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Exploring the feasibility of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme for a South African university

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Abstract

In this study, I aimed to discover the potential avenues within the context of an EI Sistema-inspired community music programme, particularly when integrated with an urban residential tertiary institution in South Africa. The objectives of this study were to identify the necessary physical and human resources for initiating an EI Sistema-inspired community music programme, to explore the adaptation of such a programme to suit the country's distinctive cultural context, and to elucidate the music education opportunities it could extend to the youth in South Africa.

Utilising a qualitative multiple case study methodology, the research sought a comprehensive understanding of the potential implementation of an impactful community music initiative. In the role of a researcher, I functioned rather as an observer than an active participant in the unfolding of the research process. Insights were derived from interviews with both international experts in the EI Sistema approach and local practitioners in community music settings, facilitating an in-depth comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation.

Three main themes emerged from data analysis namely collaboration, sustainability, and development of human potential. Interpreting the data revealed that these three themes are interconnected factors that set off a chain reaction, ultimately culminating in the success of a community music programme. Several subthemes evolved, such as crossing cultural barriers through music, integrating community music with tertiary music studies to develop teaching skills, contributing towards skills development for both community youth members and tertiary music students, as well as the wellbeing and upliftment of the broader community. In conclusion, this research underscores the intricate interplay of collaboration, sustainability, and human potential development as essential components for the success of an EI Sistema-inspired community music programme in South Africa, shedding light on the transformative impact such an initiative may exert on individuals, communities, and the broader cultural fabric.

Keywords

El Sistema, El Sistema-inspired, community music, music outreach programmes, marginalised communities, youth, sustainability, South Africa, community upliftment, integration

List of acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Full term
TED	Technology, Entertainment and Design
STTEP	(Three organisations were involved in this project, from there the acronym STTEP) S AMET (South African Music Education Trust); T PO (Transvaal Philharmonic Orchestra); T shwane E ducation P roject.
JYOC	Johannesburg Youth Orchestra Company
MIAGI	Music Is A Great Investment
CiH	Cultures in Harmony
SINEM	Sistema Nacional de Educación Musical
MEP	Music Enlightenment Project
USA	United States of America

Notes to the reader

The main aim of El Sistema is to provide music education by teaching music in groups to youth members from marginalised communities. During the process of learning music in a group environment, the students also gain important social skills such as communication, teamwork, sharing, cooperation and collaboration in which all these skills are vital for a healthy individual and community. Both words El Sistema and El Sistema-inspired programme will be capitalised on in this thesis. El Sistema refers to the original community music programme founded in 1975 by José Antonio Abreu and still currently active in Venezuela. An El Sistema-inspired programme refers to a community music programme who utilises the same six philosophical principles of El Sistema in Venezuela but is based in a different country.

In this thesis, the terms 'programme', 'project' or 'music school' are used interchangeably. These words refer to a music institute where pupils / learners / students receive music tuition. In this thesis, the words mainly refer to a music institute situated in disadvantaged communities where music education also serves as a purpose to uplift communities and to provide meaningful activities.

'Youth members', 'community members', 'learners' and 'students' refer to individuals of any age from the community who receive music tuition at a community music programme. Most of the time, more children are involved in such music programmes, but it is open to anyone which means that there may be adults who participate.

In this thesis, the terms 'tertiary institute' and 'university' are used interchangeably. Both words refer to an establishment where students continue to study for career purposes after completing their high school graduation.

The spelling utilised in this thesis is Standard British English. Should a quote be utilised from authors or other countries such as the USA where another spelling format is used, the word will then maintain the spelling of its original source.

According to the guidelines provided by the School of the Arts at the University of Pretoria, I have used APA 7th referencing throughout the thesis. (See APA 7th website:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/reference-examples.pdf>)

The APA 7th style involves specific requirements, such as that the page number of a direct quote should be placed directly after the quoted text. This often leads to citations being split in sentences.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background to the study

Music has to be recognized as an agent of social development in the higher values: solidarity, harmony, mutual compassion. And it has the ability to unite an entire community and to express sublime feeling.

Jose Antonio Abreu¹

I have been a music educator in a low-income community of Tshwane for eight years, witnessing the great benefit of social inclusion and well-being that music can bring. I realised that children in this disadvantaged community have an inherent aspiration and thirst to be actively involved and to be part of something extraordinary. The community music centre where I taught on the outskirts of Pretoria was part of a government-funded initiative and contributed towards the growth of an enriched artistic culture in the broader community (Roué, 2017), resonating with the ideals of the El Sistema programme that originated in Venezuela (Carlson, 2016).

Internationally, El Sistema-inspired² programmes “are expanding and evolving in over sixty countries around the world” (Creech et al., 2016, p. 8). These include 26 European countries (Marcus, 2019), 20 countries in the Americas, and seven Asian countries (Sistema Global, n.d.). However, African countries have been slow to adopt this innovative community music initiative that can create a healthier and prospering community, especially in socially marginalised contexts (Osborne et al., 2016). Although many countries have implemented El Sistema-inspired programmes, Uy (2015) claims that, even with such positive results, few studies

¹ AZ Quotes

² The term ‘El Sistema’ refers to the original music outreach programme created by Abreu in Venezuela. ‘El Sistema-inspired’ refers to similar programmes established in other countries (Booth, 2017).

that include qualitative data have been conducted to trace the influence of these interventions on the broader community and the lives of individual youth participants.

El Sistema presents a striking example of what performing art can contribute to the well-being and healthy development of a community (Creech et al., 2014). Moreover, research indicates that extra-mural music activities can enhance cognitive development in children, especially if such children do not receive sufficient creative stimulation from schools in low-income communities (Hille & Schupp, 2015; Osborne et al., 2016). El Sistema-inspired music programmes have the potential to develop self-confidence, self-effectiveness, and act as a tool to enhance social skills in children (Hallam 2016). Campbell's (2017) research on El Sistema and similar programmes reveal how music not only creates the opportunity for community members to receive music education but also how music can be used as a tool to further holistic development in individuals. These aspects include "motivation, critical thinking and the joy of learning" (Campbell, 2017, p. 27).

During my years of teaching at the community music centre, it often came to my attention that all of us—learners and educators—had to adapt and make an effort to work together successfully, whether it concerned language or cultural differences. It became a learning curve to understand and communicate with each other successfully. Similarly, group music-making sessions in an El Sistema-inspired programme allow children to interact with each other and develop "intercultural acceptance, tolerance and understanding" (Voges, 2016, p. 87).

El Sistema deepens and expands. It has grown into the most extraordinary musical and educational movement I have ever seen, both because of the standards of musicianship it has achieved, the extent of the lives that are directly saved and enriched, and the vast

scale on which El Sistema now works - in Venezuela and now with an influence across the world.

(Sir Simon Rattle³)

El Sistema's musical growth and success in social change in underprivileged communities evoked attention from other countries who then started researching how to develop similar programmes in their own country (Borchert 2012; Govias 2011; Higgins 2012; Majino 2012; Roy, Devroop & Getz 2015; Tunstall 2012; Uy 2012). Booth and Tunstall's (2013) research reveals that a substantial number of El Sistema-inspired programmes started developing all over the world for the sake of social change through performing art in deprived communities. Countries with established El Sistema-inspired community music programmes include Argentina, Canada, England, France, Finland, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Uruguay, the United States of America, and Vietnam, only but to name a few (Booth & Tunstall, 2013). For these authors, El Sistema is not merely a system, but rather a philosophical approach to music education with six fundamental cores as guidelines for such community music programmes. Every programme is adaptable to each country's unique culture and environment but incorporates the six fundamental cores. These six principal cores include: i) music as a tool for social development, ii) all students of any age are welcome to join, iii) learning in ensembles is priority as this is where social skills are mostly developed, iv) commitment and consistency in music lessons, v) more advanced students teach younger students, and vi) it should be a safe and joyful educational environment (Tunstall & Booth, 2016).

On the Sistema Global website (n.d.), four established El Sistema-inspired programmes in South Africa are indicated namely the Miagi African Youth Ensemble in Soweto, the Manguang String Programme in the Free State, the

³ Simon Rattle: Abreu Deserves the Nobel Peace Prize | Classical Music | The Guardian, 2010.

Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra Education and Development programme, and Umculo in Cape Town. However, no residential programme in the administrative capital city of South Africa – near or in the inner city – is linked to El Sistema, an initiative that could enhance the lives of youth members in struggling communities within close vicinity to the campus of a university in this metropolitan city. Not only do El Sistema programmes “inspire children [...] to make music together while keeping them off the streets” (Lui, 2012, p. 31), they also touch the “social development goals of the community being served” (Silberman, 2013, p. 71). Therefore, this study may contribute to in-depth knowledge and understanding regarding the feasibility of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme at an urban South African university, and the way that such a programme may have to be adapted to the specific context.

Aims of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the feasibility of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme at an urban residential university in South Africa. I aimed to gain insight from international El Sistema founders who are experts⁴ in this field, as well as from founders and leaders of community music outreach projects in South Africa. Furthermore, I sought to identify the necessary physical and human resources to establish such a programme. Another aim was to unravel how such a programme could be suitably adapted for the unique context of a South African university. A final objective was to reveal the ways in which an El Sistema-inspired programme can offer music education opportunities to youth members from communities within close vicinity to a university campus.

⁴ An expert is “someone with the special skill or knowledge representing mastery of a particular subject” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Research questions

In this study, the main research question guiding this study was as follows:

What is the feasibility of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme for a South African university?

Secondary research questions to support the main question are:

- What physical and human resources will be required to establish an El Sistema-inspired programme at a South African university?
- How should an El Sistema-inspired programme be adapted to fit the unique context in South Africa?
- In what ways can an El Sistema-inspired programme offer music education opportunities to youth members from communities within close vicinity to a South African university campus?

In Table 1, key concepts used in this thesis are provided and explained.

