



WE ARE HERE!! Final Narrative Report

Published July 2019



**YOUTH
MUSIC**



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



How has the project WE ARE HERE!! helped your children?

It has helped on a number of areas: introduced the children and carers to different musical concepts e.g. beat, rhythm, volume of music and sounds. Introduced in a new fun way, to the richness of the human voice, also given increased confidence in using their voice. Provided opportunity to experience "live music" both through the musicians and their instruments, a very hands on experience. Increased cultural awareness through encouragement to share home songs.

How has the project WE ARE HERE!! helped you and your team?

We have had excellent training – both in understanding the aims of the project, and support in delivering a focus group for a specific period of time. We have learnt the value/ importance of music & songs in supporting early language & have had, like the participants, a hands-on opportunity to deliver sessions & participate in music-making.





CD included

Songgo

(For Children, Early Years Settings & Practitioners)

20 fabulous songs and activities for children aged 0-5



CD included

Songgo

(For Children & Families)

SongsTo composed by Mauricio Venegas-Astorga and Rachel Pantin



Musiko Musika's publication **Songgo: For Children & Families, Early Years Settings & Practitioners**, Award-Winning Finalist, Children's Educational category, 2019 International Book Awards

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Executive Summary

“In this way the creative potential and emotional expression that is inherent in high quality music making is present right from a child’s first experience of being part of a music-making community.” This phrase from this Final Narrative Report (see 1.3.3 below) encapsulates the fundamental mission of the project WE ARE HERE!!

We have endeavoured in preparing and writing this report to capture with words on paper and statistical evidence the wonderfully creative musical, social, cultural and educational journey that has evolved over the past 29 months, and the many stories of individual and collective progression and change. The project has built a network of relationships through musical activities for young children that are based on trust, and an understanding of shared objectives for the children, enlivened and nurtured by a willingness to collaborate across social and cultural boundaries. This is truly what building cultural capital within our communities is all about, and why it is of such importance in our society, and critical to building better futures for all children regardless of their social or cultural background.

It is evident in the process of writing this report that the families and the practitioners were at the heart of the project as much as the children themselves, creating a musical community within each family and early years setting. That was achieved by the great success we had in training practitioners and enabling and empowering them to implement the programme that we have now published as Songo (for Children, Early Years Settings and Practitioners), and in parallel to that the wide range of project activity with families, which resulted in our second publication from the project, Songo (for Children and Families).

- ***22 early years settings and 9 independent child minders involved***
- ***131 practitioners – 45 practitioners attended the full training course and 86 additional practitioners engaged at their settings***
- ***Around 540 parents/ carers attended Family Workshops and other project activities***
- ***50 different workshops and events were held for families to attend and 39 half day workshop sessions took place for nursery children***
- ***170 CDs and 51 Songo Family Books (with CD) provided for families to use at home with their children***
- ***Over 1,000 children under five attended the music workshops, concerts and other project events; a further number of at least 270 children engaged with the project’s activities through sessions led by the practitioners we trained***
- ***The 45 practitioners we trained will have delivered a minimum of 1,600 music sessions with the children they work with using the songs and activities from the project***
- ***After more than 24 months of the project 88% of the practitioners reported using the Songo songs and activities with their children once a week or more***

The profound impact of the project lies not solely in deepening the quality and accessibility of music making within those nuclei of individual families and early years settings, but in doing what music can do best, which is to bind individual families and smaller disparate local

groups together into bigger, larger communities, which is what took place on 21st May 2019 at the Lyric Hammersmith with A World of Music Day 2019:

“Yesterday was a great occasion and one of which you should be proud. You have created an incredibly vibrant, warm and open community, with a strong sense of belonging – all qualities that we need desperately in today’s disconnected and fragmented world. You also show so clearly what music can do in shaping and binding a community together.”

Peter Renshaw (former Head of Research and Development Guildhall School of Music and Drama)

There is one other theme that is at the core of Musiko Musika’s practise and which has informed the development of the project, which is addressing the cultural and social diversity of the children, families and practitioners. Parents and carers were asked to tell us the kind of things they and their child enjoy about music. This response from a parent at the children’s centre ***“We are a bilingual family and songs are a great way of finding out about and sharing different culture and history”*** neatly summarises the value and importance of this approach (see 1.3.2 below).

This report is in two parts. Section One focusses on what the project did, how we achieved our objectives and the evidence base we created. Section Two provides “Spotlights on practice: Key Findings and Learning themes from the project” which comprises summaries on our findings and learning in four areas that we believe can be of specific help in informing and supporting work by other individuals and organisations.

The contents page will help you as a reader to navigate to areas in this report that are of particular relevance and interest whether you are an early years practitioner, a music leader, organisation or funder with a strategic interest in supporting and improving the lives young children and the development of their musical experiences and skills. We would welcome feedback and further questions, and can be contacted at info@musikomusika.org

There are many people who have been involved in the development of this project, but we would particularly like to recognise the contribution of our friend and project speech and language consultant Helen Ayres, whose knowledge and commitment to supporting language development in young children has guided and inspired us in this area of work. Carol Cooke and the Hammersmith & Fulham Early Years Advisory Service have also played a crucial role in the project’s success.

Special thanks are due to the project funders, the National Foundation for Youth Music, Dr Edwards and Bishop King’s Fulham Charity, and Hammersmith and Fulham Fast Track funding for their generous support for the project. Musiko Musika is also funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation 2018-22.

And finally, we would like to thank the children, the teams at all the settings and the families, our trustees and patrons for the generosity of spirit, love and care as well as all their skills and musicianship that they have contributed.

About Musiko Musika

Musiko Musika is an artist-led music education and cultural charity, jointly directed by the musicians Mauricio Venegas-Astorga and Rachel Pantin who founded the organisation in 1998.

Our vision is that the wonderful and remarkable diversity of the world's cultures available in London, England and the world is creatively thriving and celebrated, and is valued and accessible to all as performers, creators, learners and audiences.

Musiko Musika has established itself as a unique and highly respected organisation using world music and the diversity of pedagogical approaches within those different cultures as a tool to connect with children, young people, families and the community and engage them with music as a powerful agent for social change, as a means of increasing our understanding of each other and giving creative and cultural expression to our lives. Our work is cited as an example of exemplary practice in music education and for the creative and social values of our approach to cultural diversity, encouraging and enabling participants to bring the sounds, songs and stories of their own cultural backgrounds into their music-making with us.

There are three main strands to our work (reaching over 5,600 attendances in 2018/19):

- The ECCO (Ethnic Contemporary Classical Orchestras): Our flagship ECCO programme addresses cultural diversity and social development for young people and families through excellence in ensemble playing (88% from BAME backgrounds).
- World Music Academy: Providing live performances, workshops and collaborations with musicians from around the world
- Sing and Learn: A music-based approach to the acquisition of strong speech and language skills in early years, improved social skills and well-being, and creative learning to improve the life chances of children from disadvantaged backgrounds

All three strands are supported by our Digital Output (production of audio, video resources, materials and publications).

We have been funded as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation since 2012, and are proud to have Baroness Christine Crawley, Baroness Gabrielle Bertin, Martin Morales and Richard Harvey as our very supportive patrons. We joined the Lyric Hammersmith's group of partner organisations in 2015, other partnership work includes EFDSS and Middlesex University, the publishers Victorina Press and the international production music company West One Music Group. As well as projects based at the Lyric our work takes place in Hammersmith and Fulham, and in schools and communities in other areas of London. Our NPO funded programme includes touring projects and collaborations in other regions of England. International work in Chile is also a regular part of our activity.

Section One: Project overview, activities, impact and outcomes

1.1 Overview of project

WE ARE HERE!! was created to provide an outstanding opportunity for 850 children aged 2 to 5 in highly deprived and marginalised communities in the south of Hammersmith & Fulham to secure the development of their speech and language skills through a musical programme specifically designed to address deficits in this critical area of early years development and improve their long-term personal, social and educational outcomes.

We planned to achieve this by the delivery of a specially devised programme based on the highly effective i am here!! model created by Musiko Musika in 2012-14 which is an evidence-based approach to the use of music to achieve significant improvements to speech and language skills in early years. In partnership with the borough's Early Years Advisory Team and the Lyric Hammersmith, Musiko Musika set out to work with local providers and families to deliver a comprehensive project comprising in-depth training, development and support for 72 early years practitioners; the development and delivery of workshops for two cohorts of local children (2 year old funded and 3-5 year olds); parental engagement projects leading to a festival day at the Lyric; and a package of resources created in consultation with speech and language specialists and the local community.

1.1.1 Project Aim and Objectives

The aim of WE ARE HERE!! was to improve the speech and language and parallel musical skills of children aged 2 to 5 years, creating a strong infrastructure of support in the practitioners, families and resources, tackling the detrimental social and educational impacts of delayed speech and language development and poor communication skills. In particular we wanted to develop an effective training and development model for early years settings that would ensure that the programme (the songs, activities and underlying approach) was embedded and implemented long-term.

The stated objectives of the project were

- 1: For the participating children to have improved their listening skills, their ability to perceive and discriminate sounds and rhythmic patterns within music, songs and speech, and to be vocalising sounds with greater accuracy.
- 2: For the participating children, their families and the practitioners who work with them to have increased the levels of creativity, fun and enjoyment in their musical activities and their use of language in songs and music making, during music sessions, in play and at home.
- 3: For the participating children to have increased confidence and fluency in their verbal and non-verbal communications, with improved levels of self-esteem, social skills and security in their personal and cultural identity.
- 4: For the families to be more fully engaged with and able to support the musical and language development of their children, both within the home and as part of a stronger and more cohesive community network in which families feel safe to express their cultural identity and enjoy belonging to.
- 5: For all the practitioners involved to have improved their skills in the delivery of musical activities for 2 to 5 year olds, with non-specialists acquiring new expertise, experience and

confidence to successfully deliver the project activities and resources long term, and Music Leaders having developed their understanding of this work.

1.1.2 Timeframe

The project was originally scheduled to run from January 2017 until the end of December 2018, however various factors led us to extend the length of the project to complete in mid-June 2019. These factors included new opportunities to work with the print publisher Victorina Press and the music production company West One Music Group, which altered the production schedules for the resources and rescheduling of project activity due to unexpected surgery for two key members of the team during the project.

1.1.3 Context and need for the work

The area in which we delivered the project (the south of Hammersmith and Fulham) was identified by our project partners the borough's Early Years Advisory Team (now part of the restructured services delivered by the organisation Family Support) as being the most in need of the project's benefits due to the pockets of high level deprivation, the social and education needs of those communities and the lack of access to projects and initiatives that are available in the north of the borough.

The project included private and voluntary nurseries and child minders alongside children's centres because these providers have an increasingly significant role in childcare provision and although supported by the Early Years Advisory Team often do not get access to training and development opportunities. It was a key strategy for the Advisory Team to address the deficit in training and expertise in musical activities across EYFS practitioners in that area and the up-skilling of registered child minders.

