

Participatory Approach in Music Education and its Influences on Social Behaviour and Participation in Culture

Research Report

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Introduction

The research presented in this report is a case study of a music education programme based on a participatory approach introduced in a community centre in the Praga-Południe district in Warsaw. Due to its short duration and narrow range of research activities, the study is exploratory in its nature. The research is an attempt to depict and analyse the characteristics of informal music education based on a participatory approach and to put a light on certain research areas, as well as to define specific research topics, for further investigation.

Our long-standing pedagogical experience in music education and educational projects aiming at social inclusion inspired us to make an attempt to describe the fundamental features of a participatory approach in education. We did not intend to create nor to introduce any new and innovative teaching methods, nor to focus on particular aspects of some of the methods already being used by music educators, in a comparative, competitive way. Rather, we wanted to make the first steps in defining a methodological framework broad enough to fit many methods and their individual variations. It is our intention to make the frame flexible, yet firm enough to support music teachers and facilitators aiming to create a safe and stimulating learning environment with the use of various forms of music making and improvisation. Sadly, the participatory approach in music education has not gained much attention in Poland so far. There are hardly any published papers based on local research and the majority of renown subject literature has not been yet translated into Polish, (Elliott 1995, 2015; Mills 2005; Chambers 2007). Therefore, the necessity of defining a flexible framework for creative teachers and facilitators working with children and teenagers in formal and informal education appears urgent.

One of the main challenges we had to face while joining the programme was to accommodate the proposed music education formula in order to make it fit in the tight schedule of an educational facility in which music is not (neither should be) a primary activity. We had to re-think and revise our initial ideas about the general function of music education in order to make all of the stakeholders (ie children, other educators, parents) and the whole of educational processes benefit from it. Some of the other key challenges were: no permanent group of participants (many of the children failed to attend regularly), significant age differences between participants and their diverse social and economic background. Moreover, a vast majority of the children did not own a musical instrument.

1. Characteristics of the applied educational model

The main principles of the participatory approach applied in presented educational project are:

- **Open-ended learning process and practical *curriculum* making**
 - *Curriculum* making based on a four-stage process (Elliott 1995):
 - Orientation
 - Preparation and planning
 - Teaching and learning
 - Evaluation
 - Final presentation of individual and group work results open for discussion with each participant
 - Any public performance is voluntary. Each participant is free to choose the way he/she wants to participate as well as the level of engagement.
 - The presented repertoire is freely chosen by the participants and represents the music and ideas they want to share.

- **Recognition of needs of the local community**
 - The music facilitators are constantly in touch with other educators working in the organisation and, if possible, with the children's parents.
 - The facilitator has interest in other activities undertaken by children and their relationships with peers, adults, and their broader social environment.

- **„Educative Teaching“**
 - “Educative teaching puts the care, growth, and positive transformation of students as *persons* at the center of every music teaching-learning situation” (Elliott 2015)
 - Educator–student relationship based on partnership and dialog
 - The facilitator is open to the student about his own mistakes and limitations, so-called “embrace error” (Chambers 2007).
 - The facilitator shares his/her opinion in a straightforward, yet non judgemental way (for instance: “I don't like this piece” instead of “This is bad music”)
 - „Reversing learning“. The facilitator also learns from the participants. (Chambers 1983).

- **New participants are always welcome**
 - Everybody is invited to join programme, regardless of his/her musical skills
 - No auditions. No exams.

- **Freedom in choosing preferred repertoire (music genre) and a wide variety of music instruments to choose from**
 - The facilitator asks the participants what instrument they would like to play and supports their intentions. Each participant is welcome to change the instrument any time he/she wants.
 - The repertoire for each meeting is discussed with the participants. All music genres are welcome. The facilitator approaches every composition and music genre with equal engagement (the only exception are songs with lyrics which are or might be offensive to somebody).

