

THE POWER OF EQUALITY

Interim evaluation of Musical Inclusion

Sound Sense for Youth Music





SOUND SENSE



The voice of community music

By Kathryn Deane, Anita Holford, Rob Hunter, Phil Mullen for the National
Foundation for Youth Music, June 2014

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The people listed on the front cover are not really the authors of this report, merely its scribes. The true authors are the 26 organisations, overleaf, making up the Musical Inclusion programme who have shared with us their candid thoughts about their work and the programme.

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Notes

The authors are a collective funded by Youth Music's Musical Inclusion: Evaluation and Networking funding programme. We were tasked with supporting and evaluating the work carried out by the 26 organisations funded by Youth Music's Musical Inclusion funding programme. This is our interim report on progress made so far: another report will be published at the conclusion of the programme.

This report is based on all we have learned about both Musical Inclusion (the programme) and musical inclusivity (the concept) over the past year and a half from a wide range of sources. The case studies, quotes and examples in it are there to illustrate specific points – our choice does not imply anything about the quality of those picked or not picked. Some quotes may be composites or otherwise altered to ensure anonymity.

We are evaluating the programme, not assessing individual projects; aiming to understand what would improve the potential for high-functioning results. We have looked at areas where projects told us things were going well (in the first half of this report) and areas (including some already covered) where we thought improvements could help progress to be made (second half). We are continuing to evaluate, support and help network the projects to encourage further learning. A final report will be available in mid-2015.

Grantholders

Organisations – often called “projects” throughout this report – holding Musical Inclusion grants:

Brighter Sound Ltd
Bristol Music Trust
CYMAZ Music
Daisi
Hereford Arts In Action Ltd T/A The Music Pool
Hertfordshire Music Service
HMM Arts Ltd (The Hive Music and Media Centre)
Make Some Noise West Midlands Ltd
Middlesbrough Council
mac Birmingham
More Music
National Centre for Early Music
North Music Trust
Northamptonshire Music & Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT)
Nottingham City Music Development
NYMAZ
Oxfordshire County Music Service
Rhythmix
SoCo Music Project
Sound Connections
soundLINCS
SoundStorm
SoundWave
The Garage Trust Ltd
Wiltshire Music Service
Yorkshire Youth and Music

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Musical Inclusion

Youth Music's £7million flagship funding programme Musical Inclusion aims to ensure that children and young people in "challenging circumstances" (see What does musical inclusivity mean?) are able to access music-making opportunities, not only now but – by working in, through and with the new music education hubs – in the future. The programme involves both "non-formal" (music-making activities largely provided by specialist organisations working in musically inclusive ways) and "formal" education (in this case, music services provision) ways of working and organisations.

Key findings

We first reported on the programme in mid-2013 to both the projects and Youth Music, focusing on developments that could be made for work in 2014/15. This interim report, the first public report, brings together all the learning from the programme to date, and finds:

- Musical Inclusion can ensure that issues of musical inclusivity are successfully addressed in music education hubs.
- Projects that are most successful are run by individuals with high levels of strategic and negotiating skills.

- There is a need for a clearer understanding of what is meant – both by the terms and the practices – by musical inclusivity and by musical quality in the context of working with children and young people in challenging circumstances. And these understandings need to be shared across formal and non-formal music education organisations.
- Practice – whether musical or managerial – needs to be documented and shared more. Too much practice at present is inefficiently being reinvented.
- Programmes of work that are delivered by multiple individual projects need managing and supporting so the projects understand clearly what the job to be done is and why it needs doing. Shared purpose and understandings between each project and the funder result in a more effective and efficient programme.
- There is further progress that the programme can make, even in its final nine months.

What is Musical Inclusion?

Musical Inclusion is Youth Music's response to the government's national plan for music education in England, *The importance of music*, commonly referred to as NPME. This set out a vision of equality in music education which "must not become the preserve of those children whose families can afford to pay... While music touches the lives of all young people, the disadvantaged can benefit most." This chimed with Youth Music's own vision that "life-changing music-making is available to all children and young people."

NPME also created the mechanism through which this equality might be achieved: music education "hubs." Such hubs "augment and support music teaching in schools" by drawing on the expertise of partners such as orchestras, charities, music groups and community musicians. They have "partnership working at their core," with arts-based and education-based organisations "pooling their resources through a shared interest in improving children's music education."