We gathered a comprehensive picture of the children and their families and the local area before developing the project at that time (May 2016):

- 60-70% children had mild to severe speech delay on entry to nursery provision
- Some had already been formally identified with speech and language disorders
- Children displayed a range of problems including "language quirks", hearing and other medical issues, poor development of facial muscles (an effect of lack of breast feeding as a baby)
- The head of one of the participating Children's Centres reported that they found large numbers of children who couldn't make the speech sounds "they are not hearing communication, not hearing their parents speak"

In addition to these speech related issues the other challenges faced by the children and families we were targeting that would impact on the children's social, emotional and educational development were:

- mental health problems in parents
- disabilities due to pre-mature birth, Downs Syndrome and other medical difficulties
- homelessness, and risk of eviction particularly in immigrant families without entitlement to benefits
- economic deprivation
- high numbers of families with English as a second language

This local information was substantiated by the general data which shows that there are increasing numbers of children starting school without the pre-requisite speech and language

skills for them to engage fully with the curriculum and achieve their potential at school and in later life. It has been demonstrated in various pieces of research that as children progress through the education system this early gap increases, resulting in children who are slightly behind aged 5 falling even further as they progress through school.

“The developmental outcomes of low-income children continue to lag behind those of better off children at the time of entry to the school system.” Sutton Trust Report 2010

Early intervention is recognised as being crucial to addressing attainment gaps and social and educational inequalities: “There is rigorous evidence from randomised controlled trials that early intervention programmes can have beneficial effects on the outcomes of disadvantaged children that extend into adulthood.” (Karoly et al. 1998; 2005; Carneiro and Heckman 2003).

1.1.4 About our partners and participating settings

Lyric Hammersmith

Musiko Musika has had a base at the Lyric Hammersmith since April 2015, when the organisation became part of the Young Lyric Partnership which has the mission of nurturing young talent and creativity by engaging young people from West London in high quality, affordable activities in a wide range of art forms to help develop their creative, social, personal and economic potential.

Hammersmith & Fulham Early Years Advisory Service (now Family Support)

This team played a fundamental role in overseeing the partnership relationships with the individual settings, brokering the relationships with the nurseries and child minders, and providing support in monitoring and evaluating the project. The borough’s services for early years and families underwent a major restructure during the course of the project and the Advisory Service was integrated into the new organisation Family Support

The early years settings that participated in the project were:

Melcombe Children's Centre; Normand Croft Children's Centre; Bayonne Nursery; Brook Green Nursery; Charing Cross Day Nursery; James Lee Nursery; Little Forest Folk (Fulham); Little Lillies Pre-school; Little People of Fulham; Masbro Under 3's Nursery; Melrose House Nursery; Peques Anglo-Spanish 1; Peques Anglo-Spanish 2; The Studio Day Nursery; Townmead Community Nursery; Fulham Central Children's Centre; Masbro Children's Centre And Little Forest Folk (Barnes); Little Forest Folk (Chiswick); Little Forest Folk (Wandsworth); Little Forest Folk (Wimbledon); Elsley Primary School; 9 independent childminders

1.2 Our work with EYFS Practitioners and Settings

1.2.1 Description of the training programme & approach

- *The training courses were each delivered over three half days for four separate cohorts of practitioners (January 2017, September/ October 2017, January/ February 2018, November/ December 2018)*
- *131 practitioners engaged with the project*
- *45 practitioners attended the full training course*
- *86 additional practitioners engaged with the project at their settings*
- *A Refresher Training Seminar and End of Project Seminar took place in November 2018 and May 2019 respectively*

We had aimed to engage with 72 EYFS practitioners in total through the project. The actual number reached was much greater than projected – 131 in total – with 45 attending the full training course and a further 86 practitioners being involved in sessions at the settings. These local EYFS practitioners were drawn from the teams of the nurseries and children’s centres that participated in the project, plus a group of nine independent childminders. The childminders were a group that the Early Years Advisory Service had identified as being in particular need of training and development opportunities and who are increasingly working with children with speech and language difficulties.

The training was devised and delivered by Musiko Musika’s Joint Artistic Directors (Mauricio Venegas-

Astorga and Rachel Pantin) and Assistant Artistic Director (Laura Venegas-Rojas), and was based on the

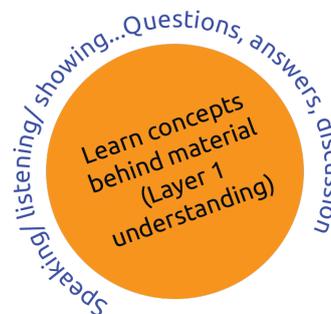
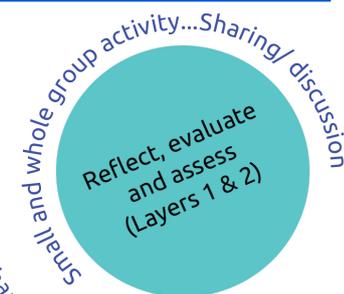
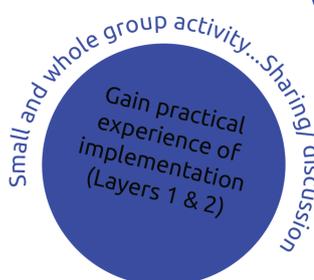
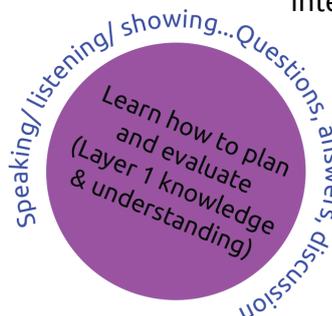
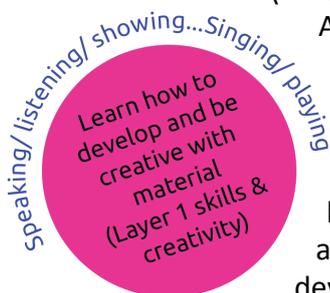
approach that we have developed for training and development, in which two layers of objectives interweave as the training progresses:

Layer 1 – “Making the practitioners strong”

Development of practitioners themselves, their understanding, skills and creativity (including personal skills: confidence, self-esteem, communication etc.)

Layer 2 – “Acquiring the tools and experience for successful implementation”

Development of the practitioners’ skills, knowledge and understanding to implement the programme



The crucial benefit of this approach is the degree of empowerment it gives to the practitioners enabling them to tap into and fully connect the techniques and materials that we are sharing with them with their existing practice and knowledge.

Following the training courses further support and development for practitioners was provided during the project through:

- Musiko Musika’s team delivering workshop sessions for the children in the nurseries/ children’s centres, giving practitioners the opportunity to see the work being delivered with the children (and families) they work with
- Individual feedback, observation sessions and planning/ evaluation meetings

“This project provided me with the opportunity to build up my self-confidence and to take a powerful lead in a group activity and to support those who are in need, e.g young children who have language difficulties low self-esteem or the ones who practice English as an additional language.”

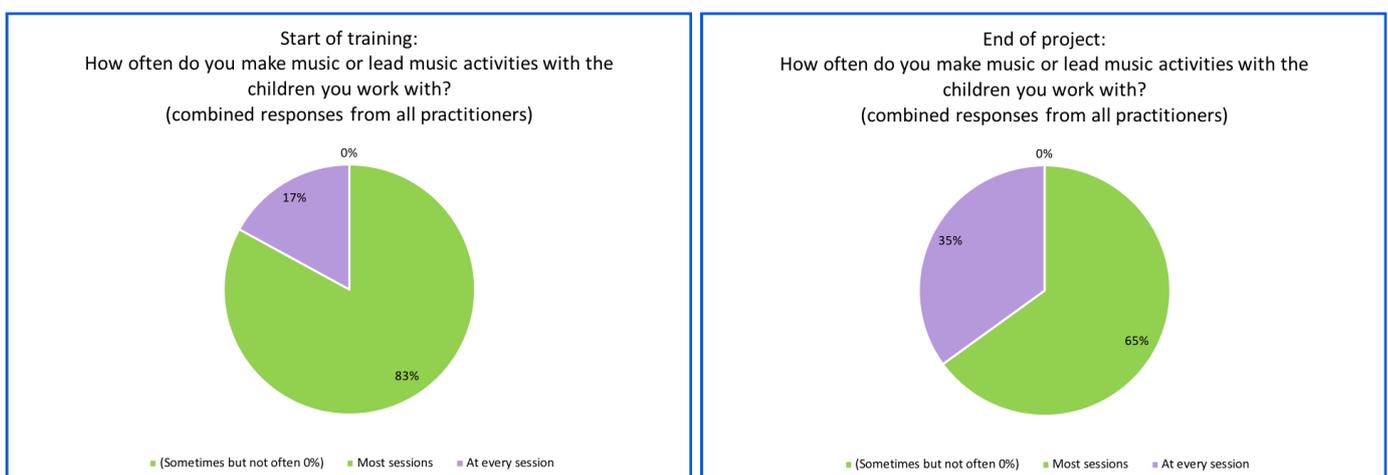
1.2.2 Meeting the training objectives

How successfully did the project meet its objectives in terms of training and embedding the programme in settings?

Our objectives for the practitioners were:

- For the participating children, their families and the practitioners who work with them to have increased the levels of creativity, fun and enjoyment in their musical activities and their use of language in songs and music making, during music sessions, in play and at home.
- For all the practitioners involved to have improved their skills in the delivery of musical activities for 2 to 5 year olds, with non-specialists acquiring new expertise, experience and confidence to successfully deliver the project activities and resources long term, and Music Leaders having developed their understanding of this work.

We gathered a range of evidence that demonstrates that the project has had a significant and lasting impact on the practitioners’ skills, creativity, fun and enjoyment in providing music activities for their children and of the frequency and quality of those activities.



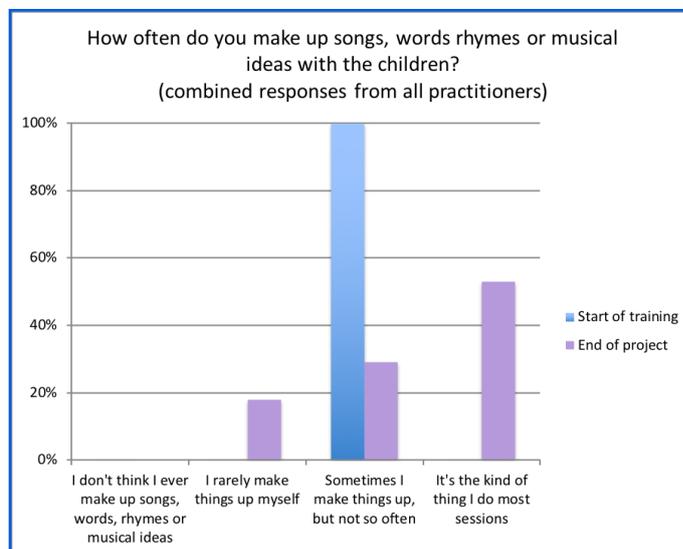
We collected individual profiles of the practitioners who attended the training courses at the start of training and at the end of the project. So in some cases the time period over which the change was measured was more than 24 months, demonstrating long-term sustained impact and change.

Q1) How often do you make music or lead music activities with the children you work with? With the range being: “sometimes but not often”; “most sessions”; “at every session”

At the start 17% had responded “at every session”. By the end of the project 35% responded “at every session”.