- **Recognition of the importance of musical exploration, improvisation and composition** in the process of individual development
 - The facilitator supports free musical activities of the participants, encourages them to discover new sounds, and supports the enthusiasm for creating their own compositions.
 - “There are no wrong notes” (Paton 2011). If, while playing pre-composed music, the student mistakenly hits notes different from the original, it is rather recognised as a form of invitation to further musical exploration.

- **Recognition of musical activities as a part of broader educational processes**
 - Close, continuous cooperation with the whole educational staff of the facility. Music, as an activity, is supposed to support other, no-music related educational processes and be a valuable contribution to everyday life activities: make use of the integrating, relaxing qualities of music and be open to engage with other areas (for instance by improvising with instruments and song on a piece of literature which is part of the children’s homework for school).
 - Other educators and community centre staff are always welcome to participate in music making.

- **Combining music making with listening to live music**
 - The participants are welcome to invite other children during their individual music lessons and perform for them.
 - The children participate in Family Concerts organised by the Warsaw Philharmonic
 - Professional musicians (from Poland and abroad) are invited by the Warsaw Philharmonic once a month to give a performance in the community centre.

- **Going out “in search for music” – crossing the space context attributed to music lessons**
 - Looking for inspirations in the surrounding sound environment.
 - Participating in music workshops outside the community centre.
 - Making music as a part of other activities taking place in community centre (for instance: children prepare music for other public performances).

- **The time of each meeting, both individual and in a group, and the proportions between individual and group lessons are fluent in order to** fit current needs of the participating children
 - The social outcome is superior to the musical outcome. However, the facilitator puts strong emphasis on providing optimal learning conditions for each individual.
 - The facilitator puts highest possible effort in each of his/her musical performances while with the participants. He/she avoids being judgemental towards the children, nonetheless presents a highly demanding attitude towards his/her own playing.

- **The participants can access instruments freely all the time,** as long as it does not interfere with other educational activities in the community centre.
 - Some of the instruments are available all day in the facility's main room (keyboard, guitars)
 - Other instruments can be accessed freely in the participants' free time.

2. Methodology

The research was conducted in a community day care centre in Warsaw (Praga-Południe district) from June to November 2017. It was an ethnographic case study based on participant observation, autoethnography and unstructured interviews. The research team consisted of 4 people: 2 music facilitators and 2 music sociologists.

The subject of the observations were (in the first place) music lessons based on the participatory approach presented above. In addition, the study included concerts organised by the Warsaw Philharmonic in the community centre and events happening in other places (for instance: concerts for families with children organised by the Warsaw Philharmonic, which children from our centre attended with their parents and staff members). Also during the study, one music workshop session for parents/adult family member was conducted.

Children attending music lessons represented the age group 7-14, with a slight predominance of 10-and-less year olds. In order to obtain a broader social context for the observed musical practices, the study included educators/staff members working in the care centre on daily basis and parents.

3. General characteristics of the analysed activities – processes, participants, musical repertoire

The music lessons were conducted by 3 educators, twice a week (two of the educators usually work simultaneously on the same day). The participating children were given a free choice in terms of choosing their music educator (they could work with one of them or all of them – it was always the childrens' choice to make). There was no obligatory attendance list, so the children participated in music lessons according to their own needs. Each time a list of participants was written down before the start of each meeting and remained open for modifications. During the time of the study 22 children participated in the project; 12 of them were regular members, so they can be referred to as the core of the group. The remaining 10 attended the music lessons occasionally. The keyboard remained “on”, and ready for use all day in the main room, sometimes with a pair of headphones plugged in so individual use was possible even while other activities were taking place in the care centre.

The instruments

The following instruments were all time at the participants' disposal: a keyboard, violins (regular and $\frac{3}{4}$), classical guitars (regular and $\frac{3}{4}$), ukuleles, djembes, a xylophone, melodicas. All of the children from the community center were invited to use the instruments during their free time, also during the music educators absence. Moreover, the educators occasionally brought in additional instruments, for instance simple percussion (triangle) or folk (kalimba) instruments. The most popular instrument among the children was the keyboard – most of them wanted to play it, which often resulted in mild arguments about who was going to use it first. The occasional absence of the instrument caused strong dissatisfaction among the participants.