The official vision for a hub was for a group of formal and non-formal local providers of music-making activities to come together in partnership with

one organisation leading the partnership. In practice, almost all the "hub leads" are music services.

As a funder of over 200 "arts-based and education-based" music projects a year – all specialists in working with children in challenging circumstances – Youth Music, therefore, has a unique role to play in the development of hubs that could address cultural equality. The activities of the 26 projects in the Musical Inclusion programme (running initially from April 2012 to March 2014, and then extended to March 2015) include music-making in areas of greatest need; workforce development to ensure the quality of such work; and strategic advocacy to ensure such work is embedded within hubs across England.

Learning is built into the programme through formative evaluation combined with critical friending, national online and face-to-face networking, and practice documentation and sharing.

Developing the place of musical inclusivity

The best of the Musical Inclusion projects are making good progress in developing – in little more than a year and a half – the place of musical inclusivity within hubs: introducing partnership working in ways that for many are unfamiliar territory; encouraging meaningful equality in music-making.

This is an achievement: hubs are new structures and their predecessor music services are tackling multiple problems of decreasing funding, DfE demands to cover specific activities (ensembles, singing, etc.), unfamiliar reporting structures, and more. The sell is made more difficult because of a lack of shared understanding of terms such as musical inclusivity.

We found examples of successful developments both in projects which were hub leads – working with non-formal organisations – and those which were non-formal organisations – advocating inclusivity practices to hub leads.

What does musical inclusivity mean?

Despite this programme being called Musical Inclusion, the programme application guidance notes didn't offer a clear definition or description of the terms inclusion or inclusivity. Not all projects could offer a succinct definition when we asked them.

More often used by Youth Music and by the projects the charity supports, is the term “children and young people in challenging circumstances” (CCC). This is variously described: *Youth Music impact report 2011/12*, for example lists 17 potentially challenging circumstances, ranging from special needs and mental or physical disabilities, through cultural status (refugee, asylum seeker) to environment (rurally isolated), the disabilities group making up 20% of project participants, the second group 6.5%, and the rurally isolated a perhaps surprisingly large 16%. Such a list doesn't explain in what sense these categories of people are challenged. *Sound Connections Challenging Circumstances Network* – funded by Youth Music – says that these lists are almost endless, and found it was more useful to explain the term: a challenging circumstance is, they say, “any barrier to accessing music.”

Case study

A hub lead's view of inclusivity

SoundStorm was formed in 2002 to tackle musical exclusion in Bournemouth and Poole; they are now the hub lead for the area. Musical inclusivity is integral to their values: "We celebrate the diversity of all music forms and makers," says manager Claire Lewis. Their (written) music education strategy has as one objective to "promote inclusion in all aspects of music education." And for their Musical Inclusion project, Sonic Boom, they have developed a comprehensive (also written) strategy.

They are clear on the focuses of their work (rurally isolated areas, young carers, looked after children, and the professional development of music leaders) because of their formal needs analysis approach which creates a virtuous circle: identify need – respond – evaluate – re-identify need etc.

This may be a help in focusing when a circumstance might be "challenging." On the one hand it makes clear that inclusion is not confined to special educational needs or disability – a conflation still made by some. On the other, it allows debate about what boundaries are to be placed on the term. It also makes clear that musical inclusivity is about more than just the music. While barriers might be musical ones they could also be social, cultural, personal, economic, emotional, health or ability ones.

In turn, such a description doesn't explain why one would want to focus on people facing barriers to accessing music. *Reaching out* suggests two reasons:

1) Being able to participate in cultural life is a human right says the UN, but numerous studies say access to the arts is patchy: *Mapping non-formal music provision and social need in London* (produced by Sound Connections for this programme) showed there were multiple areas in London where little music-making is happening and (probably not coincidentally) socio-economic disadvantage is highest. Musical inclusivity, therefore, is about creating cultural equity.

2) The twin reason is more pragmatic: studies also show that music-making brings social, personal, economic benefits to its participants; and (notes *The power of music*) that these benefits may be more marked in disaffected young people.

Case study

Embedding inclusivity

More Music was founded in Morecambe 20 years ago by Peter Moser, with a commitment to social change, quality engagement and great music-making. In this deprived seaside town and across Lancashire, children in challenging circumstances are given new pathways into music-making in the context of regeneration programmes.