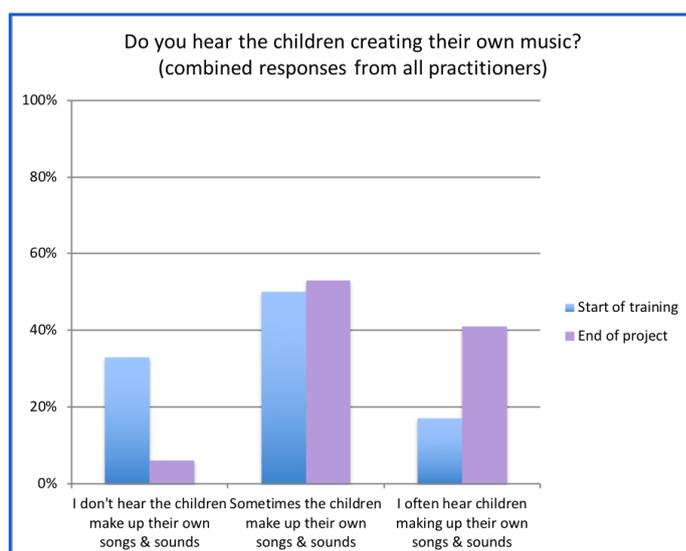
Q2) How often do you make up songs, words, rhymes or musical ideas with the children?

The possible responses ranged from “I don’t think I ever make up songs, words, rhymes or musical ideas” to “it’s the kind of thing I do most sessions”



At the start 100% answered “sometimes I make things up, but not so often”. At the end of the project 53% answered “it’s the kind of thing I do most sessions”.

(The three practitioners who reported rarely making up things themselves had not participated in the start of training questionnaire, but their lack of confidence in this area is useful to note and reflects just how fragile confidence in music making can be)

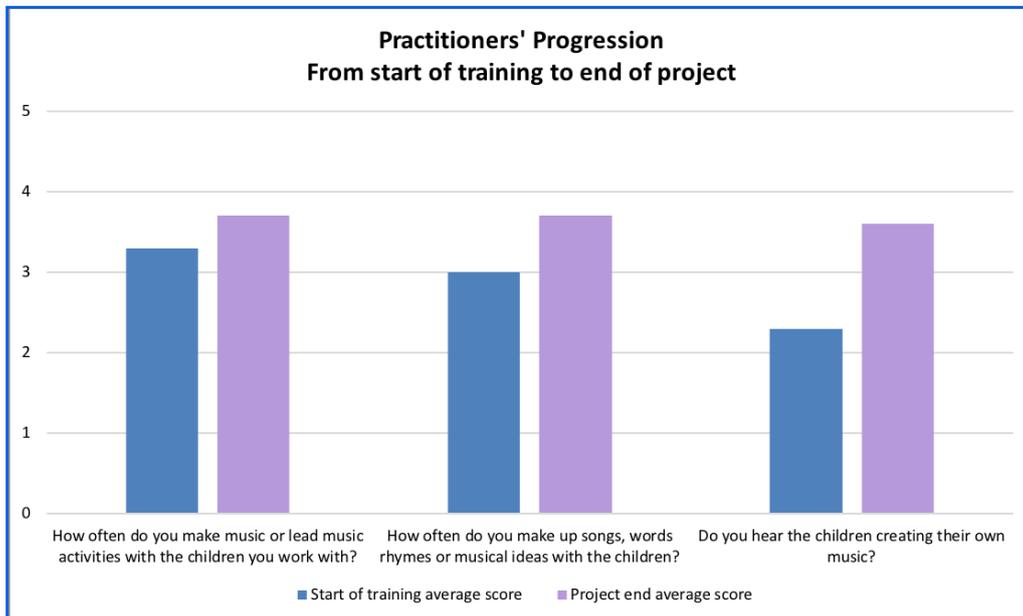


Q3) Do you hear the children creating their own music? With the range being: “I don’t hear the children make up their own songs & sounds”; “Sometimes the children make up their own songs & sounds”; “I often hear children making up their own songs & sounds”.

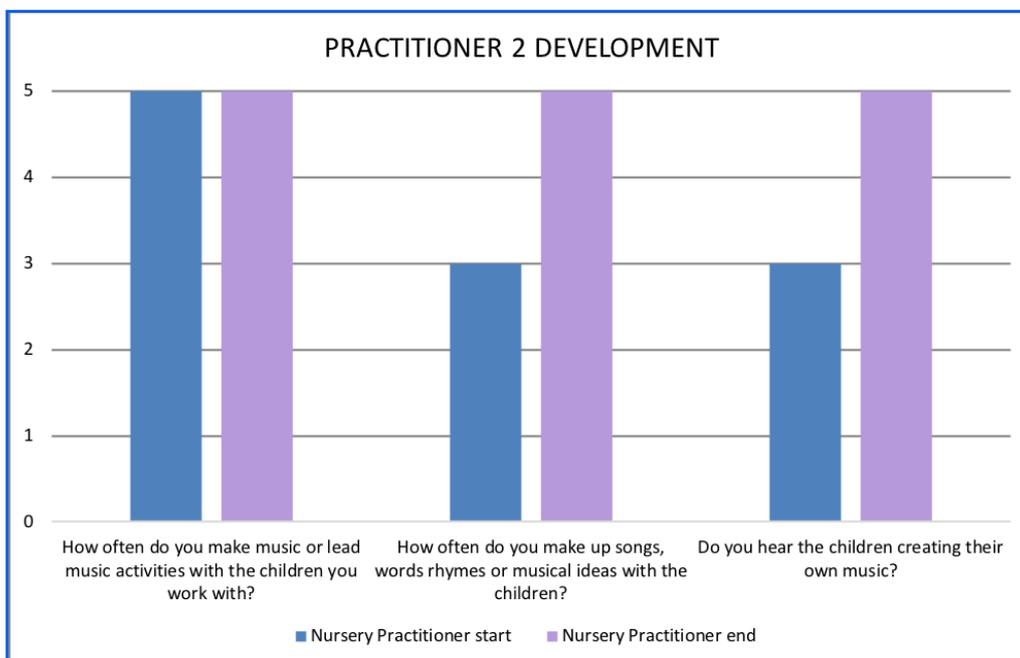
One third (33%) said “I don’t hear the children make up their own songs & sounds” at the start of the training and at the end of the project that had reduced to only 6%. Only 17% said “I often hear children making up their own songs & sounds” at the start and that had increased significantly to 41%.

1.2.3 Progression of practitioners as a cohort and individuals

This chart shows the progression of all practitioners evaluated from the start of the training to the end of the project, demonstrating change in all the areas measured by questions 1, 2 & 3.



We can see this progression at an individual level in this chart showing in particular striking increases in the creativity of Practitioner 2 as well as her perception of the musical creativity of the children she works with.

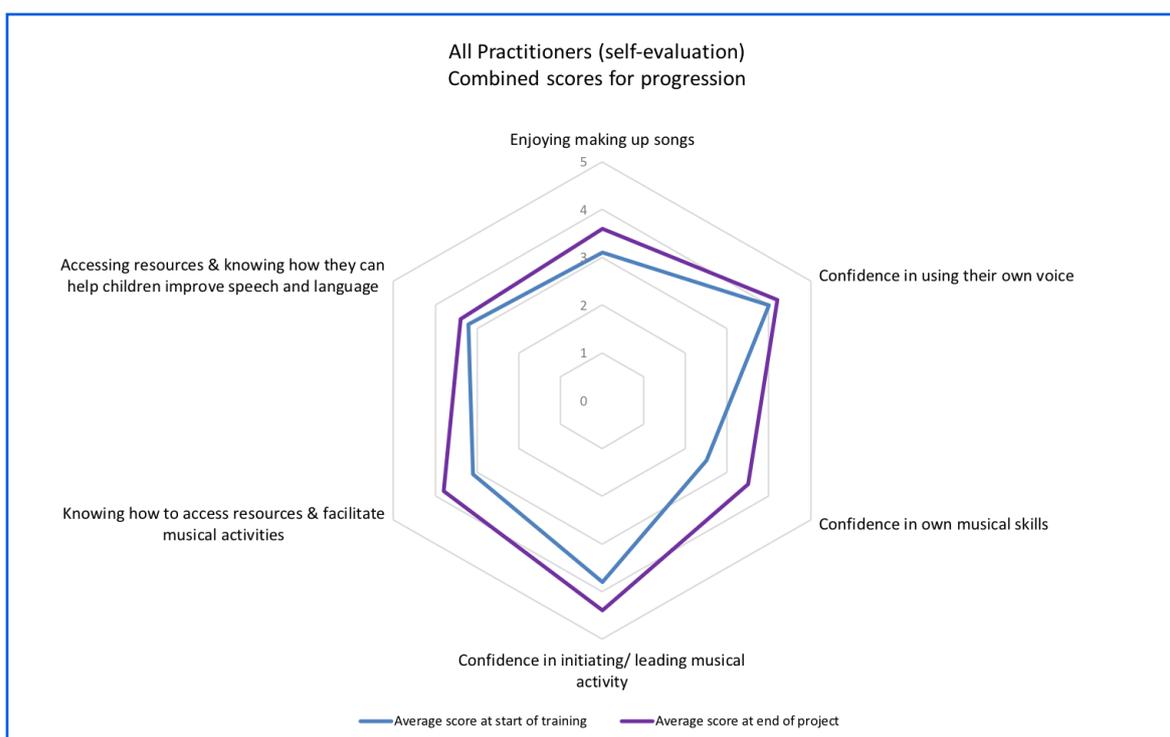


Scoring of questions 1, 2 & 3

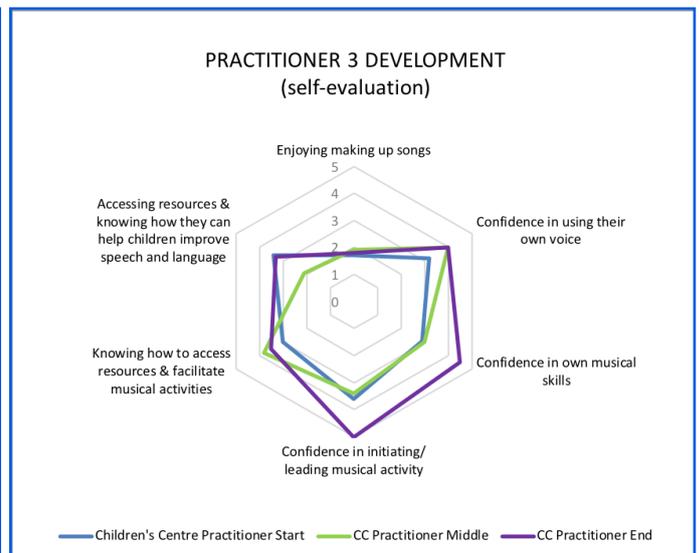
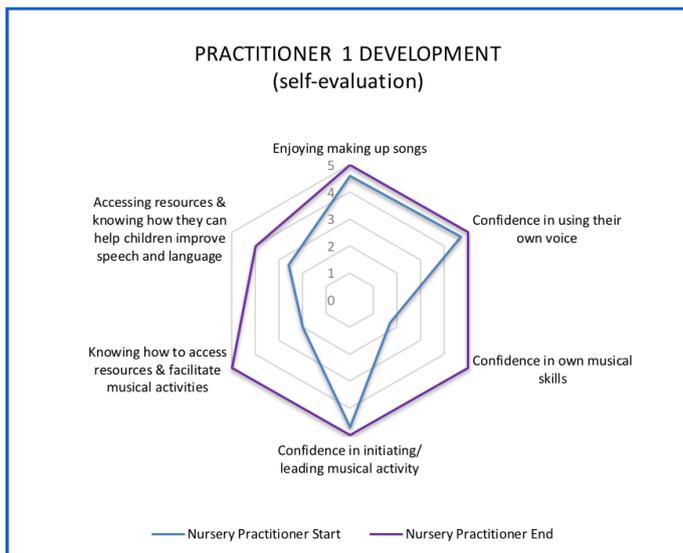
Q1) How often do you make music or lead music activities with the children you work with?	Sometimes but not often = 1	Most sessions = 3	At every Session = 5
Q2) How often do you make up songs, words rhymes or musical ideas with the children?	I don't think I ever make up songs, words, rhymes or musical ideas = 0	I rarely make things up myself = 1	Sometimes I make things up, but not so often = 3 It's the kind of thing I do most sessions = 5
Q3) Do you hear the children creating their own music?	I don't hear the children make up their own songs & sounds = 0	Sometimes the children make up their own songs & sounds = 3	I often hear children making up their own songs & sounds = 5

Individual profile

In addition to this evidence the individual profile that practitioners were asked to complete at the start of training and end of the project shows the development of their confidence in six areas on a scale of 0 to 5:



At an individual level we can see how individual progression can vary across different areas. The chart for Practitioner 1 shows a growth in confidence across all areas, whilst the development of Practitioner 3 (measured at three points during the project) shows important changes in her confidence in initiating/ leading musical activity and in her own musical skills, but no change to a preference for using songs she knows well rather than finding it fun to make up songs.