Table 1: Key Concepts

El Sistema-inspired community music programmes	El Sistema-inspired programmes utilise the same philosophy as El Sistema in Venezuela. The guidelines for music programmes adopting the philosophy of El Sistema include teaching in groups, and a dedication from educators partaking in the programme to make a social change in communities through music - "the citizen artist" (Tunstall & Booth, 2016, p. 69). El Sistema-inspired programmes should be easily accessible and open to all members of the community (Creech et al., 2016). Moreover, El Sistema means inclusion at different levels, such as beginners as well as advanced learners, social
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	inclusion spanning different ethnical groups, thereby creating a sense of belonging through inclusion (Tunstall & Booth, 2016, p.92).
Community Development	Community development is the main aim of El Sistema and El Sistema-inspired programmes (Creech et al., 2016). Music can bring a community together through concerts or live music. Music diminishes social barriers and creates a sense of belonging. Music can have a positive effect from the beginning when children learn communication, listening and social skills (Meckelborg, 2017). Music education develops teamwork and other aspects of skills such as self-esteem, social skills, collaboration time management and multitasking (Heyworth, 2013).
Feasibility	A feasibility study aims to analyse all the critical elements to consider the possibility of succeeding in the project. It also determines any potential issues that could cause future problems (The Investopedia team, 2022). A feasibility study permits the researcher to obtain important information to conclude if the project is risky or not. A feasibility study permits to simulate a project (O’Cathain et al., 2015). The researcher would gather data by interviewing participants to have a better understanding and to be fully immersed in order to reach a conclusion.
Adopt and adapt	El Sistema is not merely a system but rather a philosophical outlook on music education. For Tunstall and Booth (2016), El Sistema is adapted to each country’s unique culture and environment. “El Sistema is a pedagogy of joy” (p. 300) where music education joins learning with inspiration. There are six El Sistema guidelines that El-Sistema-inspired programmes can follow so that they operate in line

	with the principles and practices of El Sistema in Venezuela (Tunstall & Booth, 2016).
Music education opportunities	Music education opportunities are one of the two main reasons for El Sistema and El Sistema-inspired programmes. These music programmes are generally situated in disadvantaged communities or within close vicinity (Booth and Tunstall, 2016). Most of these communities cannot financially afford music lessons nor are there any platforms (music schools) available in most of the deprived communities (Roué, 2017). El Sistema-inspired programmes could therefore provide meaningful activities to the communities (Creech et al., 2016). Simultaneously, music education develops many other important aspects of life such as personal development, social and learning skills Tunstall & Booth, 2016). Platforms like these also permit a community to be united and to form social networks that eventually foster the well-being of the community.

Research methodology

In Chapter 3, I describe and motivate the research approach, design, and data collection strategies in full. Additionally, I explain the data analysis method and ethical considerations. To find answers to the research question, I have selected a qualitative research approach since this will allow me to obtain more insight and a deeper level of understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Leavy, 2017; Nieuwenhuis, 2016). According to Nieuwenhuis (2016), qualitative research is based on open-ended interaction to explore and understand the attitudes, values and perceptions of individuals. Since my aim was to discover the perceptions and values of the founders of El Sistema-inspired music programmes, a qualitative research approach was appropriate to answer the

“where”, “what”, “how” and “when” aspects of such programmes (Berg, 2004, p. 2).

For this study, I selected a case study design to do social science research because it allowed me to focus on a “contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context” (Yin, 2009, p. 2). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) describe case study research as a qualitative investigation to generate a deep understanding of the research problem within a “bounded system” (p. 37). In a multiple case study, this involves “multiple bounded systems” (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 246). This design is specifically appropriate to gather social data for “viewing social reality” (Best & Kahn, 2014, p. 265) and to explore a unique phenomenon in depth. Each ‘case’ in a multiple case study research can be a place, a setting, or an institution (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). For this study, the multiple cases are represented by participants from both international and local settings. Extensive details with regard to the research approach, research design, sampling strategy, data collection, data preparation, method of data analysis, and research quality measures, follow in Chapter 3.

Delimitations of the study

The delimitations of any study involve two elements namely assumptions and limitations (Simon & Goes 2013). During the investigation period, I therefore relied on assumptions to be able to conduct the study by trusting the participants to provide trustworthy information. By assuming that the participants will provide honest answers, the thesis will conclude and validate the assumptions I made in this research proposal (Simon & Goes 2013).

Limitations of any study could be imposed because of the choice of the study design and methodology (Simon & Goes, 2013), for example, having a small group of interviewees for data collection. This can result in limiting the information sources which may influence the outcome of the study. Simon and Goes (2013) affirm that no study can be “proved” or “disproved” and that the outcome of the

research depends on the actual situation at that moment, as well as the research design and methodology. Each study has access to certain information, and certain people at that specific time of the study (Simon & Goes 2013).

Due to the location of the research participants – many of them international or in other parts of South Africa – as well as Covid-19 restrictions, I was not able to conduct face-to-face interviews and used the online platform Zoom. This may hamper the spontaneity of participants, also making it more difficult for me to note the body language or gestures used by participants to share their views.

Value of the study

This research study was about exploring the different possibilities of implementing an El Sistema-inspired programme at an urban South African residential university. An El Sistema-inspired programme provides educational value and meaningful music activities to a variety of communities within close vicinity of the university. El Sistema is based on ensemble learning which translates into engaging as many students as possible. Although there are some music programmes in the Gauteng region of South Africa, most are based on individual lessons. Since El Sistema focuses primarily on ensemble lessons where it permits students to interact and collaborate with one another, this accelerates personal and social development. The additional benefit of a residential tertiary institution involved in an El Sistema-inspired programme means operating on a platform where staff members from the university can recognise potential talent and motivate such community members to continue their studies in music at tertiary level. In this regard, young community members can be better prepared for entry at the university. Apart from retrieving potential students, the university would be associated with community development in its surroundings, thus providing educational opportunities in music to a broad spectrum of the community. Ultimately, the well-being of individuals and the community could improve as well as contribute towards the local music industry by recognising potential talent in the community. The benefits would therefore be

twofold where both the community and the university grow their human and educational potential.

Chapter outline

The outline of this thesis includes the following chapters:

Chapter 1, Introduction: This chapter provides a background to the study, situating the research problem in a South African context and motivating the need for the study. The research questions and aims are given, and the chapter ends with a brief description of the research methodology and value of the study.

Chapter 2, Literature Review: In this chapter, I present literature relevant to this study. The chapter highlights gaps in current literature to indicate how this research could add value to extend knowledge on the topic.

Chapter 3, Research Methodology: The outline of a mixed methods research strategy is motivated and explained. Additionally, the data collection methods and data analysis strategies are described.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis and Findings: This chapter presents the results of the study that emerged after data analysis. I explain the relevant themes and categories that emerged from the qualitative interview data.

Chapter 5 - Discussion and Recommendations for Future Research: I discuss the findings emerging from this study according to related research literature to interpret how it confirms or contrasts with existing research and extends the academic debate. The chapter concludes the thesis by presenting the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Introduction

Tunstall and Booth (2016) affirm that El-Sistema-inspired programmes are spreading worldwide at a fast rate. To prepare me to plan and conduct this study, I therefore made an intensive study of qualitative and quantitative research literature regarding El Sistema programmes, covering the origins, principles and aims of El Sistema. I also provided a review of literature on existing community music programmes in South Africa. Finally, the theoretical framework that underpins this study explains how transformative learning can be associated and relevant to community music programmes.

With the socio-economic background in South Africa, numerous marginalised communities suffer from the lack of quality education (Rodger, 2014). Music education is more accessible and better funded in wealthier communities (Swart, 2020), therefore, it is critical to explore how an El Sistema-inspired programme can be implemented in economically disadvantaged communities of an urban region in South Africa.

Devroop conducted extensive research on the impact of music on children from impoverished communities (Swart, 2020). His research concludes that children or people who receive music education, tend to endure positive personal transformations such as increased contentment, dedication and confidence. However, he suggests that additional research should be conducted in South Africa to stimulate more involvement in music education opportunities for the large percentage of the population living in impoverished communities. The concept is straightforward: involving children, families, and communities in collaborative efforts to create musical beauty can bring about profound positive transformations. Globally, socially conscious musicians are guiding young individuals facing challenges like poverty, marginalisation, and trauma, to engage in intensive ensemble music activities, fostering both discipline and delight. (Tunstall & Booth, 2016).

Researchers regard El Sistema-inspired music programmes, now internationally renowned, not only as an educational platform for music, but also as a social tool for community development (Creech et al., 2014). In this review, I present literature on the origin and aims of El Sistema as a global community music programme, as well as arguments against the system. Furthermore, the lack of music education, community music programmes, and extra-curricular activities for youth in South Africa are considered as key components that necessitated this study.

2.1 El Sistema: Origins, principles and aims

El Sistema, conceived by the visionary José Antonio Abreu (1939–2018), occupies a prominent position as a transformative community music initiative based in Venezuela. During the early 1970s, Abreu was Minister of Culture at a time when Venezuela's "professional orchestras were populated with foreign musicians" (Creech et al., 2016, p. 18). Viewing music education as a tool to surmount the drawbacks of discrimination and scarcity, Abreu's vision for El Sistema was to use music education as an agent of profound personal and communal metamorphosis, leading to significant government and private funding after claims of reduced "school dropout rates [and] youth violence" (Baker, 2016). For Abreu, musical engagement not only cultivated technical proficiency in learners but also engendered critical life skills encompassing discipline, collaborative prowess, creativity, and self-esteem, thereby facilitating comprehensive holistic development (Fancourt et al., 2016). Of particular significance is El Sistema's pedagogical approach grounded in ensemble dynamics (Merati et al., 2019). The El Sistema approach entails organising music students into diverse musical collectives, such as orchestras and choirs. These collectives transcend mere musical training, fostering collaborative performance experiences that extend beyond instrumental prowess, amplifying the notions of shared responsibility and collective accomplishment (MacDonald, 2013).