The second most popular instrument was the violin. Notably, it is especially popular among female participants. Playing the violin was accompanied by certain rituals, like for instance rubbing the bow hair with rosin (calophony), named by the children “feeding” the bow. This procedure quickly spread among the children in the care centre, so that even those who had never attended music classes soon knew very well how to use calophony. **During the conduction of the study no instrument got broken or damaged by the participants.**

Some of the children made their own attempts to tune string instruments. It is worth noticing that as the project proceeded, the instruments were less likely to be de-tuned by the children during the absence of the music educators. At the beginning, playing around with tuning keys of guitars, ukuleles, violins, seemed to be lots of fun for many of them. Gradually, the instruments appeared to stay in tune (slightly out of tune due to natural processes) even for a week. Moreover, some of the participants also started to show signs of strong discontent when an instrument was not well in tune during a music class (especially guitars and violins).

Offering a variety of music instruments to freely choose from and a possibility to switch between them was a great opportunity for the participating children to discover different sounds without being pushed to choose only one. Nonetheless, some of the children chose their favourite instrument rather quickly. Others, however, especially the younger participants, remained with their enthusiasm for frequent change. This kind of open approach was also clearly beneficial in terms of the learning process: some of the strictly musical issues, for instance explaining rhythm patterns, specific phrasing, or musical structures, appeared to be much easier if additional instruments were introduced. Interestingly, despite this wide range of sounds and instruments, **the rich and natural sound of acoustic instruments seemed to be one of the main criteria taken into account by the children.** For instance, while exploring the tremendous variety of keyboard sounds, the participants

often acted with what might be interpreted as artistic sense and awareness, so the priority was given to sounds imitating acoustic instruments (grand piano, string section, double bass, orchestra hit). Choices made by the children, especially according to movie soundtracks, often seemed to be driven by the desire to imitate the original sound in the best achievable way (for example to imitate the symphonic orchestra sound from John Williams' *The Imperial March* from *Star Wars* movie series).

Another key factor for or against choosing particular instrument was its appearance (ie how it physically looks like). Small instruments, like shakers or wooden sticks, gained less interest from older children, than the keyboard, violins or guitars. Younger children also tended to favour "bigger" instruments, however they were eager to spontaneously reach out for small percussion instruments

The meetings

The course of each music class was significantly influenced by the current needs of the participants. A crucial factor was also the number of participants attending the meeting on a particular day (which was rather unpredictable), the musical ideas the children brought with them, and their willingness to play solo or to cooperate with others. Some participants remained very clear about their expectations towards the music educators most of the time. Others tended to rely on the educators' initiative, treating his/her ideas usually in a very creative way and moving freely toward their own propositions.

The proportions between individual and group work varied depending on many factors, like for instance, participants' own expectations or the information received from the care centre staff based on their observations of the behaviour of individual children on the particular day. A majority of the participants expressed openly their need for individual meetings with the educator at least at a certain point of the project. The most popular forms of group music-making proposed by the children were duos and trios. Besides the above criteria, important factors the music educators took into consideration while choosing a specific formula for each meeting were both of musical and social nature. Musical arguments are:

- individual meetings allow better practice of personal technical skills, music interpretation and individual musical expression;
- Musicking in groups creates space for playful learning of some basic principles of chamber

music, and make it possible to introduce and experience in a practical sense such terms as accompaniment, instrumental or vocal solo, and arrangement.

Main social outcomes are:

- individual lessons fulfil children's needs for individual contact and attention from an adult person
- working in groups enhances collaboration, and development of interpersonal and social skills.