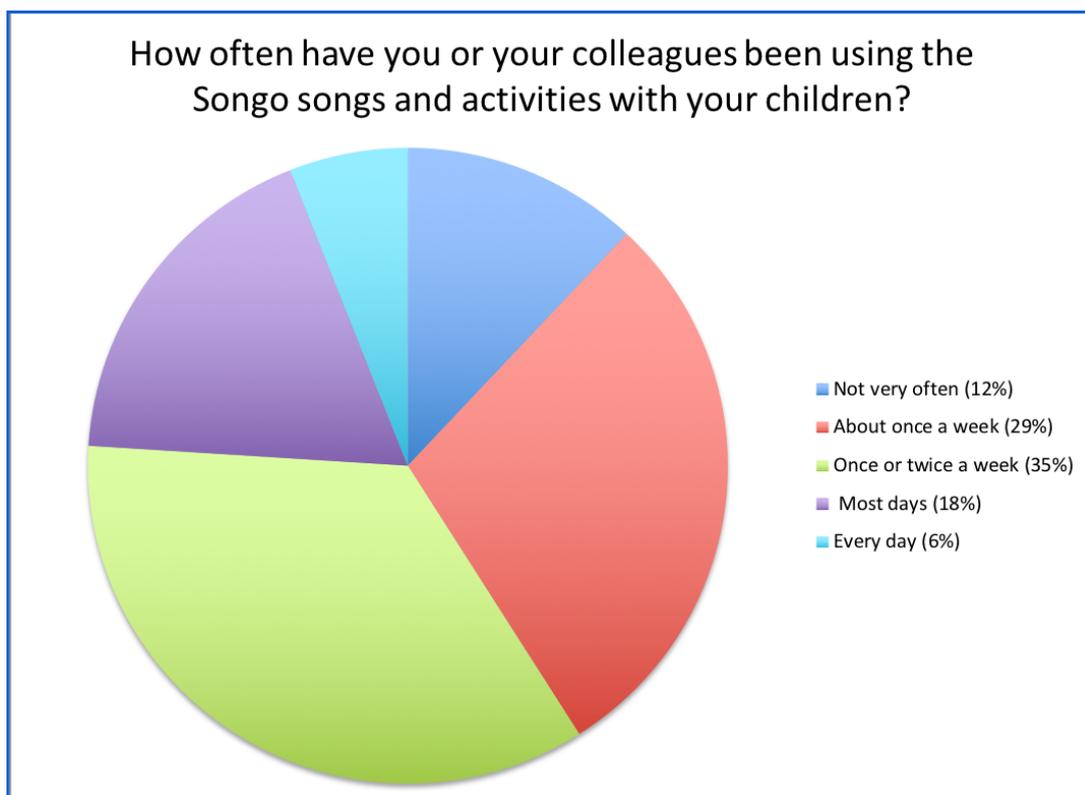


1.2.4 Embedding the programme long-term – achieving a sustainable outcome

“It has become part of our weekly routine now. We will continue to use it going forward.” (Practitioner end of project feedback)

After more than 24 months of the project 88% of the practitioners reported using the Songo songs and activities with their children once a week or more.

None reported that they were no longer using the programme, and 24% are using it either every day or most days. This represents an outstanding commitment from practitioners to the use and implementation of the programme over the long-term, when the demands on practitioners in delivering on other areas of the Early Years targets are so intense.



1.2.5 Further evidence: Narrative feedback from practitioners

- 1) Evidence that the practitioners have increased the levels of creativity, fun and enjoyment in their musical activities and their use of language in songs and music making, during music sessions.

Tell us the kind of things you and the children enjoy doing with music...

- *“Strumming my guitar and experimenting with the sounds it produces, investigating noise to depict changes in weather”*
- *“Singing together as a group and making silly songs”*
- *“Making up songs and rhymes, actions with the words, making instruments out of jars and other things around the nursery”*
- *“Introducing new vocabulary and enjoy the actions as part of gymnastics”*
- *“Music helps us to express ourselves and happiness in different ways, like sounds, words, new rhymes, actions to discover how to interact and connect with others.”*
- *“Learning new songs from different parts of the world. Expressing themselves through music - dancing to the different rhythms.”*
- *“Changing lyrics. Making up songs.”*

“I’ve really enjoyed being able to participate in the project in my role as an early years worker. Musiko Musika have an infectious positive energy about them and are examples of what fun, as well as learning making music can be.”

“This project was an amazing experience to work with Musiko Musika and their loving and hardworking team. I learnt the fun and interesting ways to have pleasure without the use of fancy expensive props, toys and how to make a positive impact on child life. e.g support then to learn new words, build up self-confidence and collaborate together.”

How has the project helped you in your job?

“Helped me (as SENCO) support children with SEN & speech and language delay in more creative ways”

- 2) Evidence that the practitioners have improved their skills in the delivery of musical activities for 2 to 5-year olds, with non-specialists acquiring new expertise, experience and confidence to successfully deliver the project activities and resources long term.

Feedback from practitioners

“I have learnt that music has a positive impact on all children’s development and mood, especially those children with SEN and EAL. It can be incorporated into all areas of the curriculum. It also gives less confident children a voice.

“It (the project) has given me a variety of new songs to sing with the children. Although I am quite confident in delivering music to the children the support and advice given to me through the project has enabled me to support other members of staff who are less confident in this area. Other members of staff have really valued the CD and have come up with new ideas to use the songs that support the children’s communication and PSED.”

How has the project helped you and your team?

“Planning music & singing activities together as part of a team and gaining confidence together to provide a good session.”

What do you think you have learnt through this project?

“Confidence to lead an activity but also understanding of how it benefits the children and their confidence and development”

“That music and language are closely linked. That it can take time to 'see results', so having persistence, and 'taking the long view' on projects are important.”

“Encouraging children, and self-esteem. Creating an environment controlled enough for the session to work, and free enough for them to be creative and explore.”

1.2.6 Further evidence: Music Leader observations

Notes by the Music Leaders from one training course:

Training Session 1 notes included:

- Mostly following quite basic use of music, some with external provision, some with no specific music session, although singing is integrated into the day.
- Very responsive to ideas & creative possibilities – transferring creativity in other areas to another.
- Positive attitude towards learning new things and developing through this programme.

Training Session 2 notes observed:

- Began to develop their creative ideas during this session & ways to adapt & implement songs & activities.
- Can see them constantly writing notes down for each song. Taking on board our ideas, how we use the songs and thinking about how they can use them.
- Wanting to implement regular song/music time into their daily routine – so they get used to it and the new songs.
- All very positive & have already been using the songs with children in most settings.
- They are thinking about how they can use these songs to connect with the parents, they want them to get them more involved – educate the parents on how music is important.

And the notes for Training Session 3 included:

- Have already been using the songs in their classes, even in assemblies with year 1.
- Using the songs/videos on YouTube during the session.
- All reported having made a start in using songs. Accessing them in different ways, structured step by step. Tina starting with ‘Hello’, Mikayla used ‘Good Morning’ with Year 1 assembly and Althea putting the CD on, children enjoying it & joining in with the words, gradually learning.
- When children didn’t know how to say hello in their mother tongue, (Tina) took the opportunity to ask the parents how to say hello in their mother tongue, to start integrating the parents.
- Enjoyed song writing & adapting words & ideas.
- Also discussed use of Garage Band to provide chords - IT connection.
- All confident & committed at this stage.

Observations of long-term progression at Bayonne Nursery

In November/ December 2017 we held a series of workshops at Bayonne Nursery with the nursery children and with parents and carers. This concluded with a Christmas Concert in which the children performed alongside the newly formed Parent Choir. At that event Musiko Musika's team took the lead in rehearsing the children, planning the repertoire, integrating the Parent Choir into the event and managing the instrumental resources, all well supported by the nursery team. The following year, December 2018 showed a really wonderful development of skills, confidence and ownership in the Bayonne team that took place in a truly organic and natural way. This second year Musiko Musika's team worked with the parents again, but was not scheduled to lead workshops with the children and therefore did not have any role in preparing/ rehearsing the children before the Christmas Concert. The concert was planned and led by the nursery team, who had planned the repertoire based on what they had learnt and observed from our team the year before. They rehearsed the children and also planned and communicated with Musiko Musika about the support they would need from our musicians on the day. The concert was a great success and represented the way in which the professional leadership of a project can pave the way for the transfer of roles and ownership.

1.2.7 Engaging with independent childminders

As noted at the beginning of this section of the evaluation report, the childminders were a group that the Early Years Advisory Service had identified as being in particular need of training and development opportunities and who are increasingly working with children with speech and language difficulties. However, we were also advised that they would be potentially difficult to engage with because their confidence and self-esteem was not generally very high, and they often experienced some anxiety in the context of formal training, and music might be an area in which it could be particularly challenging for them to feel positive and confident. It was very helpful in these circumstances to have the strong communication and inter-personal skills of the Deputy Manager of Melcombe Children's Centre who was highly committed to the WE ARE HERE!! project and had already experienced the project's first training course and understood our approach, accessibility and ability to create a friendly and supportive learning environment, and convinced the childminders to attend. Nine independent childminders took part in the second training course alongside four nursery practitioners.

It was refreshing to observe how adaptable and imaginative the childminders were in their approach to the songs and materials, in fact we saw them as being generally more so than the nursery practitioners. And for a period of about four months this group was very strongly engaged with the project. We had ambitions to create a longer-term offer for the childminders based at the Lyric, but this proved to be difficult to get off the ground because the all childminders have very variable schedules and commitments. The solutions to this could be explored further in a future project.

In spite of this we have clear feedback and evidence 18 months after their initial training course that there was a significant long-term impact for this group and the music activities they provide for children.

Carole Cook (Deputy Manager of Melcombe Children's Centre at the time) commented about the childminders' enthusiasm for the training and the project *"Anyone would think I'd given them the winning lottery ticket"*.

In our project review of May 2019 childminders reported that they are still actively using the songs and activities. And we also know from a number of sources (local families who also attend

our activities at the Lyric) that some of the childminders are also using songs in the play group they run.