The fundamental objective of El Sistema as a prominent community music programme is to provide equitable access to music education and socio-cultural development for children, particularly those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. El Sistema is built on the premise that musical engagement cultivates traits such as discipline, collaborative aptitude, creativity, and self-esteem, thereby contributing to holistic development (Fancourt et al., 2016). A salient feature of the programme is its ensemble-based pedagogical approach. Participants are organised into ensembles, including orchestras and choirs, fostering collective music-making experiences that extend beyond individual instrumental proficiency (Merati et al., 2019). These ensembles serve as platforms for honing performance skills, enhancing accountability, and nurturing a sense of unity and responsibility within the group (Miell & MacDonald, 2000). El Sistema's operational framework includes the establishment of community music centres known as "nucleos" (Alemán et al., 2017). These nucleos function as hubs for music education, offering tuition-free learning opportunities and fostering a sense of inclusivity (Calabrese Barton & Tan, 2020). Particularly noteworthy is El Sistema's commitment to reaching marginalised communities, thereby mitigating social disparities through music education (Sánchez, 2018).

Extensive research underscores the program's manifold positive impacts (Cohen et al., 2018). Apart from musical skills, participants often exhibit heightened academic performance, enhanced interpersonal competencies, and augmented self-assurance (Creech et al., 2013). Moreover, numerous success stories underscore how graduates have translated their musical training into diverse career trajectories, reinforcing the program's efficacy (Díaz, 2015). El Sistema's influence transcends national boundaries, inspiring similar initiatives globally, termed "Sistema-inspired" programs (Bolden et al., 2021). These adaptations reflect the universality of El Sistema's principles and its capacity to address distinct social contexts.

In 2009, Abreu received the TED⁵ prize for a system he created to use music as a social tool to uplift disadvantaged communities and create hope for a better future (Uy, 2012).

Of paramount significance is the program's deliberate outreach to marginalised sectors of society, thereby ameliorating socioeconomic disparities through music education (Sánchez, 2018). Extending beyond national confines, El Sistema's influence resonates globally, serving as an impetus for analogous initiatives, termed "Sistema-inspired" programmes (Bolden et al, 2021). These adaptations exemplify the universality of El Sistema's foundational tenets and its capacity to accommodate variegated sociocultural contexts.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that El Sistema remains subject to critical discourse and inherent challenges (Puromies & Juvonen, 2020). Of note are contentions pertaining to potential predispositions towards orchestral paradigms, potentially marginalising alternative musical idioms, in addition to ongoing efforts required to ensure consistent quality and sustainable fiscal resources across disparate núcleos.

The core activities of El Sistema in Venezuela comprise various community-based music activities that form part of the national education system, each called a núcleo⁶ (Uy, 2012). Social inclusion takes prominence in each núcleo by joining people from different socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, and ethnic groups, where students attend music lessons every day for several hours. Some even continue over weekends (Booth & Tunstall, 2016). Many of these núcleos accept students as young as two years old with their parents so that the children may learn rhythm and the fundamentals of playing in ensembles. During their intensive study of El Sistema, Booth and Tunstall (2016) visited many núcleos in Venezuela, noting that many students, tutors, and directors have the following view: "El Sistema's goal is not to create musicians. It is to create successful,

⁵ Technology, Entertainment and Design.

⁶ The nucleos within each community are linked to a regional and national system forming a unity within the El Sistema programme (Govias 2011, p. 21).

happy, and good citizens” (Booth & Tunstall, 2016, p. 30). Most of these students who graduated from El Sistema do not become musicians, but it is the fundamental social and human development they undergo which will carry over into their quotidian lives. Booth and Tunstall note that students who do show potential and an interest in pursuing a career in music, have the opportunity to receive extensive training through El Sistema in preparation for them to become professional musicians. Many Venezuelan children have become members of high-level orchestras and the number of touring orchestras has augmented over the past years. The world-renowned Simón Bolívar orchestra remains the pinnacle of El Sistema and is an example of the highest achievement one can reach in El Sistema. Today, Venezuela acknowledges El Sistema as an educational system of “social action through music” (Baker, 2016, p. 11), striving towards improved quality of life for youth members who become part of ensemble groups and learn to play musical instruments as part of the programme (Ilari et al., 2016; Lorenzino, 2015). This allows individuals to prosper, develop social skills, as well as creating a space for culture, education and social cohesion (Osborne et al, 2016).

The premise of any El Sistema or El Sistema-inspired programme is that it establishes music ensembles or orchestras in deprived areas as one of many ways to uplift a community and to provide positive recreational activities for children (Baker, 2016) who would not normally have such opportunities (Creech et al., 2016). El Sistema is often misunderstood as a methodology for music (Creech et al., 2016); however, its main aim is to instil a sense of accomplishment and ambition in youth through music education and to bring about “positive social change” (p. 17) as well as “cognitive outcomes [...] new skills, [...] cultural capital, interpersonal bonds [...], shared goals, [...] mutual respect [and] rewards for excellence” (p. 23). Uy (2012) comments on how both a government and the local society’s perceptions of the arts play vital roles in ensuring the success of an El Sistema programme. Through intensive music training, social change within the community could be the key to a “healthier society” (Bernstein & Tunstall, 2013,

p. 67). Govias (2011) proposes the following five social principles underpinning El Sistema programmes:

- Social transformation: Music education is used as a tool to achieve social transformation;
- Ensembles: Making music in ensemble groups, for example in a choir or an orchestra, is a key aspect of El Sistema experiences;
- Frequency: Ensemble practising is a regular activity, occurring several times a week over an extended period;
- Accessibility: El Sistema is open and free to anyone; and
- Connectivity: El Sistema is an interactive program based on the nucleus within each community. The nucleus is linked to a regional and national system forming a “cohesive network of services and opportunities for students” (Govias, 2011, p. 21) who are part of the El Sistema programme.

The main focus of El Sistema or El Sistema-inspired programmes is the musical development and music education of children from disadvantaged communities (Uy 2012). Combined with music education, such programmes may enhance social inclusion and, driven by a common goal of music-making, give children and youth members a sense of purpose and belonging (Steele, 2017). Critical scholarly inquiry attests to the breadth of El Sistema's affirmative impacts (Cohen et al., 2018). Beyond musical acumen, participants routinely manifest pronounced enhancements in academic attainment, heightened interpersonal proficiencies, and augmented self-esteem (Creech et al., 2016). The narratives of numerous Sistema alumni further corroborate the transmutation of musical training into diverse vocational trajectories, underscoring the programme's efficacy in nurturing holistic development (Baker, 2016). Highly acclaimed musicians, such as conductor and violinist Gustavo Dudamel (Tunstall, 2012); Natalia Luis-Bassa, now conducting three English orchestras; flautist Pedro Eustache; violinist Edward Pulgar; violist Joen Vasquez (Sistema Global, n.d.);

and double bass player Edicson Ruiz – at a time the youngest member of the Berlin Philharmonic (Berliner Philharmoniker, n.d.); acknowledge El Sistema as a feasible option to promote music participation and youth development (Baker, 2016). Since El Sistema-inspired community music programmes are highly flexible, they can be successfully applied in countries other than Venezuela (Hulting-Cohen, 2012). Such projects in low-income communities around the world have shown significant efficacy (Dyck, 2015).

2.2 Participatory music-making and social inclusion of youth

Tunstall and Booth (2016) argue that many welfare programmes do not always fully accomplish positive social impact and personal transformation, but that programmes linked to music education, such as El Sistema, can achieve these outcomes. Music transmits important life skills, strengthens confidence, and improves behaviour, which help children to overcome difficult situations and life conditions in disadvantaged communities. These authors' view is that individuals spearheading El Sistema programmes see themselves as participants in a global network that holds a straightforward yet powerful belief; through prolonged engagement in collaborative music-making, children can rise above challenges, cultivate empathy, and become active, constructive members of society. By dedicating hours to learning and creating music, youngsters acquire the capacity to make life choices that might otherwise be inaccessible in their circumstances. In this way, they contribute significantly to the improvement and enhancement of their communities. (Tunstall & Booth, 2016).

Tunstall and Booth's (2016) research indicate that social exclusion is one of the most damaging aspects to a person's emotional well-being. Where the feeling of exclusion can reinforce the notion of rejection and create the self-perception of being "no one" (p. 95), communal music-making provides a platform where youth members can experience a sense of belonging and of being accepted in a social context; a crucial part of becoming balanced and healthy individuals (Hall et al.,

2019). These authors suggest that El Sistema can create such experiences for children and individuals in low-income communities.

El Sistema prioritises inclusivity by welcoming children and individuals, even those with behavioural challenges. This approach aligns with the recognition that a fundamental motivation for the formation of gangs in poverty-stricken areas is the psychological drive to belong to a group (Booth & Tunstall, 2016). Consequently, El Sistema programs adopt an open-door policy, refusing no one, thereby fostering a sense of belonging, inclusion, and acceptance among students.

Central to El Sistema's philosophy is the emphasis on group tuition, rooted in the belief that collective learning accelerates personal and social development more effectively than individual music lessons. By focusing specifically on group instruction, El Sistema aims to create an environment that not only imparts musical education but also nurtures social bonds, contributing to the holistic development of its participants.