Moser's strategy combines making things happen with substantial advocacy so that the organisation is seen by colleagues and partners "as an influential, reputable organisation that helped to game change." He and his team have changed "opinion, perception and process" in the Lancashire music hub, first by working on the original application and now by chairing two of the hub's six working parties, including crucially one on inclusion, as well as developing the special educational needs strategy. The partnership in the hub is endorsed by outside observers as strong and progressive.

In short, making music benefits people. But not everyone can access music-making activities, and it is disadvantaged people who face the biggest barriers. Musical inclusivity recognises that, and actively dismantles those barriers to create a more culturally democratic society.

The importance of strategic skills

What makes a hub successful in addressing inclusivity? Projects told us ingredients included:

- a clear commitment to inclusivity in a hub's business plan
- experts in musical inclusivity jointly developing the plan
- and these experts being strong members of a hub's strategy group
- musical inclusivity work being a proportionate part of a hub's activities
- and funded through a range of sources.

We found that the individuals who best achieved such ingredients had significant skills. Whether they were hub leads or managers in non-formal organisations, they demonstrated:

- strong strategic and negotiating skills
- a passion for inclusion
- longevity at this task
- an understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the various partners.

Case study

Organisational strategy

Oxfordshire County Music Service is headquartered in a primary school in Headington, on a council estate with high indexes of poverty. Here, OCMS head Tony Mealings has been taking a “conscious route of developing the music service into a hub lead.”

Strategic decisions are taken by a music service operational group. There is a providers alliance of about 20, “to stop people tripping over each other” – but it would be “naive” to think that such a body could make decisions that over-rode the commercial position of the lead or other organisations. But Mealings insists that decisions below that level are “hugely collegiate. I don’t dictate to partners, it’s a dialogue.”

Mealings’s commitment to inclusivity is obvious: Musical Inclusion has been “fundamental” to enabling OCMS to pump prime, take risks and buy time for “really tangible dialogue with a range of providers, to sort the good from the bad.” His ambition for the work is clear: “Sustained relationships with a range of providers with agreed qualitative processes; a way of working we already do.”



Case study

Relationship strategy

In its work with hubs in its part of north-west England, Brighter Sound is seen to have authority because of: its reputation for good quality delivery and progression opportunities; its strategic thinking; the interpersonal skills of its senior managers; and the added value they bring to an individual hub from their overview of musical inclusion in other hubs. "Taking the time to make good relationships has been the key, to go at the right pace for the individual hub, to listen and facilitate rather than impose an agenda and grab delivery opportunities for the company. We're learning how to be catalysts," says CEO Debra King. "The Musical Inclusion grant and role has been critical to allowing us time and authority to do this work."

A community of practice

Twenty-six projects learning from and sharing between each other make for a powerful knowledge programme. In Musical Inclusion there is an identifiable and growing online community of practice, with conversations on the Youth Music Network and Facebook Musical Inclusion groups (also shared via Twitter), contributing to individual and organisational knowledge. Such a community of practice supports collective problem-solving, enabling individuals to develop their practice and so strengthen their professional identity.

A question about the ethics of collecting and sharing personal information about participants sparked a debate on the Facebook group. Projects from Yorkshire, Gloucestershire, Brighton and Suffolk all contributed; excerpts were posted on the Youth Music Network, and the conversation continued there. The practices are to be documented through a collaborative Google Doc.

Joining networking to evaluation (see The research, on page 24) strengthens both. Curation by the evaluation team can help fledgling communities of practice to make connections better, and encourages a focus on learning rather than advocacy. Networking (both online and face to face) helps evaluators understand projects' interests and concerns better.

Face to face national meetings continue to be a very popular way of learning, and the Musical Inclusion programme includes

Case study

Sharing practice, developing practice

Paul Weston of The Garage, Norfolk, posted a blog on the Youth Music Network about issues of adults other than the music leader being present in music sessions. He posed four scenarios under the introduction "Other adults in your session: Help or Hindrance? One of the key challenges when delivering music activities with Children in Challenging Circumstances are the other adults in that setting. These people can be teachers, youth/case workers, carers or volunteers."