Case study: Childminder E

Childminder E is one of the child minders who attended our training course in September/October 2017. We saw a very clear progression of skills and confidence over the three training sessions as Childminder E increasingly contributed new ideas and creative work to the activities we were sharing. At session two she reported back on how the children she works with had responded to the songs from i am here!! and how she had been adapting the activities she had learnt during training session 1. By session 3 we were very happy to find that Childminder E was leading the songs and activities at a play session for the local community that she runs with other childminders. It is this kind of empowerment of inspired local leaders that we believe can really make a lasting impact on the outcomes for young children in the area.

1.3 Our work with families

1.3.1 Description of the events and workshops for families

- **The Project Launch in February 2017 hosted at Melcombe Children’s Centre opened the project to local families and kick started their engagement with WE ARE HERE!!**
- **Around 540 parents/ carers attended Family Workshops and other project activities**
- **50 different workshops and events were held for families to attend**
- **170 CDs and 51 Songo Family Books (with CD) were provided for families to use at home with their children**
- **Song collecting and songwriting projects culminated with families recording their tracks at the studio at the Lyric Hammersmith, with two songs being available online**

The project had aimed to reach 150 families. In total this number was greatly exceeded, with around 540 parents/ carers attending. This increased engagement with families was due to two factors, the first being the high level of interest and attendance at sessions, and the second being the increasing evidence we saw of the value of using Family Music Workshops and Parent Choirs at nurseries as a way of supporting the learning partnership between the nursery settings and the children’s homes. We were fortunate to be able to raise additional funds for us to provide an increased number of Family Workshops and to extend the provision of resources for use at home to include the new publication for families that was produced during the project Songo (for Children & Families)

The workshop sessions and other activities were devised and delivered by Musiko Musika’s team of Music Leaders which included Mauricio Venegas-Astorga (Chilean), Rachel Pantin (British) Laura Venegas-Rojas (British of Chilean heritage), Yemisi Obasaju (Nigerian) and Margarita Salazar (Chilean). The Project Launch and the final festival day at the Lyric A World of Music Day also involved our ECCO youth ensemble (Ethnic Contemporary Classical Orchestra), which increased the projection of a spirit of cultural collaboration across different social and cultural backgrounds.

The 50 sessions for families represented a very varied offer, some of which took place at the nurseries and children's centres and some at the Lyric:

- At Children's Centres there were regular weekly music sessions, usually for a period of six weeks at a time that were integrated with the regular Learn and Play. We also included targeted sessions for children identified as needing additional support in speech and language development with their parents/ carers. As the project progressed the children's centre sessions developed into song collection and songwriting workshops, which culminated in two recording sessions in the Lyric's recording studio
- Family Event at the Lyric (May 2017), with music and dance workshop, followed by children and parent/ carers seeing *The Emperor's New Clothes*, one of the Little Lyric shows for children
- Parent Choir at Bayonne Nursery
- Parent Choir rehearsals and performance at the Lyric
- One-off music workshops at nurseries and at the Lyric for families, introducing them to the project's songs and activities
- A World of Music Day 2019 (see 1.3.5 below)

Generally, the workshops for children with parents/ carers followed a regular pattern of activity, opening with our introductory "Hello" song which kick starts pro-active involvement and contributions from parents/ carers by including the word "hello" in different languages spoken by the families attending and the Music Leaders. We would also usually include a song or songs to develop rhythm and pulse skills and encourage everyone (children and parents/ carers) to move and enjoy the rhythm and feel of the music; songs to explore different instrumental sounds and imaginative themes that developed the children's vocal confidence and range (including songs to develop specific skills in phonology, prosody and/ or pragmatics). We would then end the session with songs that the children can choose to sing for the character Songo who is introduced during the workshops. The children can choose their favourite song for the group to sing together before the session ends.

1.3.2 Meeting the project's objectives for families

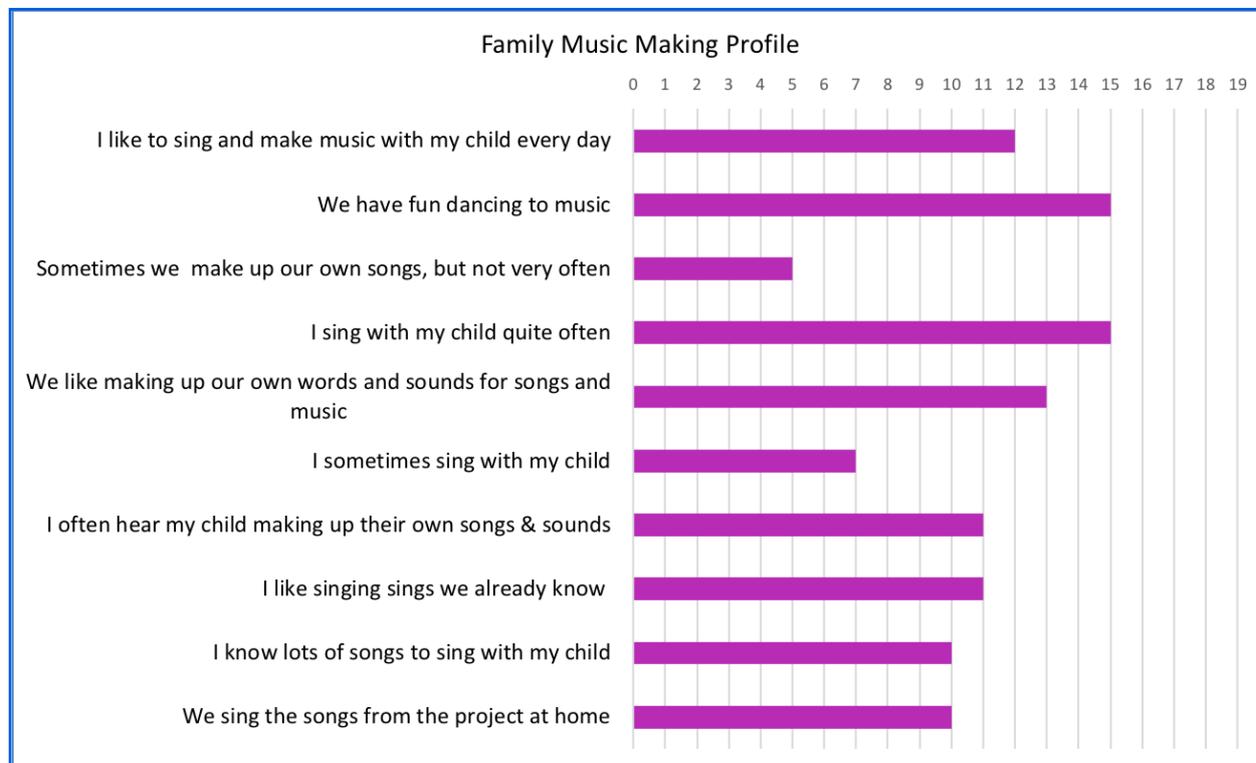
How successfully did the project meet its objectives in terms of families enjoying making music, using the songs at home and supporting their child's development in music, speech and language?

- For the participating children, their families and the practitioners who work with them to have increased the levels of creativity, fun and enjoyment in their musical activities and their use of language in songs and music making, during music sessions, in play and at home.
- For the families to be more fully engaged with and able to support the musical and language development of their children, both within the home and as part of a stronger and more cohesive community network in which families feel safe to express their cultural identity and enjoy belonging to.

During the project our monitoring and evaluation activities gathered insights into the music making that takes place at home through a parent/ carer questionnaire. However for practical reasons we were only able to collect that information at one point in time in most cases, so unlike the data on practitioners, the data does not give a picture of changes during the project. Nevertheless overall it provides a very positive picture of how parents/ carers are engaging in music making activities at home and were using the songs and music from the project.

The questionnaire was presented as a multiple choice, with parents/ carers being able to select as many of the options as they wanted.

90% either said “I like to sing and make music with my child every day” or “We have fun dancing to music” or both, and even the few who didn’t select “I like to sing and make music with my child every day” did choose “I sing with my child quite often”.



Parents/ carers also shared useful observations about the role of music in their family lives. Here are some of their responses to the question “Tell us the kind of things you and your child enjoy about music”

“Language development, enjoyment, expression, teaches attention, listening skills, fun and laughter.”

“Singing makes us happy.”

“Singing, joining in.”

“Bonding, dancing, learning, expanding her vocabulary.”

“We are a bilingual family and songs are a great way of finding out about and sharing different culture and history.”

1.3.3 Further evidence: Narrative feedback from the nurseries and children’s centres

“The minute you (the Musiko Musika team) all walk into our building, *everyone's spirits are lifted, it such an amazing atmosphere*. When Parents/carers know you are coming our attendance numbers rise. *The opportunities of attending activities at the Lyric and have our families more involved in the community is also amazing*. I can’t wait for us to also work in partnership to offer more activities for our children and families at the Lyric.

As for the parents as well it has given them the opportunity to develop their self-esteem and confidence by attending the session on a regular basis, again to give them skills to access even more opportunities within the children's centre and outside of their children's centre. For them to achieve more positive outcomes for themselves and their families which of course will impact on their children."

"To observe this whole process from start to finish and watch the parents/carers and the children's self-esteem and confidence absolutely go through the roof to what they had achieved was priceless!"

"Parents have commented on how their children are singing the songs at home and how nice it is that they can sing along with them.

Children remembered the family session and spoke lots about it. They came up to the front independently and sang the songs they remembered."

"The Christmas Concert at Bayonne was amazing. My own son spoke very fondly of you all and loved learning the songs. I thought it was a great idea to involve the parents too: not only did it help strengthen the nursery community amongst the parents, it was a great bonding experience with our own children too, practising the songs together at home. In particular we would sing along to some of the songs on YouTube, with the whole family joining in too."

Parent feedback on the Bayonne Christmas Concert

1.3.4 Further evidence: Music Leader Observations

Having live music and instruments in the session such as the guitar, violin or bombo (bass drum) accompanying the songs enables great musical flexibility and fluidity. Our Music Leader team are very used to responding to individual children who want to help strum the guitar or explore the sound of the violin or drum. In this way the children are getting hands on experience of how musical sounds are made and how they can be loud or soft, fast or slow, happy or sad, just like our voices. In this way the creative potential and emotional expression that is inherent in high quality music making is present right from a child's first experience of being part of a music-making community.

Feedback from parents and carers showed us how much they value the opportunity for their children to make music with live musicians and have direct experience of musical instruments. This seems to be regardless of the cultural or socio/economic background or whether they themselves had been able to access music making as a child.

The other very direct way in which parents/ carers showed how much they valued the music sessions was the rate of attendance. The children's centre sessions that included a Musiko Musika workshop had twice the attendance levels of the regular Learn and Play sessions.

1.3.5 Celebrating the community and bringing families together

The project WE ARE HERE!! ended with a celebratory one-day event at the Lyric Hammersmith on 21st May 2019 – A World of Music Day. The day was a great opportunity to bring together the different groups that had been involved in the project and was a very direct and visible demonstration of the cultural and social capital that the project had generated. The day included two Songo Concerts (one for nurseries, and one for families), a Seminar Session exploring key themes and individual perspectives on music for young children from the project, and a final A World of Music Day Concert in which the WE ARE HERE!! Family Choir of parents

and their children performed alongside Musiko Musika's ECCO youth ensemble (Ethnic Contemporary Classical Orchestra).