According to Booth and Tunstall (2016), social exclusion is a complicated paradox that cannot be easily resolved. These authors explain that, to successfully change individuals from feeling like “no one” to “someone” is a complex “internal psychic” (p. 98) change that needs to take place before there can be any positive results. Over many hours, weeks, months, and years of music-making in group sessions at El Sistema, these researchers found that students slowly change their “habits of mind and heart” (p. 98) and gradually transform into prosperous and happy individuals. By accepting everyone to participate in ensembles at El Sistema, social inclusion is present and can provide opportunities for the community to gather, to form social bonds, and to create a sense of belonging (Garbutt, 2009). A large social group tend to nurture social relationships requiring people to interact with one another which may “dampen the effect of disadvantage or social exclusion” (Garbutt, 2009, p. 86). Research provides evidence that active involvement in group music activities has a positive

impact on children and youth, especially in socially marginalised communities (Osborne et al., 2016), and social inclusion and cohesion are part of the broader objectives of music education (Lindgren et al., 2016). In addition to supporting community members through music education, El Sistema-inspired projects assist in breaking segregation barriers and social exclusion, circumstances often found in dense megalopolis areas (Rimmer et al., 2014). The El Sistema ethos suggests that music education opportunities for community youth members acknowledge student accomplishment, enhance prosocial behaviour and collaboration, accept different cultures, develop partnerships with family members, and nurture mutual respect, tolerance, accountability, and social inclusion (Osborne et al., 2016).

Children and teenagers show significant development in “cognitive, motor and socio-emotional development” (Ilari et al., 2016, p.36) when they are involved in music-making activities (Hallam, 2016; Schellenberg, 2011). Osborne et al. (2016) emphasise that the focus of El Sistema is to provide opportunities for music-making to children from marginalised areas, thereby providing an inclusive and mentored environment where children can enjoy and learn music. With these factors in place, El Sistema programmes offer children opportunities to develop self-esteem, build confidence and experience a sense of belonging (Osborne et al., 2016). Due to the global decline of music education in schools (Aróstegui, 2016; Ilari et al., 2016; Jacobs, 2010), an El Sistema programme may provide music education opportunities to youth members from marginalised communities in South Africa. However, there is a paucity of research on the feasibility of an El Sistema-inspired music programme at a South African university.

2.3 Critique against El Sistema

The El Sistema programme has not been immune to scrutiny and challenges (Puromies & Juvonen, 2020). Criticisms centre on potential biases toward orchestral music, potentially neglecting other genres, and concerns about maintaining consistent quality and financial sustainability across nuclei.

Literature on El Sistema, at times, makes unconfirmed statements to inflate positive claims of its role in providing social justice (Booth, 2011; Govias, 2011), for example, Tunstall's (2012) assertion that the "fundamental mission of El Sistema is not only to help children but often, literally, to rescue them" (p. xii). Baker (2016) argues that the original aim of El Sistema in Venezuela was not necessarily to uplift communities in deprived areas but to expand the classical music platform within Venezuela. In his view, the notion of "social action" and "social inclusion" (p. 10) linked to the El Sistema programme only developed at a later stage and targeted deprived areas in Venezuela. Baker (2016) argues that the Venezuelan programme creates a "gap between rich and poor" by paying high salaries to members of international ensembles in the country, such as the Simon Bolivar Orchestra, while local children's orchestras suffer "considerable hardship" (p. 18). Baker (2016) views El Sistema as modelling a "society of extreme inequalities" (p. 18) and that programmes show a "high dropout rate and a failure to target the poor effectively" (Baker 2018, p. 161), aspects that have to be critically examined to appropriate and contextualise such an initiative for a South African university.

Another critique is the absence of assessment of students' music development while being involved in El-Sistema-inspired projects (Majno 2012). Baker (2016), Booth (2011), and Govias (2011), suggest that El Sistema programmes can create false hope in participants with promises that the skills they acquired will ensure them appointment as professional musicians.

A justified argument against El Sistema programme is that the emphasis is on classical music, catering mostly for the elite despite many other musics that resonate with youth members who are part of the programme (Campbell, 2017; Dobson, N., 2016; El Pedroza, 2015; Frega, 2019; Goesch, 2020; Lui, 2012). However, several El Sistema-inspired music programmes in South Africa have adapted their choice of repertoire, including the Bochabela String Orchestra that regularly performs "a wide variety of music from baroque to traditional and popular African music" (Music in Africa, n.d., par. 1).

In the United Kingdom, El Sistema-inspired projects often target schools in deprived areas, thereby stigmatising such programmes as aimed at lower-class communities rather than establishing programmes independently, irrespective of class or income. Bull (2016) argues that these programmes concentrate more on social outcomes while El Sistema in Venezuela focuses more on the level and outcome of the music skills gained by participants. This author mentions that classical music – often taught at El Sistema-inspired projects – is more present in the culture of middle-class populations, and questions the effectiveness of classical music in low-income communities. While middle-class communities tend to project themselves in the future and positively view long-term investments such as youth members learning to play musical instruments, labour hardship in low-income communities makes future vision and investment difficult (Skeggs, 2010). Baker (2016) notes that “there has been a surge of Sistema-inspired advocacy symposia, but a lack of corresponding academic events” (p. 12). It is therefore imperative that any new El Sistema or El Sistema-inspired programme is thoroughly researched and motivated before inception to ensure that it is adequately adapted to suit the needs of the community where it is intended to function.

However, Booth and Tunstall (2016) explain that the philosophy of El Sistema is to utilise music as a tool for social change in communities where attention is needed. Low-income communities mostly do not have the financial ability to pay for extramural activities such as one can find in wealthier communities. Dalisay (2018) explains that the aim of El Sistema is to provide free music education to those who cannot otherwise afford it. El Sistema is of course open to anyone but is mostly based in deprived communities to provide easy access for community members. Most of the members do not have the financial capabilities to pay for transport if the music centre is far and out of reach. Dalisay (2018) maintains that “crime, school dropout rates and delinquency” is more prominent in impoverished communities and would therefore be more rationale to offer music education to provide comfort and assistance through music to members in difficult circumstances.

Geoffrey Baker, a music lecturer at Royal Holloway University, criticised El Sistema and stated that it is considered as a “cult, mafia and corporation” in its own country, Venezuela (Ellis-Petersen, 2014). Baker also discloses that more of the middle-class communities benefitted from El Sistema rather than the deprived communities as El Sistema claims. However, writer and musician Reynaldo Trombetta, a former student of El Sistema, counteracted the allegations of Baker. Trombetta confirms that more than two million children from impoverished communities in Venezuela have been participating. Parents are desperate for their children to participate in El Sistema to avoid the negative influence of drugs or crime (Ellis-Petersen, 2014). Marshall Marcus, former head of music at the Southbank Centre and now the chair of Sistema Europe supports Trombetta and adds that no figures have thus far been available to prove that El Sistema serves the middle-class communities rather than deprived communities.

El Sistema breaks the vicious circle [of poverty] because a child with a violin starts to become spiritually rich [...] thanks to El Sistema, art is no longer a monopoly of elites but rather a right for all the people. (José Antonio Abreu, 1975)

Regardless of the critique towards El Sistema, this approach is clearly expanding worldwide at a fast rate and provides distinct evidence of the successful social impact music can have on communities (Booth & Tunstall, 2016). El Sistema roused attention from all corners of the world that recognises the remarkable social change music could have on economically challenged communities. With the overwhelming success in uplifting communities all over the world, El Sistema programmes should be able to overcome all criticism and rectify eventual weaknesses (Booth & Tunstall, 2016). However, it remains paramount that any forthcoming El Sistema or El Sistema-inspired initiative undergoes meticulous research and thoughtful consideration prior to its initiation. This careful examination is essential to ascertain its suitability and effective adaptation to meet the unique needs of the community it aims to serve.

2.4 Extra-curricular activities for South African youth

Graham et al. (2019) stress the importance of “co-curricular and enrichment programmes in [...] arts and culture, [...] after formal school hours to [...] inspire learners and develop their talents and potential future careers” (pp. 43-44). These authors advise that such programmes should be driven by different spheres, including governmental and private sectors. In a South African context, educational programmes aimed at youth are especially relevant since a third of the population between the ages of 15–24 are not employed, neither are they attending school nor receiving any other education or training (Cassim & Oosthuizen, 2014; Graham & De Lannoy, 2016). Moreover, youth members in this age group are “arguably the most vulnerable to chronic unemployment and poverty as well as to social exclusion” (Graham & De Lannoy, 2016, par. 8). Participation in extra-curricular activities assists youth members “in gaining experience, trying out new skills, and facilitating personal development and identity formation” (Graham, 2019, par. 19). Research studies also reveal that youth members attach special value to music-making. Therefore, it is important to explore the feasibility of an El Sistema-inspired programme for a South African university, and the possible educational and recreational opportunities it may provide for community youth members.

2.4.1 Lack of equal music education in South Africa

There is a large portion of the population in South Africa struggling with poverty, exposure to crime, and a lack of structural development (Swart, 2020). Limited education opportunities hamper children’s identity formation (De Lannoy et al., 2015). These authors argue that children and youth in struggling communities often have to deal “with an uncertain future characterised by persistent poverty, inequality and violence” (p. 21). Youth from economically challenged communities are continuously experiencing social inequalities that lead to academic failure, discouragement, and poor employment, therefore, involvement in additional education may lead to employment opportunities for these young

adults, in turn fostering their hope for a better future. De Lannoy et al. (2015) stress the importance of implementing mediating programmes to help South African youth flourish during crucial stages of their coming of age; from childhood to adolescence and from youth to adult.

Since the democratic elections in 1994 in South Africa, the struggle to equalise education – and especially music education – is still in a developmental stage (Drummond, 2014; De Villiers, 2017). Various steps were taken by the South African Department of Education to ensure an inclusive education system, providing equal education opportunities for all South African children as well as including music and the arts from primary to secondary school level (DoE, 2003; DoBE, 2011). However, several researchers over the past two decades found that few South African teachers received the necessary training to fulfil the complex skills and knowledge required to be able to teach a specialised subject such as music (De Villiers, 2017; Drummond, 2014; Herbst et al., 2005; Jacobs, 2010; Lategan, 2015; Russell-Bowie, 2010). In their view, the results of inadequate preparation of teachers for a new and challenging curriculum led to inefficient teaching that failed to provide the learners with solid musical knowledge. It is evident that it can lead these teachers to feel inadequate and uncertain when teaching class music (Cloete & Delport, 2015). Cloete and Delport (2015) describe how this dilemma can lead to unequal music education in South Africa. Most deprived communities are underfunded and can be inclined to poor music education in contrast to bountiful communities who are able to afford “qualified music educators”. Drummond (2014) notes that there is a strong willingness in South African teachers to use music as a “tool for social change” (p. 182). Moreover, she argues that many teachers desire their learners to learn from each other’s cultures through music, thereby developing mutual respect and tolerance, aspects that resonate with an El Sistema-inspired programme.