In under a week there were lengthy responses from projects in Gloucestershire, Reading and Oxfordshire, each building on the last, as these shortened examples show:

Submitted by nick.wright on 25th February 2014. *I recognise scenario 3 which I have definitely come across in the past, but am fortunate to be working in a situation more like scenario 4 at the moment [...]The problem I have had on occasion is that...*

Submitted by LucyReadipop on 27th February 2014. *My experience of this is from the other side, or more appropriately, the middle. We were working in a local youth centre on a project for parents experiencing abuse from their children...*

Submitted by anita holford on 4th March 2014. *... Like Lucy, when I take part/visit projects, I'm usually neither a music leader, nor a teacher/support worker, but I think anyone being present in these situations would benefit from - and appreciate - a few tips...*

Submitted by Mark Bick on 4th March 2014. *These are very real issues that have been around for a long time. [...] I remember my early experience of work with adults with learning difficulties [...] I have also had recent interesting experiences in Pupil Referral units. To give one example...*

This sort of open discussion benefits readers and well as contributors, as one remarked: "I think everyone should read Other adults in your session: Help or Hindrance?. This is an issue that I've reflected on over the years, and there are a lot of interesting and valid points made in his blog and the responses to it."

five such “gatherings.” Online networking is good for knowledge-sharing and in-depth learning (and has a particular place in bringing newcomers to a particular strand of debate or knowledge up to speed) but gatherings provide a “knowledge marketplace” where debates, negotiations and knowledge transactions can take place more swiftly than online.

Grown up funding

Youth Music’s funding of strategy work in this programme gave people essential time to plan and think, and to have the sort of relationship-building meetings that may not have immediate outcomes – projects recognised such funding as rare. Youth Music was also remarkably swift in setting up the funding stream even as the details of music education hubs’ operations were being announced.

Funding criteria for Musical Inclusion required projects to do both strategy work and direct music-making work. And projects were keen to do both: they couldn’t envisage strategic development that didn’t go hand in hand with, rely on, be informed by, musical activities; or music-making that didn’t need consequent strategy developments. Otherwise it was just “doing work that didn’t have a purpose,” or work that would be in danger of not being sustainable.

Assessing the funder

How well is Youth Music doing as a funder in Musical Inclusion? The Grantee perception programme from the Center for Effective Philanthropy asks fundees to rate their funder against a wide range of criteria.

Looking at a sub-section of eight of those criteria we saw four being very positively met:

- how well the funder’s work impacts on the fundee’s field of work
- how responsive, approachable and fair it is
- how helpful its selection process is
- how well it understands fundee’s goals and strategy.

Some limitations and occasional grumbles in:

- what post-acceptance (ie, once the funded work is up and running) help it is to the fundee.
- what impact it has on the fundee’s organisation and on the sustainability of the work

And some concerns over:

- how well it advances knowledge and impacts on public policy
- how clear it is in communicating its own goals and strategy.



Improving performance

Despite the positive achievements of the Musical Inclusion programme so far there is work still to be done to achieve widespread musical inclusivity of the sort described in the opening pages of this report. The latest NFER *Key data* analysis of hubs' activities indicates that disadvantaged children still face barriers to participation in music: 18% of pupils are eligible for free school meals (a widely-used indicator for disadvantage), yet only 12.8% of the pupils participating in ensembles and choirs were receiving a subsidy to assist with attendance. There is limited cultural range in most hubs: "mainly classical and chamber music, tiered progression ensembles [...] grade exams and qualifications," and there are "few examples of hip-hop, digital, folk, or ethnic/world ensembles."

The improvements described in this section would help the Musical Inclusion programme to contribute better to achieving this cultural equity.

Developing strategic skills

Developing the place of inclusivity within hubs is a job for strategists – individuals with a range of skills of very high order, capable of addressing the sorts of challenges in these two examples:

1. A non-formal organisation faces disinterest from a hub they want to partner with. They need to be able to partner with. They need to be able to exploit the assets (e.g. considerable links with schools, a longevity in arts education) that they do have. They need to have the skills to analyse why they are making little progress, explore what tools they need to address this, and be able to devise a strategy for moving forward.

2. A hub, like many, is essentially its predecessor music service. Its head is committed to inclusivity, has personal testimony of its value, and works with non-formal organisations – though only of his choosing. To fully realise the vision of NPME for partnership working with arts-based organisations "pooling their resources", this hub lead could create a broader strategy group with more arts organisations contributing to the work.