"Yesterday was a great occasion and one of which you should be proud. You have created an incredibly vibrant, warm and open community, with a strong sense of belonging – all qualities that we need desperately in today's disconnected and fragmented world. You also show so clearly what music can do in shaping and binding a community together."

Peter Renshaw (former Head of Research and Development Guildhall School of Music and Drama)

"I really appreciate that you get me those tickets. The concert was stunning, absolutely brilliant. I haven't felt so good in quite a long time. Last time when I went to a concert with him was when he was 6 months and it came out as a total disaster."

Parent feedback

1.3.6 Links to the videos of songs recorded by the families

Melcombe Music: <https://youtu.be/p0WKISIS1c>

Melcombe Hello: <https://youtu.be/wr7e3nvv5TM>

1.4 The project's impact on children

1.4.1 Reach and engagement with children under 5

•Over 1,000 children under the age of five attended the music workshops, concerts and other project events

•A further number of at least 270 children were engaged with the project's activities through sessions led by the practitioners that were trained

•In addition to the 50 different workshops and events that were provided for families, 39 half day workshop sessions took place for nursery children, including 14 for the targeted groups of 2-year olds

•The 45 practitioners we trained will have delivered a minimum of 1,600 music sessions with the children they work with using the songs and activities from the project

Musiko Musika's team worked directly with over 1,000 children under five years old over the 29 months of the project, around 18% more than the target of reaching 850 children. In addition, at least 270 will have benefited from the project's activities through the sessions led by the practitioners that we trained.

The format of the sessions was similar to those for families (see 1.3.1 above). In some settings there were sessions over a period of up to eight weeks, which allowed for plenty of development to take place from week to week and for our knowledge and familiarity of the children to inform the planning and content more.

1.4.2 Meeting the project's objectives for children

How successfully did the project meet its objectives in terms of improvements in the children's musical, speech and language and personal, social and emotional development?

- For the participating children to have improved their listening skills, their ability to perceive and discriminate sounds and rhythmic patterns within music, songs and speech, and to be vocalising sounds with greater accuracy.
- For the participating children, their families and the practitioners who work with them to have increased the levels of creativity, fun and enjoyment in their musical activities and their use of language in songs and music making, during music sessions, in play and at home.
- For the participating children to have increased confidence and fluency in their verbal and non-verbal communications, with improved levels of self-esteem, social skills and security in their personal and cultural identity.

The evidence we gathered from the nurseries and children's centres demonstrates the tangible and significant impact that the use of the Songo songs and activities has had on these three areas of development.

Some of the children had been non-verbal at the start of the project and were observed by the Music Leaders or practitioners as having made huge leaps in confidence and progress in their verbal and social skills. For example saying "goodbye" to one of the Music Leaders at the end of a session, or requesting a song during the time to sing with Songo. We noticed that children will show this increased confidence in different ways according to their character and we adapted the way we worked with the children to support and accommodate the different personalities.

The songs "Hello" and "Hi There" are really effective for demonstrating progress in the use and understanding of the pragmatic aspects of communication. We also have evidence of developing understanding and making use of the opportunity to "sing for Songo" as a time for choosing a favourite song to sing and share with the group.

Music Leaders observations showed improvements such as increased levels of eye contact and responsiveness to facial expressions. The shared use of instruments also provided good evidence for progression in individuals in turn taking and sharing. For example one child who found it very difficult to share toys with other children, was observed progressively to improve in sharing an instrument.

Evidence of the expressive and imaginative use of the voice has been most clearly visible in activities to create the sounds of animals (tiger roaring, snake hissing etc), and in verbal responses to songs such as "First Thing in the Morning".

Practitioner observations:

"Child X has a very short attention span and will often be distracted by other things or sounds he may see or hear in the room. When Child X first started the Musiko Musika sessions he would lose interest after a few minutes but then regain focus once a new song had started or a different instrument was playing..."

As the sessions went on Child X would hold his focus for longer and start anticipating the next song or the next move by saying to the adult "up", meaning stand up to dance.

"Child Y: After a while, she started to show pleasure in listening to new songs and clapping her hands and moving her body to the music. She was responding to an adult and followed simple instructions by taking part with exploring new musical instruments and making music. By the end of the music sessions she was making babbling sounds and enjoyed rhythmic patterns in the song."

"Child Z is quite reserved with people who are not familiar with him and will often look down or avoid interacting with them altogether. When Child Z started the Musiko Musika sessions Child Z would observe the session but only join in if the rest of the group took part. When asked if he wanted to stand up and sing and song he would shake his head indicating that he did not want to.

"As the sessions continued Child Z became more and more confident in taking part and would often talk about or sing songs from the sessions with his peers and other staff during the normal nursery day.

Child Z's confidence has grown through each session and will now choose and sing a song on his own, preferring to remain sitting as he sings. He will choose the instruments he wants independently and often shouts out suggestions for the "Hello" song, mostly being "Bonjour".

Examples of observation sheets completed by practitioners

Date/ time	Group/ session	How did the session go? (draw a face)	Write comments/ observations here or use post-it notes
04/12/17 ↳ 10:30	BABYroom (circle time)		Expand vocabulary by replacing the words "caterpillar, garden, leaves"
11/12/17 ↳ 15:00	BABYroom (Activity with animals)		He started to repeat some sounds of animals ("grr" "muuu").
12/12/17 ↳ 10:45	BABYroom (Activity with the sounds)		we practice the phonology with familiar sounds / words.
13/12/17 ↳ 15:30	BABYroom (Activity with the parts of the body)		we encouraging him smiling and eye contact. He pointed
14/12/17 ↳ 10:50	BABYroom (Activity with the different emotions)		with his finger some visual cards He started to understand of non-verbal concepts: eg. / happy, sad, worried, scary, sleep

Date/ time	Group/ session	How did the session go? (draw a face)	Write comments/ observations here or use post-it notes
01/11/17 ↳ 10:30	BABYroom (circle time)		He started to say "hello" (babbling a lot). He imitated some familiar words.
08/11/17 ↳ 15:15	BABYroom (Activity in different languages = spanish/english)		He understood simple phrases and words in different languages.
17/11/17 ↳ 10:45	BABYroom (Activity with the peers)		(Hold - Hello - Hi). He took the musical instruments and shook them.
20/11/17 ↳ 15:20	BABYroom (Activity with the familiar photos)		He learnt more vocabulary and the concept of family members (mum, dad, sister...)
05/11/17 ↳ 15:00	BABYroom (Activity with the animals that lived in the sea).		we use different intonation. He imitated the sounds of the animals, pointed the visual cards and took some animals toys while smiling a lot.
		Put a tick in the column each time you use a song	

		Put a tick in the column each time you use a song							
1	Songo Songo (Favourite song)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Hello (circle time)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Good Morning (circle time/breakfast time)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Hi There (circle time)	✓	✓	✓					
5	I Am Calling My Friend (Activity with the peers).	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
6	First Thing In The Morning (Activity about routines)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
7	Look At The Sky (Activities about the weather)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	There's A Hungry Caterpillar (Activity with animals)	✓	✓	✓					
9	Who's That Walking (Activity + Physical circuit)	✓	✓						
10	We're Going To The Seaside (Activities)	✓	✓	✓	✓				
11	The Sparkling Sea (Activity with sounds)	✓	✓	✓	✓				
12	Walking In The Jungle (Activity with animals)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
13	In the Jungle (Activity with animals in the jungle)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14	I'm Going To... (circle time)	✓	✓	✓					

Sample Nursery Data

This sample nursery data from September 2017 (two terms after completion of the WE ARE HERE!! training course) shows the progression between spring and summer terms, during which time they were regularly implementing in the Songo programme with the children.

The combined "All year groups" spring and summer shows 55% on target or above target (for their age range) in PSED in spring, and this had improved to 81% by the end of the summer term. The data for Communication and Language shows a similarly significant shift, from 58% in the spring to 83% being on or above target by the end of the summer term.

	PSED			Comm & Lang		PSED			Comm & Lang	
	Below Target	On Target	Above Target			Below Target	On Target	Above Target		
N1 Spring	4	3	6		N1 Spring	3	2	8		N1 pupils started in Jan 17
N1 Summer	3	2	10		N1 Summer	3	2	10		2 New pupils started in Summer Term
	PSED			Comm & Lang		PSED			Comm & Lang	
	Below Target	On Target	Above Target			Below Target	On Target	Above Target		
N2 Spring	21	0	23		N2 Spring	20	0	24		N2 pupils started in Sept 16
N2 Summer	7	4	32		N2 Summer	6	7	30		
	PSED			Comm & Lang		PSED			Comm & Lang	
	Below Target	On Target	Above Target			Below Target	On Target	Above Target		
R Spring	1	0	0		R Spring	1	0	0		1 reception age pupil held back from primary school due to SEN
R Summer	1	0	0		R Summer	1	0	0		
	PSED			Comm & Lang		PSED			Comm & Lang	
	Below Target	On Target	Above Target			Below Target	On Target	Above Target		
All Year Groups Spring	26	3	29		All Year Groups Spring	24	2	32		
All Year Groups Summer	11	6	42		All Year Groups Summer	10	9	40		

1.4.3 Further evidence: Narrative feedback from practitioners

- 1) Evidence that the children have improved listening skills, ability to perceive and discriminate sounds and rhythmic patterns within music, songs and speech, and vocalising sounds with greater accuracy.

"We are using 'There's a Hungry Caterpillar' song as a part of our spring/mini beast theme at the pre-school. All children enjoyed using a drum to show how many leaves has been eaten by the caterpillar.

This activity helped children to recite some number names in sequence.

"The 'Hi there' song did help children to settle down and become part of the group at the circle time. This song is a great way of getting to know each other's names. This song increased the children's attention and listening skills as they did enjoy listening to adults singing their names."

"The rainbow children were able to learn the Hello song and sing it during the afternoon circle time. Also, they were able to learn "Hi there" song and memorise the words. They love the song and they sing it during the day"

- 2) Evidence that the children have increased levels of creativity, fun and enjoyment in musical activities and use of language in songs and music making, during music sessions, in play and at home

"The children often come and ask me to sing a song for them or with them"

"Children are using their own imagination while singing the song "First thing in the Morning" They sing this song independently."

"Hello song almost all of the children are able to sing the song independently. I have heard them singing all day long. Sometimes they use different musical instruments while singing the song."

"Hello Song is in the head of all the practitioners and children. Heard some children making of the song e.g. Apple apple, how many ways are there to say apple? Banana, chair etc. These children were from Indigo."

"First thing in the morning' children enjoyed thinking of new things to do in the morning."

"It is nice to see the children's enjoyment progress throughout the weeks as they get to know the songs and actions."

- i. Evidence that the children have increased confidence and fluency in verbal and non-verbal communications, with improved levels of self-esteem, social skills and security in personal and cultural identity

"Children gained confidence in taking part with all the music and singing in "WE ARE HERE". The children now are much more confident in taking part in all the music and singing activities that take place in our centre."

"The WE ARE HERE! project has been an amazing project and opportunity for all our families and children that have been part of it. It has given the children the opportunity to develop their

speech and language skills through music. It has also given them the opportunity to raise their self-esteem, knowledge and understanding of their world, as well as their personal and social skills to achieve such positive outcomes in their learning.”

“Hi There – this song was used to support communication between peers. Encouraging cooperative play and building relationships.”