Considering the socio-economic background of South Africa, many communities suffer from low income and a lack of structural development, thus can El Sistema-inspired programme be considered as a suitable and a much-needed institution

(Cheteni et al., 2019). It can potentially provide emotional relief and social skills to overcome difficult situations and carry out better life decisions for their future (Booth & Tunstall, 2016).

2.4.2 Community music programmes in South Africa

Although there are several outreach music programmes in the country, these initiatives are randomly assigned to communities and are not coordinated nationally (Voges, 2016). Voges emphasises the critical importance of creating ensembles in low-income South African communities but argues that they are often not sustainable in terms of funding or providing music educators to teach the youth members on a long-term basis. Therefore, the proposed research may lead to an understanding of how a music outreach programme for a South African university – with an established infrastructure and a campus in close vicinity to marginalised youth – may offer sustainability and lasting continuation.

In the following paragraphs, six established community music programmes in South Africa are described. The last five of these – Miagi, Manguang strings, Johannesburg Youth Orchestra, Umculo and Music Enlightenment Project– are listed on the El Sistema Global website (n.d.).

Buskaid, a world-renowned community music strings programme in Soweto, Johannesburg, was established in 1997 by British viola player Rosemary Nalden. (Buskaid, n.d.). This programme gives youth members from Soweto the opportunity to learn classical stringed instruments “virtually free of charge” (Buskaid, 2019). Moreover, it has transformed the lives of numerous young people as well as producing musicians of international quality.

Miagi, an acronym for ‘Music Is A Great Investment’, was founded in 2001 and supported financially by the Department of Arts and Culture (Miagi, n.d.). This El Sistema-inspired music centre was established in Soweto, Johannesburg, giving young South Africans the opportunity to develop their music skills to harness new

visions for their lives. However, no research on this community music project has been published.

The Manguang String Programme in the Bochabela suburb of the Free State provides “extra-curricular instrumental tuition” (Cloete, 2006, p. 17) to children and youth in the community. Peter Guy initiated this programme in 1998 with the vision to make music education available to underprivileged communities in the area (Cloete, 2006). Beginners have music lessons during the mornings while the more advanced pupils receive specialised lessons from University of the Free State staff members in the afternoons. Structured on a similar basis to El Sistema in Venezuela, the Manguang programme is ensemble-orientated; four of the five orchestras are aimed at younger learners who work towards admission in the senior orchestra called the Bochabelo String Orchestra and consist of high school learners and university students (Bochabela String Orchestra, n.d.).

The Johannesburg Youth Orchestra Company (JYOC) was established in 2000 as a non-profit organisation. Apart from its strive for excellence and international recognition, the company reached out to low-income communities involving twelve schools and 7600 learners and experienced a growth of 400% in audience members (JYOC, n.d.). However, the funding of music education to learners from marginalised communities remains a challenge (Voges, 2016).

Umculo – a community music project in Cape Town – is a direct inspiration of the original El Sistema in Venezuela (Creech et al., 2014). Their vision is reflected in the Xhosa word ‘umculo’ which refers to both “art music and reconciliation” (umculo.org, par. 1). The project was founded by Shirley Apthorp to provide training in classical voice to youth members from the community and since 2010, they have produced ten operas (Classical:Next, 2019).

Music Enlightenment Project – In 2009, Adeyemi Oladiran launched a community music programme called the Music Enlightenment Project (MEP) in the Braamfontein neighbourhood of Johannesburg (Booth & Tunstall, 2016). Oladiran explains that there are “many mixed populations of Africans from many

other countries” (Booth & Tunstall, 2016, p. 355) and envisioned to create a platform to bring them together through music. In 2011, a friend informed Oladiran about El Sistema and he was instantly inspired. Within two years, Oladiran partnered with a school and commenced a youth orchestra which is still active to date.

The six community programmes described above are close to major cities in South Africa, including Cape Town, Bloemfontein, and Johannesburg. However, limited research on these projects has been conducted. Additionally, programmes for youth music development in Pretoria – the administrative capital of South Africa – are sparse (Roué, 2017; Swart, 2020). Although the Gauteng Department of Education’s Magnet school in Mamelodi is still functioning (Roué 2017), some parts of the Unisa Music Foundation Project in Soshanguve (Swart, 2020) were not sustainable over the long term. The STTEP⁷ music school – launched in 1995 and originally funded by Mercedes Benz – was first established at the State Theatre in Pretoria (van Niekerk & Salminen, 2008). This project was accommodated at the Groenkloof campus of the University of Pretoria from 2003 until 2008, but unfortunately had to dissolve as it was no longer sustainable. However, no music staff or students from the university were involved. It is therefore critical to explore the feasibility and potential of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme that may be operated in collaboration with the music division of one of the largest residential universities in the country.

2.4.3 The global development of El Sistema

El Sistema deepens and expands. It has grown into the most extraordinary musical and educational movement I have ever seen, because of the standards of musicianship it has achieved, the

⁷ The acronym STEPP stands for the first letters of the following organisations: SAMET (South African Music Education Trust); TPO (Transvaal Philharmonic Orchestra); and the Tshwane Education Project.

extend of the lives that are directly saved and enriched, and the vast scale on which El Sistema now works – in Venezuela and now with an influence across the world.

Sir Simon Rattle (Vulliamy, 2010, p. 2)

El Sistema is growing worldwide at a fast rate. By the end of the twentieth century, EL Sistema was expanding across Latin America and by the beginning of the twenty-first century, numerous countries recognised the inspiration and successful social development of El Sistema contribution towards deprived communities (Booth & Tunstall, 2016). Results of a study on El Sistema in Venezuela, analysing the impact of classical music on low-income communities, indicate a significant decrease of drop-out and criminality rates, an investment delivering a fruitful and positive turnover (Dyck, 2015).

According to the collaborative research of Creech et al. (2014), there are 300 El Sistema-inspired projects spread over 55 countries. Countries include France, Spain Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, Vietnam, Canada, Australia, Austria, Argentina, Guatemala, and Germany, only but to name a few (Sistema Global 2020). In April 2015, a conference dedicated to the El Sistema initiative promulgated critical thinking about El Sistema experiences and policies. Speakers from across the globe were present such as Gustavo Borchert who conducted research on El Sistema-inspired programmes in Scotland and Sweden.

In **Scotland**, El-Sistema-inspired programmes have been implemented with the main focus of “changing lives through music” (Allan, 2010, p. 114). This orchestral programme called “Big Noise, Sistema Scotland”, was initiated in 2008 with three hours of lessons per week combined with extra activities after school. Campbell (2010) claims that inclusive education in deprived areas could contribute towards cultural awareness amongst each other. The main aim of Big Noise Scotland is to create social inclusion through music within a community and to identify potential talent. In this way, the project in Scotland imitates El Sistema in

Venezuela by uplifting a low-income community through music (Allan, 2010, p. 119). “Big Noise”, noticed the positive changes of their students and specifically the development of social transformation such as communication, team effort and a sense of belonging.

In **Sweden**, several cities such as Gothenburg, Stockholm and Malmö introduced El Sistema music programmes (Lindgren, Bergman & Saether, 2016, p. 78) with the aim of creating social inclusion, social development and multicultural gatherings. Research indicates that these initiatives opened-up possibilities for the holistic development of communities through music programmes.

In **Australia**, music programmes were initiated at two primary schools in low socio-economic communities following the moral ethics value of El Sistema in Venezuela (Osborne et al., 2016, p. 157). These music lessons are open to all community members and therefore, student selections and auditions are superfluous. The aim of these music programmes are to create social cohesion, to initiate a sense of belonging for the participating children, and to promote multicultural interaction that develops tolerance and team building. Campbell's (2017) research conducted at these two primary schools reveals positive results, indicating that the children who were part of the research presented improved literacy and mathematical skills, and developed a better mind-set at school (Campbell, 2017, p. 28). Apart from the aim to create social development in communities through music at these schools, the high-quality music tuition students receive allow them to master an instrument, which could open career possibilities for their futures (Osborne et al., 2016, p. 170).

In **England**, the Department of Education and Arts Council allocate funding to six El Sistema-inspired initiatives known as 'In Harmony Sistema England.' The primary objective of these projects, as outlined by Rimmer, Street, and Phillips (2014), is to enhance deprived communities both socially and politically while elevating the cultural value. Renowned musician Julian Lloyd Webber, serving as the chairperson of 'In Harmony,' ardently encourages youth participation,

emphasising its potential for positive individual transformation, particularly in economically challenged regions such as Liverpool, Norwich, and Lambeth (Burns & Bewick, 2016).

Creech's research (2014) substantiates the impact of 'In Harmony's' orchestral programmes, emphasising the provision of structural security, cultural persistence, and a platform for mutual learning among children. Group music-making within the project fosters teamwork, positive group identity, and opportunities for ensemble playing, enriching the children's experiences (Campe & Kaufman, 2013; Smithurst, 2011). In Elswick, England, a deprived community has embraced the El Sistema programme within one of its local schools, implementing it during school hours to ensure comprehensive involvement from pupils to staff members. Elswick's adaptation is emblematic of a holistic approach, ensuring that all children benefit from the programme. Initially established as an 'In Harmony' project, Sistema in Norwich, launched in 2009, received central funding from the Department for Education and the Arts Council. Research on this initiative reveals the significant role of music in fostering familial connections, as children learning to play instruments receive acknowledgment and emotional involvement from their parents. Additionally, the opportunity for these children to showcase their musical talents within their community further underscores the programme's impact (Rimmer, Street & Phillips, 2014). These authors suggest that organisations overseeing these El Sistema-inspired programmes engage selected schools in England based on specific criteria related to financial status, health, and education.