Both aspects mentioned above seemed to transcend one another in many ways: the musical ideas presented by the children often appeared to be implied by the current condition of their social relationships. The overall course of the music lessons was also influenced in a major way by other events happening in the care centre during the music educators' absence, which sometimes resulted in disability to focus attention, and diminished willingness towards collaboration among the children.

In ensembles, a common problem were individual participants' attempts to gain a dominant position. The music educators sometimes failed to convince them to "make space" for other participants' musical expression, which often brought signs of dissatisfaction from the "dominant" children (few times some of them just left the classroom as a sign of protest). Nevertheless, **music itself appeared to be the best and sufficient solution**. Most of the time the children showed a lot of enthusiasm for collaboration, for instance performing illustrative music based on stories and narrative structures they had written before. Some of the stories were so appealing to them, that they were able to reconstruct them seamlessly even after a couple of weeks. The least effective of all means used by the music educators to increase children's motivation were verbal instructions given by the educators – it seemed that they often resulted in a notable decrease of interest and involvement of the participants.

A surprisingly positive case of effective extrinsic motivation, proposed by the participants themselves, was the "talent show" formula popular in Poland due to commercial TV broadcasters. Children were eager to play both the participant's and jury member's role showing impressive ability to concentrate on their tasks. Their verbal creativity according to self-given stage names (for instance *Señorita Margarita*) and titles of the performed music pieces (*Wild Monkey Running Around in Church*) is also worth noticing. Many of them presented adequate expressive qualities to the following music, becoming inherent parts of the performance. All children agreed to switch

roles, so that each of them got the opportunity to play both the part of the contestant and the jury member. The same rules applied for the educator. The jury watched all of the performances with great attention. The educators implicit role was to facilitate the whole process in order to make all of the participants apparent winners. Interestingly – the children mostly turned out to be very generous with their “verdicts” clearly focusing more on the joy coming from the performances rather than on the competitive aspects of the contest. In the presented example, **group music making seems to be also an effective tool for overcoming communication challenges related to age difference**. Older children were eager to create duos with younger participants, in some cases becoming their “mentors”, in other - creating a more equal relation based on partnership.

Performing in front of an audience – even if consisting of peers from the care centre and the educators only – evokes strong emotional reactions, but seemed to be a very important and desired form of musical activity. During the educators’ absence, the children organised a couple of spontaneous mini-concerts for the adult staff members: they chose the repertoire, organised music rehearsals (also teaching other children to play certain parts, for instance on the violin), and rearranged the room for live performance (by putting the chairs in rows and choosing the location of the “stage”).

Another factor which had profound influence on the course of the music lessons was the ability of each educator to attend to the facility regularly. **Even a single absence of any of the educators usually resulted in a notable change in the children’s behaviour both in terms of their musical expectations and general behaviour**. After the educators absence a significant shift towards activities based on musical improvisation and exploring the sound of different instruments was noticed. The children were not interested in continuing working on previously chosen repertoire and recall pieces they had already learned, what might be interpreted as setback in the learning process. An educators absence was usually also followed by a decrease in enthusiasm for cooperation in groups. If the regularity of the music lessons was maintained, many of the participants started expressing their needs of in-depth work with certain musical or technical issues and were also more willing to memorise the music.