“First thing in the morning is a good great song for the routine. After singing the song for a few weeks Indigo children are able to sing independently and also, they are able to add their own thinking and routine they follow.”

“‘Walking in the jungle’ – less confident children felt that they could talk through the puppet, works well with younger children.”

“Increased cultural awareness through encouragement to share home songs.”

“I would like this initiative of this project to continue, it will benefit more, new children and their parents whom English is not their first language.”

1.4.4 Further evidence: Music Leader Observations

With the younger children, and during the Learn and Play sessions at the children’s centres we observed that the children increased their attention span and listening to the instruments and songs. For example, listening to and counting the number of strings on the guitar. We also saw that they were increasingly able to listen to and follow instructions.

Older children were able to copy and repeat different rhythm patterns in songs such as “Who’s That Walking?” and were clearer in their sounds and words, for example singing “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” on their own with clear words.

We were really delighted with the regular feedback that we got from the nurseries that participated and the parents who told us about the extent to which their children have been enjoying making music, are singing the songs at home and during the day at nursery, and are repeatedly requesting from nursery staff for the CD to be put on so that they can sing the songs from the project. They also told us about how the children have been exploring sounds and instruments more regularly and we could see in the sessions that they are having fun. One of the activities in which fun and creativity was most evident is in the song “Look at the Sky” in which children use their imaginations and assign different instruments to the sounds of the rain, wind, thunder and sunshine, developing early composition skills. The songs and activities with the animal puppets have also been a great source of enjoyment and imaginative expression for the children as they create the sounds of the jungle animals with their voices.

Clear evidence of change in children’s enjoyment of music came from one practitioner asked at the first session how she could get children to love and enjoy music (because the children she worked with didn’t like doing music). At the third training session she said “I put on the CD, they love it, they get up and dance”

The project has had a very significant impact on social and communication skills for almost every child. We saw this in the way in which children were increasingly able to share instruments with each other, were making more eye contact with the music leaders and their peers, and gained confidence in singing and using their voices either individually or as a group. We noticed that

children will show this increased confidence in different ways according to their character and we adapted the way we worked with the children to support and accommodate the different personalities.

We were also very interested to notice how children were spontaneously using the mouth of the Songo soft toy as they “sing with Songo” to show the segmenting of the words of songs. We hope to collect further evidence of this in the future.

1.4.5 Further evidence: Case study: Child M

Child M was aged 3 when we first started working with him in spring 2017. He attended Musiko Musika’s family sessions at Melcombe delivered as part of the Children’s Centre’s weekly Learn and Play provision. He was observed by our team and the setting staff as being very shy during sessions and other centre activities, and would hide his face or cling to his grandma. Children’s Centre staff identified him as a child who needed additional support with speech and language development and therefore he attended our targeted group for five sessions. By the fourth session we could see progress:

“Child M, A & R sat in a line watched and engaged...Later Child M, A & B continued to join in and participate in the song.”

Since the sessions with Musiko Musika were clearly benefitting Child M we provided a bursary place for him to attend Musiko Musika’s Do Re Mi Fa music class at the Lyric, which he attended with his grandma. During the summer term he gradually increased in confidence until one day he arrived at the session with a ukulele that he had brought from home. During the music session he played his ukulele and sang along, imitating Mauricio who was playing the guitar, and clearly enjoying and expressing himself very openly and independently.

By September he had progressed to nursery school and the Children’s Centre Manager reported to us that the growth in confidence he experienced from the music sessions had helped him substantially with the transition to attending full time nursery.

At the end of November we started working with the children at Bayonne Nursery for a series of workshops leading to a Christmas performance and were delighted to find that Child M was part of the group of children we were working with. At those sessions he was singing audibly, looking confident and comfortable within the class and we observed him as being within the top 25% of the group.

His mum observed that the project has impacted on his use of language and vocabulary, “he’s started picking up musical words ‘that’s a beater’ instead of saying ‘stick’.”

She goes on to say

“Him seeing musicians perform regularly, watching you and copying you has really filtered through to him. When he sees musicians now he wants to stop and watch. He knows rhythms more and tries to copy rhythms at home and do things in time (not random). He’s been very lucky to work with you.”

1.4.6 Targeted work for 2-year olds

The project included a series of targeted workshops for 2-year olds at two settings to enable us to develop some specific activities for this age group, which was slightly younger than the majority of children that had participated in the 2012-14 project i am here!! Though not part of this project, our well-established programme of termly classes at the Lyric for 2-5 year olds and

their parents provided a rich background of experience on which the development of this targeted work could be based and enabled us to make comparative evaluations on the progression of the children that participated in the project.

Our two main observations about the work with these targeted groups of two-year olds are both intrinsically connected with the value and importance of learning from peers, a factor that is increasingly supported by research into neuroscience and early cognitive development.

- The need to address the personal, social and emotional development (PSED) of 2-year olds from challenging circumstances before the programme's specific activities to improve speech and language specific can take effect.

For example, the songs and activities in our programme to support the development of pragmatic (social) aspects of language will be much harder for children to engage with if they are poorly socialised and have emotional difficulties that create negative interpersonal communication and hinder children's ability to operate comfortably in a group situation. During the project we strengthened the activities and our understanding of way in which PSED can be addressed through the songs and activities in our programme, and this is evident throughout the Songo books that we published (see 1.5 below).

- The important function of role models within the group, either of a similar age, or slightly older.

Our observation was that in creating a scheme through which two-year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds receive free nursery provision, where that provision only reaches that cohort (rather than also including fee paying children) there is a strong likelihood that the group will have a much higher proportion of children with weaknesses in PSED and other developmental areas than nursery groups with a more mixed intake due to socio-economic factors of the group being targeted for that support. The impact of this is that a group with few or no children within the usual developmental range in PSED for their age vulnerable children are further disadvantaged because they are not learning and socialising with children from whom they can model improved personal, social and emotional development.

1.5 Organisational development and production of resources

"Very good and informative really looks at children's development and gives good structures and support systems to use to enable them." Practitioner feedback on the Songo publications produced by the project.

As the project progressed the evidence was showing how successful the songs, activities and underlying approach and methodology were in improving the musical, speech and language and personal, social and emotional development of the children. It was also clear that the training courses were very effective in imparting the knowledge, skills and confidence to the practitioners to enable them to deliver this work themselves. The essential third element therefore that would complete the package was in creating a printed resource and audio CD for the project. By that stage we had witnessed the interest of parents / carers in supporting their children in making music at home and seen the benefits of having this strong link between the music activities within the early years setting and at home, and so we took the decision to produce and publish two publications: Songo (for Children & Families) and Songo (for Children, Early Years Settings & Practitioners). The choice of the name for the publications was natural –

the children that take part in the workshops have embraced the character of Songo and talk about going to music with Songo. So “Songo” it became.

In parallel to the project WE ARE HERE!! we had been awarded a place on the ArtsForward scheme which provided two business mentors from Deutsche Bank who worked with us on the brand identity and marketing for the publications. We were really delighted when Victorina Press decided to publish both books, bringing on board a talented illustrator and graphic designer to work with us on the designs and layout. The opportunities for the Songo programme took a further leap forward when the international music production company West One Music Group became the music publishers for Songo, releasing the album globally across all platforms in May 2019. This organisational development has the potential to greatly increase the reach of this work to children, families and early years practitioners internationally, as well as future income generation.

In May 2019 we had more good news when the Songo publications received a Finalist Award in the Children’s Educational category of the 2019 International Book Awards.

To provide further support and learning for practitioners we created ten training videos. Four of these demonstrate delivery of songs and activities from the programme, and six are videos illustrating “Songo and the Early Learning Goals”.

The training videos are available online here: <https://vimeo.com/musikomusika>

The Songo publications are available to purchase here:

<https://www.victorinapress.com/product/songo-for-children-and-families/>

<https://www.victorinapress.com/product/songo-for-children-early-years-settings-and-practitioners/>

Lastly, the work we have developed during this project will be part of an international project that we have been commissioned to deliver in Chile for the local education authority in Coronel. This July (2019) will be the first stage of a training programme for teachers in using the Songo programme to teach English to young children, embedding English language learning within the schools at the earliest age.

1.6 Methodology and evidence used in evaluation

The project plans for WE ARE HERE!! included a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan, which was implemented and followed. As referred to above, the major issue that we encountered was in the great variation in tracking of children that is used across the 22 settings that we worked with, which limited our data collection in this area. In most cases the feedback and evaluation templates that we used were based on existing formats we had developed for previous projects, with investment of a lot of thought and discussion across the team and with our partners in improving and refining these to capture a great range of information and evidence from practitioners, parents, music leaders and settings, but without this becoming a burden to the delivery of the project. We were not in a position to use control groups of children for this project, but would wish to do this in a future evaluation of the impact of the Songo programme.

Section Two: Spotlights on practice (Key findings and learning themes from the project)

2.1 Practitioners:

Training and development for long-term impact and implementation

1) The accessibility of approach, content and communication style of the training/ Music Leader team, resources and activities and integration with the Early Learning Goals

The high level of expertise, experience and understanding that Musiko Musika's team has acquired over many years of the realities of children's lives and of the practitioners who work with them has underpinned the composition of the songs, the development of the activities and the effectiveness of the entire pedagogical approach. We recognised that devising the resources and training so that they demonstrably connect with an integrated with the Early Learning Goals was essential. A music package that operates separately as a bolt-on addition will never achieve the high level of adoption and long-term implementation that we have shown with this project. We also believe that the diversity of Musiko Musika's team, a core part of the mission, vision and values of the organisation is a strong factor in achieving accessibility.

"We have had excellent training – both in understanding the aims of the project, and support in delivering a focus group for a specific period of time. We have learnt the value/ importance of music & songs in supporting early language & have had, like the participants, a hands-on opportunity to deliver sessions & participate in music-making."

2) Building supportive long-term relationships

The design of this project included a variety of interventions following the training course that were individualised to the needs of the settings. These included workshops delivered by the Musiko Musika team in the settings, and meetings to support on planning and review implementation. So it was clear for the practitioners from the outset that the training was not an isolated initiative, but part of a wider package of support and development.

One practitioner really hit the nail on the head in her end of project feedback: *"That it can take time to 'see results', so having persistence, and 'taking the long view' on projects are important."*

3) Developing the confidence of the practitioners

"Increased confidence" - the one phrase that keeps coming up in the feedback we have received from practitioners is the confidence the project has given them as well as the fun, enjoyment and new skills they have developed. Training that cannot address this fundamental issue will never achieve lasting change in the skills and approach of practitioners. Developing confidence of practitioners who

4) How work is shared across a setting and integrated into the daily activities of the setting

We came across some examples of outstanding practice in settings where what had been learnt was being successfully shared and passed on to the rest of the team, ensuring that the music and activities can be integrated across the whole setting. This is dependent on success in

achieving 1), 2) and 3) above, but also requires a strong commitment to the project from the senior management team downwards, and a leadership style within the setting that encourages reflective thinking and practice.

