subcase 2 (CS2SC2)                  |
| Phase 3 | Sep-Dec 2014 | Case Study 3 (CS3) | Subcase 1 (CS3SC1), Subcase 2 (CS3SC2), Subcase 3 (CS3SC3) |

### **Cross-MEP themes**

Representation of all MEPs in the research was ensured through examination of cross-MEP themes, as well as attendance at all Network Meetings, and consultation with six-monthly/annual reports and other documentation. Cross-MEP themes were investigated using a range of methods including: focus group discussions with musicians and MEP coordinators; in-depth interviews with Steering Committee members; site visits to MEPs; as well reviewing statistical data reports, MEP Reporting Frameworks, MEP Annual Reports, the MEP Application Forms, and Implementation Plans.

### **Methodology**



Collecting data within each case study involved a strategic methodological approach which included: nonparticipant observations of lessons/workshops/performances etc., and audio recordings of each programme; interviews with parents/guardians, classroom teachers, Home School Community Liaisons, school principals, MEP coordinators, musicians, other local partners, and focus group discussions with children and young people. Particularly important to how this research was conducted was ensuring that the voices of children and young people could be richly captured across each subcase. To this end, a number of useful perspectives informed this aspect of the research in terms of effectively eliciting the voices of children and young people and viewing children/young people as co-constructors of their meaning (Griffin 2009; Anne Smith, Duncan, and Marshall 2005). Images and other media were used to elicit responses in discussion groups/interviews (Harper 2002).

### **Analytical approach**



1. Define and design;
2. Conduct 1st and 2nd case study (prepare, observe, analyse, interview, compare);
3. Analyse and conclude;
4. Conduct 3rd case study (prepare, observe, analyse, interview, compare);
5. Analyse and conclude.



# Case Study 1 (CS1)

| Subcase                 | Subcase 1 (CS1SC1)   | Subcase 1 (CS1SC2)   |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Context</b>          | CS1SC1 is an early-years music programme. It takes place over 12 weeks (6 before midterm and 6 after) in a primary school in an urban context in the North East region. The school is a DEIS Band 1 school, i.e., it is located in an area of concentrated levels of educational disadvantage. This programme was being implemented across a number of schools in the county. The barriers to instrumental vocal/tuition identified by participants were primarily socioeconomic, cultural, and available expertise. | CS1SC2 is a whole school classical strings programme (violin, viola, cello, and double bass). It took place in a primary school context over the course of a school term (10 weeks). The school is located in a rural area on the outskirts of a village in the North East region. This programme was being implemented across a number of schools in the county. The barriers to instrumental/vocal tuition identified by participants were primarily economic and geographic.                              |
| <b>Musician(s)</b>      | CS1SC1 is facilitated by Lorna, a singer/choral educator with expertise in early-years music education.  | CS1SC2 is facilitated by two musicians: Siobhán (cellist) and Joanne (violinist).  |
| <b>Description</b>      | <p>Lorna meets with two infant groups (age 4-6 approx.) on her visit to this setting. The early-years music workshop takes place in the school's gymnasium where Lorna sets up and awaits each group to arrive. Each workshop lasts for approx. 30 min.</p> <p>Over the course of 6-weeks, the young children (n=16) experienced music-making through song, exploring and playing a range of percussion and tuned instruments, play, and movement.</p>   | <p>The musicians teach separately two consecutive 'core groups' (30 mins/ea), before coming together at the end of the day to co-teach the larger 'general group'.</p> <p>The first group observed was a group (n=6) of children from senior classes who were learning violin with Joanne; the second group was a senior class group (n=16) who were learning violin, cello, and double bass with Siobhán; the third group (n=24) observed (co-facilitated) was a junior class who were learning violin.</p> |
| <b>Interviewees</b>     | The MEP coordinator, the musician, the children, the classroom teacher (Eilish), the school principal (Jean), the Home School Community Liaison (Margaret), and parents/guardians.   | The MEP coordinator, the musicians, the children, the classroom teachers (Mary and Bernie), the school principal (Sharon), and parents/guardians were interviewed.   |
| <b>Methods</b>          | Observations, focus group discussions, interviews, children's drawings, photo elicitation.   | Observations, focus group discussions, interviews.   |
| <b>Subcase snapshot</b> |   |    |