In the **United States of America** (USA), there are over 60 El Sistema-inspired programmes based in low-income communities in various areas, including Los Angeles, Massachusetts, Cleveland, and Utah (Hulting-Cohen, 2012). Due to each American State's cultural background and general setup, the programmes may vary from each other (Osborne et al., 2016, p. 166). Most of the El Sistema-inspired music programmes in the United States are supported by orchestras dedicated to community growth (Hulting-Cohen 2012). Some well-known

orchestras, such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra, contribute towards community service by offering El Sistema-inspired programmes to vulnerable communities. Moreover, study programmes have been created in the USA to provide opportunities for performers and teachers to study the El-Sistema system in Venezuela with the aim that participants implement similar programmes on their return (Campbell, 2017).

In **Costa Rica**, Central America, an El Sistema programme called SINEM (Sistema Nacional de Educación Musical), was introduced i) to further music education in deprived communities, ii) to use music as a tool of social change and iii) to create opportunities for those who live in remote areas (Rosabal-Coto, 2016). Financially maintained by the government, SINEM accommodates about seven thousand students nationwide. According to Rosabal-Coto (2016), insufficient research has been conducted on the impact of these programmes in Costa Rica.

More countries in Central America such as **El Salvador**, **Guatemala** and **Honduras** have also launched El Sistema-inspired programmes in rural areas (Booth & Tunstall, 2016). El Salvador established a female orchestra: The Female Orchestra of the Salvadorian Institute for Childhood and Youth, where teenage girls are drawn off the streets from gangs into the orchestra as part of a project for social upliftment and social change (Booth & Tunstall, 2016, p. 55). Guatemala formed some of the best international El Sistema ambassadors such as Alvaro Rodas, Samuel Matus and Bruno Campo. Campo (2022), in recent years, visited Pretoria, South Africa. His intentions were to establish an El Sistema-inspired programme in Pretoria but unfortunately due to the Covid pandemic in 2020, the project could not be realised.

Studies in other countries such as **Finland** and **France** have shown that students who receive music education, more specifically in El-Sistema-inspired programmes show greater skills in communication and reading skills. The El Sistema-inspired programme in **France** is called "Passeurs d'Arts" (Booth &

Tunstall, 2016, p. 102). The director of this programme, Jean-Claude Decalonne, confirms that many students in this programme are mostly immigrants and from poor communities. The El Sistema-inspired programme was launched in 2014 with great success. The French government immediately provided financial support and expanded the programme to 22 other schools with the aim of supporting these communities in perceiving a sense of social inclusion and developing social upliftment (Booth & Tunstall, 2016).

In **Finland**, an El Sistema-inspired programme called 'Tempo Orchestra' was launched in 2009 (Puromies & Juvonen, 2023). The aim is to promote social inclusion and children are brought together through music to advance mutual appreciation and amiability in communities where many cultural differences are present.

Research studies verify that El Sistema-inspired projects are efficient, and, more particularly, that apart from serving music education, music becomes a tool for social change as believed by the founder José Antonio Abreu (Eatock, 2010; Barbarani, 2016). It can assist youth with finding their identity, allowing them to develop social skills which they carry through to adulthood toward social independence. Such music programmes could be an important link in the chain of society.

2.5 Theoretical framework: Transformative learning

Since individuals form presumptions through their experiences in society, religion, psychology, and education, scholars attempt to explain such social phenomena through theories, thereby "offering an illuminating interpretation" (Neuman, 2014, p. 53) to clarify the meaning of a specific phenomenon. In this study, transformative learning links to two important aspects that are part of El Sistema programmes. Firstly, El Sistema programmes become "catalyst[s] for social change" (Steele, 2017, p. 359), and secondly, they nurture music-making as an integral part of communal activities. Mezirow and Taylor (2009) suggest

that transformative learning promotes new “perspectives about privilege, race, and racism” (p. 262), aspects that are crucial in South Africa, a country committed to the process of transformation (Graham et al., 2019).

2.5.1 Defining transformative learning

In 1978, Jack Mezirow coined the term “transformative learning” (2006, p. 90) and explained it as a gradual process of changing “the habits of mind, mindsets and meaning perspectives” (p. 92) through learning. These habits of mind are set by the way a person thinks, feels, behaves, and presumes. Mezirow (2000) developed his theory of transformative learning from the 1970s through to the early 2000s and it has since progressed into “a complex and comprehensive theory of adult learning” (Cranton, 2016, p. 27).

Transformative learning is defined as the process by which we transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, meaning perspectives) – sets of assumption and expectation – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change. Such frames are better because they are most likely to generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (Mezirow, 2006, p. 92)

All individuals form their own assumptions based on their personal beliefs (Mezirow, 2000, p. 17). Transformative learning involves “problem solving” (p. 20) by critically reflecting on personal assumptions during the education process. Kitchenham (2008) describes transformative learning as a complex and profound process of fundamental change regarding “thoughts, feelings and actions” (p. 104). In an EI Sistema context, this aids music students—who act as tutors—and learners from the community to “examine alternative interpretations of [...] experience by ‘trying out’ another’s point of view” (p. 20). Mezirow (2006) argues that it is far more complex for a person’s mind to transform its habits of perceptions and beliefs, than for the person to transform physical habits. Within an EI Sistema context, learners may “become aware and critical of assumptions,

their own, and others” to transform their perceptions of themselves (Mezirow, 2006, p. 93).

Mezirow (2006) describes the transformative learning process in five stages:

- to think critically and objectively;
- to establish whether it is wrong or right;
- to be able to rationalise and explain one’s beliefs;
- to maintain one’s belief until new evidence appears which initiates retrospection; and
- to endorse one’s own assumptions and that of others by carrying out objective discussions through the lens of transformative understanding.

Mezirow (2006) refers to “Instrumental learning”, a process involving self-observation which reflects the fundamental aspect of transformative learning. Self-observation drives a person to assess their beliefs and to think critically about their own assumptions and perceptions. Mezirow’s (2000) transformative learning theory assisted me in comprehending how current community music programmes in South Africa and abroad have shaped the perspectives of founding members, and how they perceive the active involvement in music-making affected participating youth members. Additionally, it provided me with a lens to understand how founding members of community music outreach programmes view their social role in extra-curricular programmes focused on developing musicianship and social development in youth members from the broader community (Cortese, 2019, Rocha, 2016).

2.5.2 Transformative learning through community music

Although transformative learning mainly applies to adult education, it can be highly relevant in music education and learning (Qi & Veblen, 2016). The fundamental goal of transformative learning is to teach a person to think

objectively and to be critical towards their own perceptions. Qi and Veblen (2016) conducted five case studies in deprived communities in Brazil, considering the following three aspects: music as a tool for social change; students learn to take control of their lives; and music is a long-lasting endeavour. El Sistema-inspired programmes portray identical traits of transformative learning. Qi and Veblen (2016) explain that community music programmes are popular music education projects in Brazil. Because of the existing social prejudice in Brazil, education is not equal. It leads to a large percentage of the population who do not receive adequate education and even less so for music education. For this reason, community music programmes serve as extramural activities to compensate for the limited education received in public schools.

Qi and Veblen (2016) describe how students from Brazil accept their fate. Their perceptions led them into thinking that their future consists of limited possibilities to rise out of poverty and success being out of reach. At the community music programme in north-eastern Brazil, students learn social skills during the process of musicking. They develop skills on how to interact with each other, teamwork, how to deal with critical situations and at times “pushed out of their comfort zone” to develop critical thinking (Qi & Veblen, 2016, p. 104). It is during these situations that transformative learning occurs. Another case study was conducted in Sao Carlos, Brazil, on a community orchestra. Qi and Veblen (2016) proclaim that the community orchestra is intended to reach a larger amount of community members. It is to provide opportunities to more students than only providing individual lessons. The intention as Qi and Veblen (2016) proclaim, is to “create human development through interaction [in the orchestra] from different social, cultural, and economic classes [...] (p. 109). In this regard, students work together and are challenged to think critically, and objectively to find solutions when they traverse social predicaments within the orchestra of which all point back to transformative learning. El Sistema can clearly be recognised in this regard of which transformative learning becomes relevant and applicable.

The largest community music programme in Brazil, named “*Projeto Guri*” (Qi & Veblen, 2016), serves low-income communities by providing “collective music learning” (p. 110). The intention of this programme is to use music as a social tool to initiate social involvement, tolerance, community unification, and a feeling of belonging. Through the music programme, children gain confidence and want to be “admired for their skills” (Qi & Veblen, 2016, p. 111); they attain a different approach to life and the future, developing self-esteem, a sense of identity; and some even identify themselves as musicians, indicating that transformative learning has taken place.

It is evident that transformative learning occurs in instrumental learning (Mezirow, 2006) and even more so in community music programmes. This closely corresponds with the vision and philosophy of El Sistema and El Sistema-inspired programmes. Music-making in communities and specifically marginalised communities, can be utilised as a tool of social agent to change the “habits of mind through instrumental learning” (Mezirow, 2006, p. 92), a vital aspect in the current educational landscape of South Africa.

Summary

In this chapter, I defined and presented the views of multiple authors regarding the concept of El Sistema and its historical perspectives. Both positive and negative insights into the realm of El Sistema were offered to provide the reader with broader information, comparisons, critiques, and approvals, thereby enabling objectivity. This information provides a better understanding of El Sistema in “real life” rather than assumptions and personal beliefs. Further, I offered discussions about various community music programmes that illustrate the great desire and necessity for meaningful extra-curricular activities in marginalised communities in South Africa. Lastly, I explored transformative learning as theoretical framework for this study to indicate how critical reflection applies to the El Sistema concept, as well as to my personal journey during the research process.