This feedback comment on learning from the project exemplifies a practitioner who has understood and absorbed the essence of the training and approach at a deep level: *“Encouraging children, and self-esteem. Creating an environment controlled enough for the session to work, and free enough for them to be creative and explore.”*

Case Study: Sharing work across the nursery – successfully engaging the whole team and integrating the work into the daily activities of the nursery

One nursery in particular that really grasped and took on all the tools and information we were giving them was Charing Cross Day Nursery (working with 3 age groups: 6 months to 2 years, 2 to 3 years and 3 to 5 years)

What was really positive for the project’s success was that the team at Charing Cross knew what we were doing when we arrived at the nursery (after two members of staff attended the training course). The team were aware of the songs, they knew who we were and that makes a real difference in our being able to deliver the sessions with their children effectively. All the training hadn’t just been handed down to one person who hadn’t shared it, they have passed on what they have learnt across the whole of their team and a very natural way. The Nursery Manager Dierdre McCollin said in her review meeting: *“music is very catching so we had the toddlers in the pre-school participating in it but when we did the session with ourselves the whole nursery was involved because they might be covering in different rooms and then we would do things in the garden, and they loved the music and every member of staff that was there, they knew how to do the session with the children”*

This is a great example of how they engaged the whole team not only by telling everyone about the training and the songs etc. but by injecting the music into their daily routine, and just making it a part of their day to day in a very organic way (for example having the CD on when the children were doing outdoor play), making music a living organism within their nursery. This meant that not only did the target group of toddlers in the pre-school participate and gain something from these songs and activities but as they spread it throughout the whole nursery with all the different age groups benefited from it. With the different age groups being together making music sometimes a lot of peer learning could take place there as well - a lot of the time children internalise and learn more when they learn from their peers, or children just slightly older than them.

2.2 Early Years Settings:

The challenges of the diversity and changing environment

Our previous large-scale early years project i am here!! (2012-2014) had predominantly worked with nurseries attached to primary schools. The wide range of settings that were involved with the project WE ARE HERE!! presented some very interesting differences and insights into the great diversity of offers in the education and care of under-five’s. Overall it is a very fragmented professional environment and this is coupled with a level of instability as a result of providers and the agencies who support them working in tight financial constraints due to underfunding. The settings that participated in the project included:

- Children’s Centres (which underwent a restructure at a local authority level during the project)
- Private nurseries that are part of a larger chain or group of nurseries
- Private nurseries that operated as stand alone providers

- One that is attached to the hospital, serving the hospital workforce and local community
- Nurseries that are part of the local authority schools system

Within this diversity of organisational structures the settings also utilise a wide range of educational practice, including a group of outdoor forest nurseries, and two that specialise in providing bi-lingual early years education (English and Spanish). Most are based on current approaches to child-centred learning, though implemented in a variety of styles. There were a number of ways in which these wider issues within the sector impacted on the project, mostly around staffing and team development, long-term strategic planning for improving outcomes for children and families. Observation of other local authority areas would indicate that these issues are not specific to Hammersmith and Fulham, but are reflective of the general picture of the early years education sector. These are some of the factors that had to be accommodated within the structure and development of the project:

- Some settings are under such intense financial and/ or staffing pressure that their leadership did not have the capacity to consider engaging with a project that would put additional demands on their staff and what they considered to be their core activities.

In some cases this was great reluctance as the nursery could see the potential benefit of the project and we were able to defer their involvement to a later training course. We learnt that offering training courses more than once during an academic year allowed much needed flexibility.

- Restructuring of local Children's Centres and related services and the intense and varied demands on the teams at Children's Centres has a very tendency to generally undermine the confidence of practitioners and affect their ability to implement the songs and activities themselves. There are very particular challenges to the delivery of music activities for parents/ carers and children at drop in sessions, not least because the attendance is by its nature very fluid, and parents/ carers often see the sessions as a time when they can relax and sit back whilst the practitioners do the work. This leaves the children's centre staff feeling uncomfortable and isolated in trying to motivate the adults who are present to sing and be active.

At a strategic level the quality and strength of the partnership with the local authority services and relationships with the senior leadership was essential to there being no significant impact on the project from the restructure of services. At the level of delivery by practitioners discussing and recognising the challenges they face in their centres is a useful first step, followed by including some specific strategies in the training that can be used to get parents/ carers active and joining in.

- The range of settings types and educational practice meant that in spite of the discussion and preparation with the Early Years Advisory Service in advance of the project we found that the systems used to track progress were in almost all cases different, which made it very difficult to generate any comparative data on the progression of children in speech and language and PSED across a series of settings. This was very different to what we had encountered with the nursery settings we had worked with on the previous project, which, as mentioned above, were all attached to schools. Those three nurseries were in three different local authority areas, yet were nevertheless using tracking systems that were easy to correlate with each other.

Within the context of WE ARE HERE!! we adapted our evaluation methods to the data that was available, but this issue is something that we will want to address differently in future in order to design evaluation methods that can gather a greater depth of data on the impact of the programme we have devised on children's speech and language and PSED.

2.3 Families:

Strategies for engagement and adapting our work

As an organisation we are committed to working and engaging with families, regarding them as having an essential role in the musical, cultural, social and educational development of the children and young people we work with. This is a very natural consequence of our work being rooted in the music making and pedagogy of cultures from around the world including those outside Western Europe in which the shared community of making music together and oral traditions have remained relatively intact.

There are some specific strategies and understanding that we have developed, particularly through our ECCO (Ethnic Contemporary Classical Orchestras) project that we applied in our work with families on the project WE ARE HERE!! One challenge is in getting families who have never even heard of the Lyric Hammersmith – an arts venue that is a ten minute walk from their local children’s centre and just around the corner from a major shopping street that they will probably be familiar with – to attend workshops, recording sessions and events there as part of the project activity. We know that people are often inhibited from entering public spaces that they are not familiar with, and arts venues are spaces that many of the families targeted by the project would regard as somewhere they do not belong, in spite of these being publicly funded organisations with the ambition to be open and available to their local community.

The measures we took to bring families into the Lyric for activities included:

- Developing work in the Children’s Centre, which led to a recording session at the Lyric. In this way, relationships of trust and commitment were established
- Scheduling the recording session at the regular time of the Learn and Play session with Children’s Centre staff walking the group of families from the centre to the Lyric
- Providing maps in advance with written directions and information about lifts and where buggies can be left
- Providing additional signage in the building on the day and people available along the route into the building to welcome and direct families

A Music Leader’s insights on working with families

With trying to engage and work with families it is crucial to make that initial connection, and for us it can be as simple as the “Hello” song. It is a tool that we use to spark that connection – what better way can you get to connect with someone than by learning how to say hello in their home language? As someone who grew up with Spanish speaking parents, I know as a child I would instantly connect with someone who said something in Spanish. It ignited my interest and I was happy someone spoke in the language I used at home. Naturally, many parents when we were working in Children’s centres were shy at the beginning and weren’t going to just offer up suggestions when you first ask, “Can anyone think of a different way to say Hello?” so it was our job to offer something first, and as this is repeated eventually they begin to give you suggestions and actively join in more, until it just becomes a routine – they know we are coming, they know it’s the Hello Song and it’s time to offer something up.

I think having a diverse team also helps us connect with the families we work with; they see themselves represented and reflected in us – we are what London looks like. Also, having a diverse team means that although we are all working with the same resources, we all approach things differently but with the same common goal and it is those differences that makes us stronger.

Again, when engaging with parents in a children’s centre I think they appreciated how we shared our instruments with them and their children. We also shared some songs so when it came to us asking them if they knew any songs they were a little bit less reticent about offering up a suggestion to us. We had to react instinctually a lot of the time with the families, we always

arrive with a lesson plan or structure of what we want to do that session, but we are always reacting to what is going on in the moment as well.

Engaging with families in nursery settings can be a little more difficult as they aren't usually present when we deliver the sessions but with several nurseries we got the parents involved in different ways. With Bayonne Nursery we formed a parent choir that we set up for their Christmas concert, and in Charing Cross Nursery we held a session as part of their International Evening, and the parents were invited to come along and see the work with us. The Nursery manager said: *"the parents really loved that the children were doing music sessions they saw your demo (video the nursery had uploaded for the closed parent network) and were really happy and were asking when are they coming back?"* this shows that the children were going home and sharing what they had learnt with us and the parents, having seen us deliver a demo session, were totally supportive.

Laura Venegas-Rojas (Assistant Artistic Director Musiko Musika)

2.4 Songo and the Early Learning Goals

Tools and approaches to support practitioners

As we considered the content for the book *Songo (for Children, Early Years Settings & Practitioners)* it became completely obvious that the way in which the Songo programme links with and supports the Early Learning Goals should be referenced throughout, because this is the primary tool that practitioners are using to plan activities and assess children's progress. It is not enough to simply create a great music programme that is accessible and effective in its own terms. For it to be adopted and implemented by practitioners and settings and achieve a long-term impact it has to integrate with their daily working practice, be relevant to the needs of their children and their lived experiences.

To do this we undertook an in-depth analysis of the programme that we had devised and mapped that onto the Early Learning Goals, interrogating for each song how and where it would fit with and support learning and development in specific areas. This informed the way in which the songs and activities of the Songo programme were described and the structural elements of the book were designed.

Interconnection of PSED and Communication & Language

As mentioned in Section 1 of the *WE ARE HERE!!* Narrative Report an area of learning for us in this project was a greater depth of understanding of the interconnection between Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and the Speech and Language (referred to in the Early Learning Goals as Communication & Language). In the activities of the Songo Programme these two development areas are often working hand-in-hand, with achievements in PSED also marking progress in Communication & Language.

Creating training videos

The workshops that took place in settings following the training gave the practitioners the opportunity to see the songs and activities being delivered with their children, during which they could observe the reality of using what they had learnt in their training. By creating training videos that show the songs and activities being delivered by our team and by an early years practitioner we can illustrate key points, extend the development of understanding of practitioners, refresh knowledge and provide inspiration and new ideas.

We produced six videos to illustrate “Songo and the Early Learning Goals” in practice:

Two of these address **Communication & Language**

Pragmatics - looking at songs that support the development of pragmatics in early speech and language, that is to say the use and understanding of language in a social context.

Prosody & Phonology - examples of songs and activities that support young children with the development of phonology – producing and articulating the sounds of speech; and prosody.

One focusses on **Personal, Social & Emotional Development** – how the songs can be used for personal, social and emotional development in the early years.

Three are about **musical development (Expressive Arts and Design)** showing:

-a group of children progressing through musical activities that explore different sounds and textures on circle drums

-musical activities to develop the foundations of rhythm and a strong sense of musical pulse

-a group of children exploring and using a range of musical instruments to engage their creativity and develop their imagination.

We also produced four videos demonstrating the delivery of songs and activities from the programme.

The training videos are available online: <https://vimeo.com/musikomusika>

The songs

This project and the programme we have created would be nothing without a repertoire of great songs that we have composed. Songs that are well written so that not only do they serve the purpose of learning, but are enjoyable and fun to sing. We believe that the children and families we work with have the right to the same quality of music as we produce and perform in our other professional activities.

If the children and practitioners are not enjoying making music then we have not achieved our core mission. These are some of the comments from the practitioners about the songs from Songo:

- *“I love the songs and so do the children.”*
- *“One child loved the songs so much would not listen to any other song”*
- *“The CD is excellent and some of the songs are wonderful especially (Hi there) in my setting children feel joyful when we combine their names in the song.”*
- *“The songs are really simple therefore they are easy for the children to learn. They use basic vocabulary which helps the children especially those with English as a second language. They are able to take part and follow the session. The songs are a great way of supporting children with their language and communication skills as well as building their confidence.”*

As WE ARE HERE!! has shown, music in the community can be of the highest quality if we use our skills to make it so, and put the children and families at the heart of it and not ourselves.



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