The repertoire

The repertoire performed during the music classes was very diverse. On the one hand, the participants enjoyed improvising, sometimes coming up with their own compositions; other time it was the educator, who made an attempt to inspire the children, for instance by suggesting a topic on which the improvisation was founded (for instance “sounds of a storm”). On the other hand, pre-composed music was also an important part of the process. The children often came up with suggestions related to the music they would like to learn (if the educator was not familiar with it, the children presented a recording using their mobile phones). **The educators did not prioritise nor discriminate any music genre. Remaining open about their personal musical preferences, they expressed them in a non judgemental way** (for instance they would rather say “I like this” than “this is good music” and “I am not really into it” than “this is bad music”). As the research have started, free improvisation and exploration of sounds of different instruments were the two most preferred activities. The music proposed by the participants included different genres and artists: Polish hip-hop (Gang Albanii), Polish and international pop (Patrycja Kazadi, Sarsa, Michael Jackson), disco polo¹ (many artists), songs from movie soundtracks (songs from Walt Disney’s movies, John Williams’ music from *Star Wars*, a song from the Polish movie *Miasto 44*, Henry Mancini’s *Pink Panther* theme), music from computer games (*The Witcher*, *Minecraft*), and sometimes rock music. After a couple of weeks classical music started to gain a strong position, especially compositions which were provided as “demo songs” in the keyboards set memory (L. van Beethoven’s *Für Elize*, *Ode to Joy* from his *IX Symphony*). Some of the children also reached out for polish equivalents of singer-songwriter ballads (KSU – *Moje Bieszczady*). Younger participants often proposed popular melodies which they had learned at school (*Pojedziemy na łów*, *Wlazł kotek*, Polish versions of *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, *Brother John*). There was also one Polish soldier’s song from WWII (*Serce w plecaku*). Moreover, in the period directly preceding Christmas, children showed great enthusiasm towards learning and playing Polish carols (*Wśród nocnej ciszy*, *Przybieżeli do Betlejem*, *Pójdźmy wszyscy do stajenki*, *Lulajże Jezuniu...*). Another great example: *Simama Ka* – an African song introduced by one of the facilitators, became particularly popular among the participants: children of all ages learned to sing and play it on different instruments. A majority of the children did not seem to be very much attached to any particular repertoire and tended to show a positive

¹ Polish dance music, also being referred to as Polish urban folk music.

approach towards learning new music. One of notable exceptions was Jędre², who consistently strived to improve his piano interpretation of John Williams' *Imperial March* during almost every meeting. However, **it is worth a notice, that being given almost complete freedom of choice, the children showed what seemed to be a natural tendency for enriching and developing the repertoire by reaching out for new compositions and genres (including classical music)** rather, than being satisfied with what they were already familiar with.

As the project continued, the number of participants was constantly growing. New participants, if asked about their motivation for joining the project, usually mentioned the opinion or encouragement of one of their peers who had already been participating, or their own curiosity. In several cases the encouragement came from one of the parents (mothers), who had participated in the music workshop. As the attention of the parents towards musical activity grew stronger, an increase in the children's motivation was also observed. During the time of the study, participant parents also showed growing attention for musical activities of their children.

² Names of the participants have been changed.

4. Social relations built around music

Besides being a chance to develop and improve certain musical skills, music lessons also offer a possibility to build new and maintaining the already existing social relations. In the first place it is worth to take a closer look at the relationships **between the children participating in the project and the educators**. The main factors defining the nature of the relationships are individual needs of the participants and (significantly) the participant's age. As it was observed, especially younger participants (7-10 years old) appreciated a close personal relationship with educator. This phenomenon was particularly visible in group of female participants: they tend to shorten the distance between them and the educator by for instance calling her "auntie³", showed signs of affection by hugging her, and with openly manifested dissatisfaction if the educator was absent. This kind of relationship influenced a higher level of motivation to engage in musical activities (they were eager to take on new challenges, feel less discouraged by momentary failures and difficulties) and more regular meeting attendance.

Older children (11 years old or more) also tend to built close relationships with the educators (for instance, some of the children shared their problems from home or from school with them), nevertheless they seemed to perceive the educator more as a mentor or guide through the world

3 Polish: „ciociu”

of music. In case of some of the participants, their commitment during the music classes appeared to be influenced mainly by the high personal authority of the educator. A good example of the processes mentioned above is the relationship between Witek (12 years old) and one of the educators. Witek was highly interested in music and willing to develop his musical skills. His favourite instruments are the guitar and djembe. To him, the relationship with the educator appeared to be a value in itself. He was impressed by the educators knowledge and musical skills, which seemed to have a major influence on Witek's general level of motivation. He was a very vigorous child, yet showed great ability to focus during individual lessons. It was clear, that he cared a lot about the educators opinion and acknowledgement, but also he wanted to gain as much as possible from every single music meeting.