## Case Study 2 (CS2)

| Subcase                 | Subcase 1 (CS2SC1)   | Subcase 1 (CS2SC2)   |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Context</b>          | CS2SC1 was a foundation music programme which took place in a rural primary school on the outskirts of a small village in the South East region. The musician also facilitated small-group ukulele lessons in the context of this programme. It was 10-weeks in duration and took place in the classroom with the classroom teacher present. The barriers to instrumental vocal/tuition identified by participants were primarily financial, cultural, lack of value, and available expertise. | CS2SC1 was a small group instrumental programme (guitar primarily) which took place in a DEIS designated post-primary school on the outskirts of a village in the South East Region. The young people involved (n=13) were from 2nd to 6th year. They learned guitar but a number also learned bass guitar. The barriers to instrumental/vocal tuition identified by participants were primarily socioeconomic and geographical inequality.  |
| <b>Musician(s)</b>      | CS2SC1 was facilitated by Gerry, a classical guitarist and music educator.   | CS2SC1 was facilitated by Martin, a classical/jazz guitarist and guitar teacher.   |
| <b>Description</b>      | <p>Gerry rotated around the various class groups teaching whole-class foundation music. This included music rhythm games, exploring standard notation/sight reading, playing instruments including chime bars, incorporating technology, and singing.</p> <p>Additionally, Gerry met with a smaller group of children (n=8) to teach beginner ukulele. At the end of the school term, a concert was held in the school's gymnasium for family, friends, and the wider school community.</p>    | <p>The instrumental classes took place in a designated music room in the school. Over the course of one day, Martin met with small groups of young people (age 13-17 approx.) for their lesson. Each group comprised 2-3 young musicians. Each week, the instrumental lesson schedule rotated so that the young people would not be absent from a subject class for a consecutive week. Martin facilitated the range of young people's musical interests across folk, pop, classical, to jazz. At the end of the term, the young people had a concert for family, friends, and the wider school community.</p> |
| <b>Interviewees</b>     | The MEP coordinator, the musician, the children, the junior classroom teacher (Lucy), the senior classroom teacher (Jenny), and parents/guardians.   | The MEP coordinator, the musician, the young people, the classroom teacher (Stephanie).  |
| <b>Methods</b>          | Observations, focus group discussions, interviews, children's drawings, photo elicitation.   | Observations, focus group discussions, interviews.   |
| <b>Subcase snapshot</b> |   |    |



# Case Study 3 (CS3)

| Subcase            | Subcase 1 (CS3SC1)  | Subcase 1 (CS3SC2)   | Subcase 1 (CS3SC3)   |
|--------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Context</b>     | <p>A large group song writing/ performance programme which took place in an urban primary school on the outskirts of a city in the South West. This was a whole-school programme. The musicians (n=3) met with groups (n=50 approx.) of children in the school's gymnasium.</p> <p>This programme was 9 weeks in duration, but rather than weekly in occurrence, it was spread out over two school terms. The participating subcase school was one of a number of settings in the city participating in the programme. The main barriers to PME identified by participants: socioeconomic, cultural, and lack of value.</p> | <p>A multi-instrumental/vocal programme which took place in a community hub on the outskirts of a city in the South West. This programme was the extension of a previous music programme that was occurring at the hub, but the partnership between the local MEP and the hub enabled the expansion and development of the programme in different ways. The main barriers to PME identified by participants: socioeconomic, geographical inequality, and cultural.</p>   | <p>A multi-instrumental programme which took place in partnership with Youth Reach, a training and work experience programme for early school leavers aged 15-20. The programme took place on a purposely designed bus, parked near the setting, which was redesigned as an exciting educational/performance space for young musicians. This was the first time that Youth Reach had partnered with Music Generation in this context, so it was a rich site to investigate a fledgling partnership. The main barriers to PME identified by participants: socioeconomic, as well as educational disadvantage.</p> |
| <b>Musician(s)</b> | <p>CS3SC1 was co-facilitated by three musicians:<br/>Owen (guitar/vocals);<br/>Grace (vocals);<br/>Chris (guitar/vocals).</p>   | <p>CS3SC2 was facilitated by seven musicians:<br/>Joseph (guitar/vocals);<br/>Tristian (keyboard);<br/>Owen (guitar/vocals);<br/>Alex (rap/hip-hop/technology);<br/>Gabriel (guitar/vocals);<br/>Sara (vocals).</p>  | <p>CS3SC2 was facilitated by three musicians:<br/>Grace (vocals);<br/>Gabriel (guitar/vocals);<br/>Owen (guitar/vocals).</p>   |
| <b>Description</b> | <p>This programme was particularly unique given the large-scale nature of working with approx. 50 children in each group. The musicians facilitated a song-writing process where different class groups congregated in the school's gymnasium for a 30-min workshop. The ultimate aim was for each group to compose a verse of a song which would then 'come together' as a song for their school. This was also part of a city-wide programme initiative to bring all schools together at the end-of-term for a performance.</p>   | <p>This was a 'rolling' programme in that it was not limited to a specific number of weeks. It was for teenagers primarily, although younger children also attended lessons. In terms of the latter, the programme had linked in with a local after school youth club, and the Youth Worker sat in on those lessons. Instrumental/vocal lessons took place on a one-to-one or small group basis. The young people could choose from a range of instruments including: piano, guitar, drums, singing, hip-hop, rap, and electronic music.</p> | <p>Each week, the three musicians (two upstairs, one downstairs) would meet with the young people. The young people's musical interests crossed guitar, bass guitar, and vocals mainly in popular music genres. Given time constraints, the musicians would meet each young person for a short lesson, and given the nature of the space, it was a musical hangout space for those waiting their turn. The programme took place over 10 weeks and culminated in a concert which was held at the education centre.</p>  |

|                         |   |   |  |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Interviewees</b>     | The MEP coordinator, the musicians, the children, a classroom teacher (Catherine), parents/guardians, and the school principal (Nathan) were interviewed. | The MEP coordinator, the musicians, the programme coordinator (Joseph), the Director of the Hub (Noreen), and the children/young people were interviewed. | The MEP coordinator, the musicians, the young people, and the classroom teacher (Mia). |
| <b>Methods</b>          | Observations, focus group discussions, interviews.  | Observations, focus group discussions, interviews.  | Observations, focus group discussions, interviews.                                     |
| <b>Subcase snapshot</b> |    |    |      |



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