In the next chapter, I explain and motivate the chosen research approach and design, indicating how I selected participants. I also describe the data collection and analysis strategies used.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I explain and motivate the selected research methodology as well as all the elements related to the selected research procedures. I describe the qualitative approach I followed, and how this led me to utilise various research procedures. These procedures include the research design, sampling strategy and data collection and preparation methods. Additionally, I explain the data analysis technique, research quality, and ethical considerations. The following flow diagram illustrates the different steps I had to take during the entire research process.

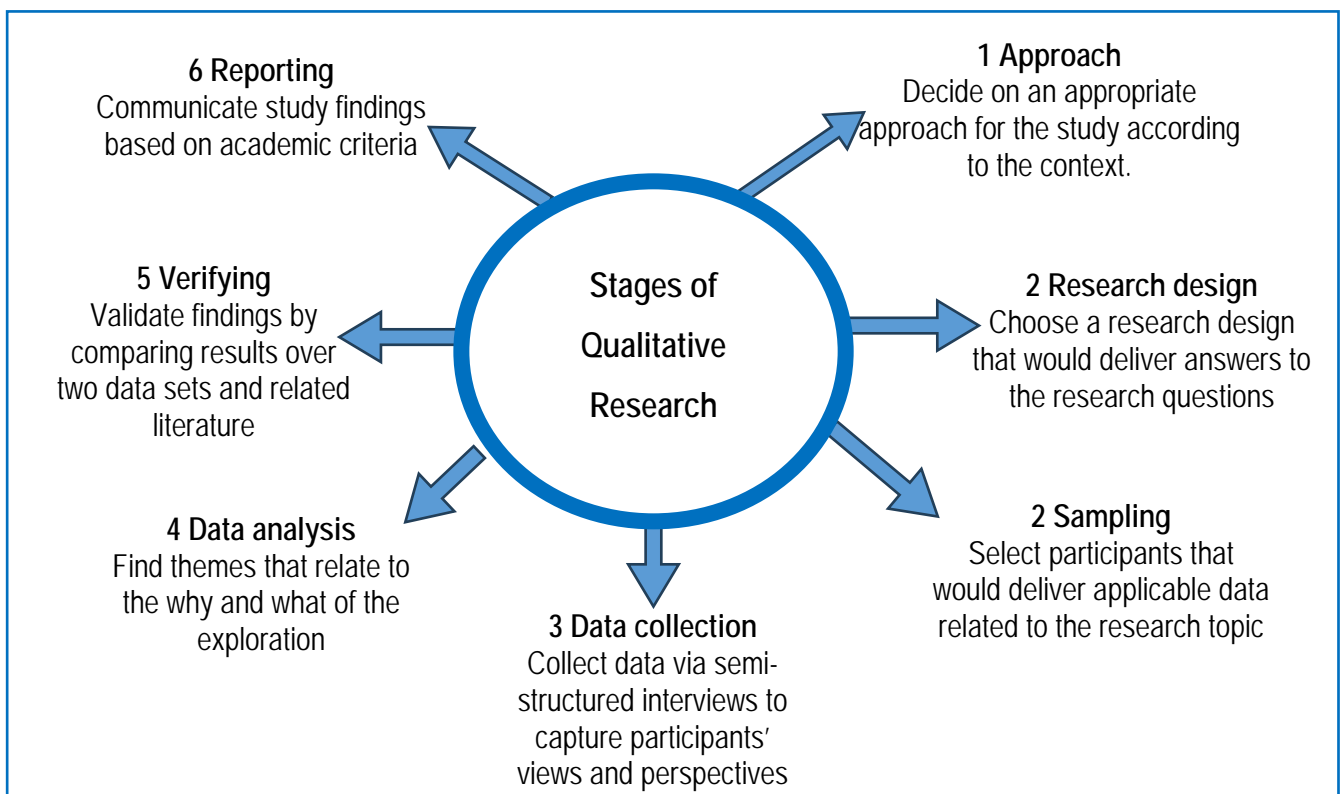


Figure 1: Steps in the Research Process

3.1 Research approach

To find answers to the research question, I selected a qualitative research approach since this allowed me to obtain more insight and a deeper level of understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Leavy, 2017; Nieuwenhuis, 2016). According to Nieuwenhuis (2016), qualitative research is based on open-ended interaction to explore and understand the attitudes, values, and perceptions of individuals. Since my aim was to discover the perceptions and values of the founders of El Sistema-inspired music programmes, a qualitative research approach was appropriate to answer the “where”, “what”, “how” and “when” aspects of such programmes (Berg, 2004, p. 2).

Creswell and Poth (2016, p. 234) describe the following elements that are typically part of a qualitative study:

- “Natural setting”: where the researcher is “talking directly” to the participants. The participants don’t need to go to a different environment for the researcher to collect data;
- “Researcher as key instrument”: The data is collected by the researcher him or herself through analysing documents and interviewing participants;
- “Participants’ meaning”: The focus is on what the participants express and reveals during the interviews and not on the perceptions and views of authors or the researcher;
- “Emergent design”: Qualitative research may develop or change and therefore the study cannot follow a strict prototype of research design. This includes for example questions that could be adapted or data collection may differ. The main focus is to gain knowledge and understanding of the subject being researched.

- “Reflexivity”: The researcher also plays a role in the study. The culture and personal background of the researcher contribute to the development and course of the study; and
- “Holistic account”: the holistic perspective is implied as a complex phenomenon under study. There are many complex aspects of the study to consider and analyse in order to understand and interpret the research which cannot be narrowed down to a simple understanding. Many smaller elements undergo research to understand the phenomenon in order to portray the greater picture of the study.

In the following subsections, I explain how I applied each of these elements in the current study.

3.1.1 Natural setting

Norum (2008) explains that qualitative research is often rendered and researched in its natural environment. This means that qualitative studies should not be conducted in laboratories, neither does it involve “control groups” (Norum, 2008, p. 551). The most common form of fieldwork is in its natural environments such as “non-profit organisations”, “hospitals”, “school classrooms” (Norum, 2008, p. 551), home studios and so on. This author considers a natural setting as a complex correlative procedure with a focus on collecting data in its natural environment and is therefore suitable for qualitative research. Although I could not physically visit each participant in their natural environment, I conducted online interviews with them via Zoom in their natural setting, i.e., in their homes or studios. The aim was to communicate with them in their normal context (Norum, 2008). Once I collected the data, I amended it into rich informative information.

3.1.2 Researcher as key instrument

Brodsky (2008) claims that perhaps the most important component in qualitative research is the researchers themselves. With the researcher being the primary tool when gathering data such as interviewing participants, Brodsky (2008) notes that the researcher is placed in immediate contact with “raw words and real life” (p. 766). The participants and researcher are both considered as the current situation of the topic being researched, where signification and interpretation are formed during the course of data gathering. During the process of researching, researchers have their own perspectives and differences. Brodsky (2008) explains that information from the insider – “emic” and from the outsider – “etic” is a fusion of many truths existing concurrently which is processed and combined by the researcher (p. 766). Therefore, during the collection and analysis of data, I was continuously aware of my key role as collector, processor and interpreter of the information.

3.1.3 Participants’ meaning

Qualitative researchers are more interested in the views and perceptions of the participants to understand the phenomenon being researched (Munhall, 2008). The main focus for the researcher is to understand the experience, meaning, opinions and involvement of the participants. Munhall (2008) suggests that an individual’s perception of a situation is interpreted in their own way which translates into their personal truth. Researchers also possess their own perception and should therefore avoid attaching and combining their perceptions with the participants’ views (Munhall, 2008). As key researcher, I was constantly aware to approach the participants with an open mind during the interviews by listening to their opinions and personal experiences. In this regard, it gave me the opportunity to understand their perspective and point of views.

3.1.4 Emergent design

Research design introduces a research idea that the researcher transforms into a plan to carry out the study (Cheek, 2008). The research design does not simply involve techniques identified for data collection. The design is rather emerging and shaped according to “theoretical, methodological and ethical considerations” (Cheek, 2008, p.763) to bring the research to a successful conclusion. In this study, I therefore shaped the design according to specific considerations related to this study. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on in-person interactions and gatherings, I was compelled to adhere to social distancing guidelines, travel restrictions, and safety precautions, which prompted me to adapt and innovate my research approach and design. This shift allowed me to continue data collection while minimising physical contact and travel (Ienca & Vayena, 2020).

3.1.5 Reflexivity

Dowling (2008) describes four types of reflexivity namely “bracketing”, requiring researchers to answer questions about their methodological choice, investigating the “social and political issues” that communicate knowledge for the research process, and the “researcher-participant relationship” (p. 747). I therefore used bracketing as a means of keeping a record of my personal opinions and emotions so that I could adapt my methodological choices during the study when necessary. The second type of reflexivity I applied, as suggested by Dowling (2008), was to critically think about my epistemology or theory of knowledge. Consequently, I kept a notebook to understand my own presumptions and perceptions. Dowling’s third type of reflexivity is “political and social issues”, which refers to the researcher analysing specific circumstances to comprehend and interpret the participants’ perspectives. The fourth type of reflexivity suggested by Dowling is perhaps most relevant to the current study, as the “researcher-participant relationship” is a form of correlation and collaboration. It was therefore important for me to maintain objectivity during the interviewing

process as the course of any study is influenced and driven by the background, perceptions and cultural background of the researcher.

3.1.6 Holistic account

In a qualitative approach, the researcher's intention is to reach a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being researched (Ospina, 2004). To reach a holistic understanding of qualitative research, the researcher tends to fully immerse him or herself in terms of being in contact with the participants, "physical involvement" or observing (Ospina, 2004, p. 4). In this study, the researcher studied smaller elements such as researching documents, interviewing participants, or viewing audio-visual material to understand the greater picture of the phenomenon.