Secondly, it is crucial to present the **relationships between the children participating in the presented music project**. All of the participants were regular visitors to the care centre, so they knew each other at least by sight. The duos and trios, and other configurations in which they sometimes attended music classes, were often based on their everyday relations. Nonetheless, it is worth a mention, that **a majority of the children was open to cooperate with participants with whom they had never been engaged in any other forms of social activity**. Let's take Artur and Jędrek (both approximately 12 years old) in order to illustrate described process. At the beginning, they both tended to be focused on improving their individual skills. Sometimes, they were invited by other participants (individually) to join their classes, but even then they appeared more interested in presenting their own repertoire and focused rather on practising on their own. So when they both decided to play together, at the beginning their cooperation had not seemed to be going very well. However, after a while, with slight support of the educators, they were able to play as a duo and it seemed that they enjoyed this formula very much.

Occasionally, some issues that occurred, made it difficult to proceed with the meeting. However, It is important to stress out that the children's behaviour was influenced significantly by the overall atmosphere prevailing in the facility on a particular day. It was observed that both negative (for instance unfortunate incidents between some of the children which influenced also the emotional condition of others) and positive events (for instance a system of rewards used to motivate the children during meetings taking place on the same day) had a disruptive influence on the children's behaviour during the music classes. Afterwards, children showed difficulties with focusing attention on musical activities and were less interested in cooperate and interact with others.

Other difficulties appeared to be of individual nature. Attempts taken by some of the children to impose their own ideas or rules on other group members need to be mentioned. For instance, Jola (8 years old) enjoyed the role of a leader of the group: distributing tasks, deciding upon who in the band plays which instrument, choosing the repertoire for a particular meeting, and so on. Despite her strong leadership attitude, she usually showed general interest in other participants' ideas and she respected their opinions. However occasionally, she appeared to be driven mainly by her own ideas, and as a consequence not to paying much attention to others and their well-being.

Next topic worth to investigate is the parents involvement. When our music project started, the parents did not show much interest for the musical activity of their children. Occasionally adult family members (mainly mothers and grandmothers) bothered to enter the classroom and talk with the educator or listen to their children playing. A couple of times participants were unwillingly taken away from the classroom before the end of the music class, which was followed by the explanation from the parents' that they were in a hurry and could not wait any longer to bring their children home. **A breakthrough event in the field of parents' attitudes was a music workshop organised specially for them (without the presence of the children).** The workshop took place during the last month of the study and it is worth mentioning, that it was the parents own initiative to ask the director of the community centre to organise it, because they wanted to experience music making in a similar way their children did. However, only female family members (mothers and grandmothers) attended the workshop. At the beginning of the meeting some of the participants seemed to be a little confused, probably by not knowing what exactly to expect from this meeting formula. But as the workshop continued, they were getting more interested in playing on music instruments and sing-along with the educators. On the days following the workshop, a number of new children, encouraged by their parents who participated in the music meeting, asked to join the music lessons. The workshop seems to have also affected directly the attitude of the parents towards their children's musical activity (for instance, forcing children to finish meetings earlier has never happened again). Moreover, some of the parents declared that they were considering buying an instrument for their child so it could practice at home, and some started searching for musical episodes in their family's history and sharing them with the music educators. For example, some of the mothers referred in their stories to their own musical experiences from childhood – usually discontinued due to their discouragement with the formula of the music lessons they had experienced or the judgemental attitude of their teacher.