What's needed? Future programmes with a strategic element would be more effective and efficient if they required managers with the highest levels of strategic skills – and more effective still if they also invested in those people to become even better

strategists. If there aren't enough of such people Youth Music should invest in others to bring them up to the level of the very best.

Training or professional development would need to cover both strategic thinking (what outcomes do I want? how to achieve them? how to deal with rebuffs?) and negotiation skills (how do I apply my thinking so I win my case?)

Understanding quality and inclusivity

Musical Inclusion's prime aim is to develop high-quality music-making opportunities for children and young people in challenging circumstances – not just once but, by embedding the work within hubs, permanently and sustainably.

The difficulties start with understanding what we mean by “musical quality” in the context of musical inclusivity. This is not always clear. An over-riding issue for work in hubs is that formal and non-formal organisations talk different languages: for musical inclusivity to be embedded in hubs all parties need to be able to talk about musical quality in ways that other professionals can relate to and understand.

Towards musical quality

Music-making is what we do. Evaluations such as *Move on up* consistently point out the centrality of the music. No-one, unsurprisingly, tells us they want to make poor-quality music. But there are issues about what “good-quality” inclusive music making means. Whether it is an absolute or whether it depends on the context, including the type or degree of challenging circumstance involved; whether quality does or should involve personal or social outcomes as well as (or instead of) musical ones; even whether a common language exists between formal and non-formal music education practices to discuss such topics – all these have burdened community music discussions since the 1970s.

Youth Music's own quality framework *Do, review, improve* (which builds on much previous work) lists 23 criteria for a quality music session. Many of these are generic to good teaching practice in any sphere (young person-centred, co-construction of learning, respect for the young person as a musician, understanding of the young-person's starting points and appropriate progression routes, teacher as reflective practitioner). Inclusivity is covered a little obliquely (no participant is discriminated against; achievement and excellence

are measured in terms of personal progress; additional pastoral or other support needs should be identified). An analysis in *ArtWorks: Quality* suggests that debates on quality in participatory arts are similarly concerned with describing the practice in terms which rebut the age-old charge that participatory arts is poor-quality arts.

On the other hand, projects in this programme – and in practically every community arts programme in the past 40 years – describe the “transformational” power of the work (and it’s socio-personal transformation they mostly talk of, not musical transformation). This programme is predicated on the liberal social notion of inclusivity (see ‘What does musical inclusivity mean?’, above). François Matarasso’s *Use or ornament?* in 1997 was clear that participatory arts work had social impacts, which were inherent in the process of arts-making, and which could be planned for. Most of the articles in *Reaching out* (e.g. from Jess Abrams or Phil Mullen) are about making change in people – and not a change from mastering three riffs rather than two or perfecting an embouchure but in a range of social outcomes.

Personal developments are inextricably bound up with musical ones, says *Move on up*, and so do the projects in this programme. In musical inclusivity work, therefore, musical quality must address socio-personal issues as well as musical ones. And, by the same token, addressing socio-personal issues requires music leaders in particular to enable participants to be the best they can musically, both individually and collectively.

What’s needed? Is debate – not the usual ad hoc sessions at conferences, but a systematic programme of rigorous critical dialogue and reflection on issues of musical quality in the context of musical inclusivity (of course, building on all that we already know).

- First, to establish a common language (more likely, a common understanding of the range of terminologies and definitions) across music education sectors that doesn’t underplay the complex and significant skills and processes employed in leading music-making especially with children in challenging circumstances. (So, common as in highest common factor, not lowest common denominator.)

- Next, to generate a range of statements of what practice understanding in this area actually is.
- Finally, to negotiate an understanding – that would have wide-spread acceptability – of what musical quality and inclusivity should be.

Continuing the work

Sustainability in Musical Inclusion projects matters. It matters for musical progression. It matters for personal development: there is little point in starting work with looked after children, for example, if we can only support them for a short project which stops when the money runs out. It matters for breaking the stereotype that the rich get 15 years of continuing provision; the poor get sporadic workshops.

But the reality of short-term project-based funding makes it difficult to build confident, planned exit strategies at funding application stage. It encourages any sustainability aspirations there might be to focus at the level of the organisation rather than on continuation of the work. (Of course, organisational sustainability also matters: without a stable organisation there's nothing to build the work on

or to provide the longevity needed for good strategic development). And it builds a mindset where organisations think sustainability isn't their responsibility, whether the funder has asked for it or not:

"I'm not sure whose responsibility sustainability is. Whose responsibility is hubs being sustained? Is musical inclusivity sustainable?"

For many, sustainability simply means more funding:

"Some part of sustainability might be looking for more funding and is that sustainable in itself, yes and no. Yet funding from somewhere is part and parcel of the work – from hubs, our own Youth Music bids, funding from local colleges, PRUs."

A more strategic approach encourages others to take up the work – ensuring inclusion is written into hub plans, embedding it at local level, foregrounding musical inclusion with non- music specialist workforces.

Soundstorm – in working across the wide area of rural Dorset – need partners. So they support them to embed inclusion in their own practice. At the same time, they are developing clear evidence of the impact of their work, which they think is key to ensuring their and their partner's sustainability.

The Harry S Truman gambit (you can achieve anything you want if you don't mind who gets the credit) relies on good facilitation skills and a parking of ego:

An organisation is developing a method to mitigate conflicts of interest between a hub lead and partner providers by taking a more facilitative, objective approach: being upfront about conflicts of interest (real or perceived) and working together to find methods that'll help avoid them.

What's needed? All projects (or nearly all) should develop a plan – a realistic, strategic, plan – for sustainability right at the start, which is progress-chased thereafter. A plan that's deliverable, not just aspirational. That isn't just about more funding, but is itself properly funded – there is a case to be made for funding fewer sustainable projects over a larger number of less-sustainable ones. "Nearly" all projects? There might be a few examples of work that is not sustainable or should not be sustained.

Documentation and sharing

Community music is still a relatively young profession, and the application of its values and pedagogy within for-

mal music education is younger still. Its practitioners tend themselves to be informally trained, and much formal training is (justifiably) practice- not theory-based. One upshot of all of this is that there is a tendency for practice not to be well documented, and consequently less shared – hence either perpetually reinvented from scratch, or simply lost.

This is inefficient at best, unprofessional at worst. It doesn't have to be like that; at its best, documentation and sharing can be central to making, codifying, then progressing meaning in what we do.

What's needed? Strategy development, shared understanding of musical quality, practice development, advocacy and much more – all require more and better documentation and sharing. Because communities of practice take time to build, existing ones need to be sustained beyond the lifetime of their funded programme so that future funding strands can take advantage of them – for example, Youth Music should consider building a mandatory documentation and sharing element into its funding offers. And Youth Music and Sound Sense (as the relevant professional association) should continue to advocate for the benefits of documenting and sharing practice both for managers and practitioners.

Case study

Write it, share it

Jack Sibley, from Music Pool, Hereford, found documenting, and then sharing, his own practice allowed him to improve it. “Writing the piece ‘*Tackling rural isolation through centralised provision*’ allowed me to reflect on the history of the project and the decisions taken by the previous manager. It forced me to create a structure in which I could clarify and also summarise these ideas.”

But the real value was in sharing his documentation. Sibley found the responses he received “fascinating. I found out that there were many projects across the country dealing with precisely the same issues. In particular, I entered into an interesting discussion with Ayvin Rogers of B-Sharp in Lyme Regis in which we talked about the importance of partnerships and his feeling that it is important to spread a project around as large a geographical area as possible. The latter of these was an opinion that made me think about the way our heavily

centralised project was set up and his comments have influenced how I will run our project in the future.”

Sibley has also benefited from reading others’ documented practice: “I’ve been particularly interested in the discussion on how to avoid being intrusive when collecting sensitive personal data. It’s great that we are able to hear opinions from people working in various capacities; project managers and funders. Kathryn Deane’s comments represent a particularly interesting stance that I think it would be hard to access without this facility.”

Another project overcomes the usual cries about lack of time for documentation by making it mandatory: musicians working with Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust have to write regular blogs as part of their contract to deliver Musical Inclusion work. “It is very much now a valuable part of my work,” says musician Julie Wright.



The role of the funder

Funders are in positions of power over their grantees. They therefore have responsibilities to ensure a grantee knows (in the terminology of Tom Gilbert's *Human competence*) what to do, why, and to what standard. Three actions flow from this. First, a funder must design a clear programme, no more complicated than it must be, that can be readily understood. Second, it should take the time to ensure the grantee does understand the programme – not all Musical Inclusion projects did.