Another event which apparently resulted in strengthening the parent-child-teacher relations was a participation in a concert for families with children at the Warsaw Philharmonic. The experience of listening to music played live in a different environment and context, and the elegant, spacious architecture of the building, located in the city centre, seemed to be a strong positive experience to both the children and the adults. On the following day, during the music classes, the children expressed more enthusiasm while playing music (one of the concert's highlights was a contemporary music piece performed on everyday use objects in the function of music instruments), and often referred to the concert in their statements.

5. The Participatory Approach in Music Education and the development of selected social competences among children

One of the basic principles of music education based on a participatory approach is to create a learning environment encouraging and supporting a comprehensive development of the participants. One part of this process is the development of individual skills (for instance technical skills in playing a particular instrument) and artistic sensibility (by pointing out the need for self expression and experiencing art). But what is more important in case of the presented educational project, is supporting the development of social competences, which are essential in professional (non musical) career and relationships with other people. The aim of this chapter is to focus on the latter, as the importance of these aspects of music education still seems to be generally underestimated in the Polish educational system, despite its great potential for supporting a child's personal development. The presented study, despite its relatively short duration, points out some important tendencies in the field of social competences development. A change in social attitudes and behaviours among the participants of the music classes was observed, nevertheless a clear statement on the nature of the changes and their longevity is not possible to be made without further research conducted in appropriate time intervals. Minding those limitations, it was still

possible to observe the signs of development of certain social skills.

In the first place it is worth a notice, that learning in groups or during individual lessons is always a social process, which cannot be happening without cooperation: the participants always interact by playing in freely created ensembles, or with the educator. In that context, music appears to be a special subject, as listening is always a very important part of musical activity of any kind (Elliott 2015). Hence, **by practicing music, the children always develop their social skills.** Certainly, the attempts to cooperate were not always fully successful (we have already mentioned the key factors influencing the course of music lessons), nevertheless presenting the advantages of musical cooperation to the children (who were able to experience the effects of playing in a band, witness the emotions and enthusiasm of other participants) was a strong stimuli to encourage their willingness for various forms of collaboration. On top of that, during music classes the children often made music in multi-age groups (sometimes the age difference was even 5 years, which is a significant factor), and got thereby a chance to practice in-group cooperation, communication, and achieving common goals with others, who represent different developmental, cognitive and emotional needs.

An interesting example suggesting a strong mutual relation between the development of musical and social skills is Witek. Witek was not very enthusiastic about playing with other children, he rather enjoyed playing with the educators. **However, if persuaded to cooperate with one of his peers or join a small ensemble, he was likely to show impressive amounts of patience and personal involvement.** During the absence of the educators, Witek sometimes taught others to play pieces, he had learned from the educators on guitar and djembe. Some of the music contains refined guitar licks or complex rhythm patterns which most certainly take a lot of time and determination to be both learned and taught. Witek seemed not to be doing very well in terms of communication with other children: the younger are not comfortable with him being around because of his dominant nature, older ones sometime even provoke his violent behaviours. Notably, the same children, regardless of age, are willing to spend their free time with Witek to learn from him. Witek's deep understanding of the accompanist's role in a music band is impressive. Despite being not very open for musical cooperation, if convinced to do so, **he supported other band member's playing, showing great attention and presenting advanced musical knowledge,** for instance by artfully tuning the pulse of his playing, or the tempo with the abilities of other players, accentuating the downbeats and the beginning of a phrase. Through his activity centred around music, Witek won other children's respect.

Closely related to cooperational competences are **communication skills**. The participating children, besides careful, conscious listening to each other also learn how to express and present their ideas and opinions effectively. These early experiments in communication are particularly valuable for the younger children, who often naturally prefer very direct (sometimes too literal and offensive) means of expression.

A special place among communication skills holds **self-expression**. Music offers unlimited room for self-expression, nevertheless mastering the tools requires lots of practice. During the music classes children could enhance their creativity with the use of various musical instruments. Often they had a story ready to be expressed in a musical. Sometimes it is a very precise scenario, sometimes subtle facilitation from the educator is required.