Third, it should not be frightened to assume its position as manager of the programme. This last is important: where a “staff team” is as big as in Musical Inclusion – 26 strong – appropriate management is needed to ensure perfectly legitimate control of what the projects are doing, offering managerial support where it is needed. Projects mostly tell us they prefer hands-off outcomes-based funding to quasi-contract funding agreements. And that they need to react to local conditions. Of course they do, but “appropriate” management isn't about centralised whip-cracking but about support.

Management in partnership

Good management is authoritative not authoritarian; collaborative not impositional. There's no shortage of management books to tell you this – but they mostly boil down to tried and tested practices. First, Tom Gilbert's three questions in pursuit of “improving performance”:

- Do organisations (and individuals) in the programme know what they are supposed to do, to what standard and why?
- Are they motivated to do it?
- Are they enabled to do it by the provision of resources, skill development and support?

Second, Tom Peters and Robert Waterman (*In search of excellence*) write about tight-loose leadership. Management should be clear and demanding – “tight” – about the values underpinning its programme, what it wants to get from a job, who it wants to do that job. Then it can be “looser” around controls – reporting, inspection.

Funders running programmes of work delivered by a number of their funded organisations are in the same position as the managers of any team of contractors. And they may find it helpful to adopt management practices such as those above.

Such a model of funded-programme management is far removed from any quasi-contract funding system. It is certainly applicable to at least some funders, who can clearly be authoritative – from many years’ knowledge of thousands of funded projects, their often-unique understanding of the national environment and of a wide range of stakeholders. Who can be collaborative – sharing their vision of the goals for a programme as a whole and supporting their funded projects to deliver their contributions while all parties develop and share learning. Who can be tight in its specification of the job to be done and selection criteria for successful applications. And who can ensure that Gilbert’s three questions are answered positively.

Publicly-funded funders such as Youth Music may have constraints that may make this model more, or less, adoptable. (And we had no brief to explore the funding or management structures for hubs themselves – but the same issues would appear to be universal to any “programme that is to be delivered by multiple funded projects” including the funding and management of hubs by Arts Council England.)

What’s needed? A clearer model for managing a programme that is to be delivered by multiple funded projects. It would start with a crystal-clear exposition of the work to be done the outcomes to be achieved, and tight criteria for acceptable deliverers. Assessment would be rigorous and may include interview to ensure applicants really understood the work to be done. The programme would be managed as a partnership of the funder and the grantees (together with – and we appreciate we would say this wouldn’t we – evaluators and a practice-sharing editor), with the funder responsible for ensuring not only that projects stayed on track, but also that they were supported as necessary to deliver great performance.

Closing

The research

Our research into Musical Inclusion includes both evaluation and face to face and online practice-sharing. Our work started in early 2013 and runs until mid-2015, and is focused on six main topics, or “evaluation objectives:” musical quality and inclusivity; developing partnerships between formal and non-formal organisation in music education hubs; sustainability; fundee’s attitudes to funders and funding; the role and potential for national networking; and workforce development.

Our main evaluation method is structured interviews, by telephone or face to face: we plan to see each project twice; and we are currently over a third of the way through our second visits. Data analysis follows standard practice: data transcribed onto interview schedules then analysed first by evaluation objective; within that by interview question; and then finally for themes and patterns.

We have carried out two face to face day-long meetings or “gatherings” (three more are scheduled) for the projects. We curate online blogs and

forums, and help create practice-sharing documentation from them. We have offered the projects various forms of “critical friend” support, and plan on doing more. All of these are learning activities – for us as much as the projects and so all inform our findings.

We follow standard ethical procedures for the collection of data from individuals, in particular to “do no harm.” We gain informed consent from interviewees before starting an interview; and we ensure anonymisation unless we have specific permission otherwise. Data which can identify individuals is held securely by the team and not used for other purposes.

We declare conflicts of interest. Team members have are or may be working for a number of the Musical Inclusion grantholders or for Youth Music. Team members know about such work, and are free to challenge each other to ensure objectivity and anonymity are maintained. Kathryn Deane runs Sound Sense, the professional association for community musicians and so has a particular interest in non-formal music education.



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Sound Sense

Sound Sense is the UK professional association for community musicians.

It leads this Musical Inclusion evaluation team

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