Self-expression could not develop properly without the music educators' attitude to always support the participant's **open-mindedness and creativity**. The ideas of the children are never being criticised nor approached in a judgemental way. Rather, participants were constantly encouraged to take up further experiments both by modifying and questioning the educator's ideas and coming up with their own initiatives. For instance, when Jędreka and Maciek (both 12 years old) came up with the idea of playing *The Imperial March* and *Für Elise* simultaneously on the keyboard, the educator encouraged them to do so and assisted them in a playful way which resulted in the creation of a new meaningful composition.

A strong correlation between the participants overall emotional disposition and the preferred kind of musical expression was observed. Emotional distresses and tensions, if present at the beginning of the music class, often resulted in free improvisation becoming a preferable activity. Emotional well-being and apparent harmony increased the participants' enthusiasm for working on pre-composed music or improvising within a set structure. It was also observed, that some of the participating children seemed to benefit from music classes in terms of **better managing their emotions**. The open ended music workshop formula appears to have therapeutic qualities especially in case of those participants who showed difficulties with managing their emotions and energy level in everyday life. Apart from the mentioned above Witek, a good illustration of this thesis is the case of Franek (8 years old), who is usually bursting with energy all day. It was particularly the case, when musicians from the Warsaw Philharmonic came to visit the care centre for a monthly concert: Franek could hardly "stay in one place", which eventually resulted in him pouring the entire content of a board game box right in front of the artists' feet. However, during music classes he needed much less effort to keep his attention focused. Occasionally, he

found it difficult to communicate with other participants, or was ignoring some of the requests from the educators, but remained nonetheless relatively calm and attentive.

It is also worth pointing out that **music lessons based on the participatory approach are beneficial for shaping better ways of coping with failures and setbacks.** Musicking in a safe, friendly, environment, accompanied by the educators helped to overcome emotional barriers which were depriving them from fully participating in musical culture. One of the participants, who's attitude illustrates the above observation is Luiza (14 years old). Despite being superior to most of the other children in terms of musical skills and experience (she owns an instrument and has been attending individual music lessons for a couple of years) she constantly showed signs of low self-esteem or dissatisfaction with her own playing, for instance by constantly referring to new music pieces as "too difficult for her to play" and repeating that she was "not able to play"(even though she had actually played very well). To overcome her own reluctance, she needs the educator to support her. As the project continued, a constant decrease in Luiza's failure-related behaviour was observed.

Conclusions

The presented research, due to a narrow range of research methods (a case study of an educational program conducted in one care centre) does not provide any basis for general conclusions about the influence of the applied music education model on social behaviours. Nonetheless, we would like to point out **some of the research areas and research questions requiring further investigation in future studies:**

- Relationships between the participant and a musical instrument. How does having a free choice of instruments influence the development of long-standing interest and musical tastes?
- Relationships between the participating children. How likely are the observed changes in social behaviours and attitudes to persist outside of the classroom?
- Parent-child relationships. What kind of changes does participating in music education involving music making and experiencing live music performances together cause or support in this field?
- Music educator as a facilitator vs music educator as an instructor. How does each of the two approaches influence the learning process?
- Combining music making and experiencing live music performed by professionals. How do both activities relate to and influence each other?
- The function(s) of music in formal and informal education. How to introduce music education, so to make the whole of educational processes benefit from it (without compromising the quality of any particular component)?
- Strategies for supporting the development of the children's musical interests and aesthetic needs besides music lessons (in their time-off).

There is also a need for gathering comparative data on the local, national and international level. Without comparative data it is not possible to indicate common results of the participatory approach in music education in the field of musical and social development of the participants (for instance, its influence on the development of particular social skills). Comparative studies could also put more light on the potential and challenges of this educational approach. In order to investigate the permanence and sustainability of the observed changes in social behaviours and attitudes, professional evaluation of future educational programmes should also be considered an important process.

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