3.2 Research design

In this study, I selected a case study design to do social science research because it will allow me to focus on a "contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context" (Yin, 2009, p. 2). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) describe case study research as a qualitative investigation to generate a deep understanding of the research problem within a "bounded system" (p. 37). In a multiple case study, this involves "multiple bounded systems" (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 246). This design is specifically appropriate to gather social data for "viewing social reality" (Best & Kahn, 2014, p. 265) and to explore a unique phenomenon in depth. Each 'case' in a multiple case study research can be a place, a setting, or an institution (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017). For this study, the multiple cases are represented by the experiences of the participants in the different contexts where they operate as facilitators of community music programmes, as explained in the sampling strategy.

Stake (2013) explains that the benefit of performing a multiple case study is to investigate how the phenomenon behaves in different surroundings. In this study, it refers to exploring both the experiences of international respondents providing

international perspectives, and local respondents sharing their views and opinions within a local environment. The preselection of cases in a multiple case study is one of the “unusual tasks” (Stake, 2013, p. 150). In a multiple case study, it is important to understand how the phenomenon functions in different environments (Stake, 2013). In this study, the premise is based on El Sistema being founded in Venezuela, and therefore it was critical for me to understand in what ways El Sistema could be adapted and applicable in a South African context.

Normally, researchers preselect cases known in advance before the research commences (Stake, 2013). Three main aspects should be present when the researcher selects cases. Firstly, to determine if the cases would be relevant to capture appropriate and sufficient data to justify the phenomenon being researched. Secondly, to ascertain whether the cases provide a variety of information. Lastly, Stake (2013). Mentions that the relevant cases should provide enough information to be able to understand the intricacy and background of the topic explored. In this research, all three of these aspects were fulfilled as the participants were from different backgrounds, from a variety of countries, and with unique experiences, thereby providing rich and varied evidence as well as sufficient data that enabled me to completely gain a deep understanding of the research topic. Although I did not identify sufficient participants before data collection, I applied additional sampling strategies such as snowball and purposive sampling to select a sufficient number of cases. As researcher, I also needed to be assured and confident that the international participants would be willing and available to accommodate and put time aside for me to interview them.

3.3 Purposive sampling strategy

Data collection is integral to research for enriching theoretical understanding (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Proper selection of data acquisition methods and sources is imperative, and I realised that I would not be able to remedy inadequate collection during the data analysis process. Studying various sampling methods,

I ascertained that the most appropriate strategy for this study would be purposive or judgment sampling, which involves purposefully selecting participants based on specific traits (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This non-random approach, utilised in qualitative research, spotlights individuals or groups well-versed in a phenomenon, emphasising their knowledge, experience, and articulateness. Unlike diverse statistical studies, purposive sampling concentrates on individuals with traits aligning with research objectives, optimizing resource utilisation. This method ensures that the researcher chooses data-rich cases, enhancing research outcomes' depth and relevance (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Palinkas et al., 2015).

The main drive of sampling is to recruit participants suitable for the study and it is, therefore, a vital step in the research process (Whitehead & Whitehead., 2016). In this study, I selected specific participants using a purposive sampling strategy to provide appropriate information that relates to the research questions (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The purposive sampling technique, also known as judgment sampling, entails purposefully selecting participants based on specific qualities they possess. This non-random approach does not necessitate pre-existing theories or a fixed participant count. In qualitative research, researchers pinpoint individuals or groups well-versed in a phenomenon, emphasising not only their knowledge and experience but also their willingness, availability, and adeptness in articulating insights. Unlike statistical studies, which encompass diverse demographics, purposive sampling focuses on individuals with particular attributes that align with the research objectives, optimising resource utilisation. This method ensures that the researcher selected data-rich cases, contributing to the depth and relevance of research outcomes.

Using purposive sampling allowed me to strategically choose participants who would deliver adequate and applicable information relating to the main research question. To purposefully select the participants, I applied the criteria demanded for this study in line with Palys' (2008) "criterion sampling" (p. 697) strategy. All participants had different life experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon I

explored. Determining the number of participants, I followed the advice of Guest et al. (2014) who suggest that between six and ten participants are applicable in qualitative research where the purpose is to obtain in-depth perspectives instead of a broad overview of the research topic.

3.3.1 Snowball sampling

I also utilised snowball sampling to identify further participants who fit the criteria for participating in this study (Kumar, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Some participants provided me with supplementary information and contact details about individuals who were eligible and relevant for this study (Morgan, 2008). In this case, primary participants assisted me in finding additional respondents that were relevant and able to provide rich information to this study, as indicated in the Figure 2 (Simkus, 2023).

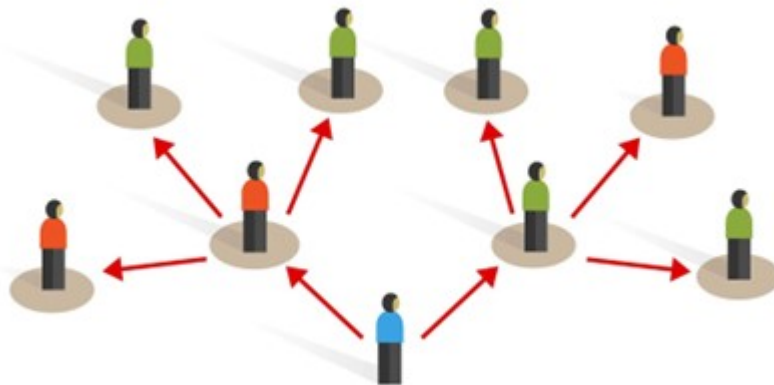


Figure 2: Snowball Sampling

3.3.2 Theoretical data saturation

The concept of theoretical data saturation holds significant importance in qualitative multiple case studies, signifying the point in data collection where new information ceases to introduce novel insights or themes, indicating that the researcher has achieved a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Fusch & Ness, 2015). This data saturation represents the culmination of data collection when the researcher begins to

observe repetition and redundancy in emerging themes across cases, suggesting that further data collection is unlikely to yield substantially new perspectives. The attainment of theoretical saturation assures that the study's findings are grounded in the depth and breadth of data, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the research outcomes (Guest et al., 2014; Hennink et al., 2017). I therefore continued with the process of data collection until I reached theoretical saturation.

Research participants

Two groups of participants were involved for data collection, namely four musicians/music practitioners who have founded or have been involved in establishing community music outreach programmes in South Africa; and four musicians/music practitioners who have founded El Sistema or El Sistema-inspired programmes internationally. This led to a total of eight participants, each representing a different case, which I describe in more detail below.

- **Group 1 - Founders of Community music programmes in SA**

For the first group of participants, I purposively selected four music practitioners who have founded – or are involved in – community music outreach programmes in South Africa. They were able to share knowledge of planning and establishing such an initiative, the recruitment process for learners, music educators and tutors, financial implications, and the daily functioning of such a programme. Moreover, their experiences with youth in a local South African community programme allowed me to better understand how such an initiative should be adapted to the unique context of a South African university.

Selection criteria for group 1

- Participants should be/have been involved in the establishment of a community music outreach programme in South Africa;
- Participants should be/have been actively involved in the planning and management of such a programme; and

- Participants should have at least five years of experience teaching in a South African community music programme.

- **Group 2 - Founders of international El Sistema programmes**

For this participant group, I purposively selected four experts⁸ who have founded – or who are involved in – El Sistema or El Sistema-inspired community music outreach programmes internationally. Each of these expert participants needed to have established an El Sistema-inspired programme, and therefore should have extensive knowledge regarding the planning, establishment, recruitment process, financial implications, and daily functioning of such a programme. They provided me with information regarding all the above aspects necessary to explore the feasibility and logistics of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme at a South African university, allowing me to gain an in-depth perspective of the processes and planning involved in such an initiative.

Selection criteria for group 2

- Participants should be/have been involved in the establishment of an El Sistema or Sistema-inspired community music programme in a country other than South Africa;
- Participants should be/have been actively involved in the planning and management of such a programme;
- The participants should represent a variety of countries where they established El Sistema community music programmes; and
- Participants should have at least five years of experience teaching at an El Sistema or El Sistema-inspired programme.

⁸ An expert is a person who has “special skill or knowledge representing mastery of a particular subject” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

3.3.3 Contacting the research participants

As an orchestral musician, I have personally met international conductors and musicians who are part of international El Sistema-inspired programmes, and local conductors and musicians who are involved in similar programmes in South Africa. Some of the international conductors and musicians are also directly involved with the original El Sistema school in Venezuela. These conductors and musicians fill the criteria for data collection. I, therefore, contacted two of these international musicians or conductors via email, asking them if they would be interested to be involved in this study. I did the same with musicians or conductors in South Africa who are involved in El Sistema-inspired programmes or similar community music programmes. I made use of snowball sampling, asking the first participants to suggest additional persons who fit the selection criteria until I met the chosen number of participants for my study. Thereafter, I arranged an initial Zoom meeting with each of the selected participants to explain the research procedures. We agreed on a date and time for the telephonic interview that suited each participant.

3.4 Data collection and preparation

Data collection is a pivotal aspect of research, essential for enhancing the researcher's comprehension of the research topic. I realised that it was crucial to cautiously select data acquisition methods and sources, as improper data collection cannot be rectified through analysis (Palinkas et al., 2015). In qualitative research, the term *data* refers to the participants' words, gathered for example, from interviews, which the researcher analyses to retrieve information for the study (Firmin, 2008). The findings in qualitative research are not "purely theoretical but rather grounded in empirical data" (Firmin, 2008, p. 190).

Interviews are one of the key forms of data collection in qualitative research. In such studies, the researcher is interested in the respondents' meaning and views of the phenomenon being studied. Words are the most important data in

qualitative research, and therefore, audio or audiovisual recordings of interview sessions are advised (Firmin, 2008). This allows the researcher to analyse the data in depth and seize the full meaning of the participants' views and perceptions. In this study, interviewing was the main technique of data collection.

In the process of data collection, I utilised another important technique namely "chaining" (Firmin, 2008, p. 191). During the interviews, most of the participants identified additional participants they recommended me to contact, as these persons had great potential that could expand and enrich the research data through their personal knowledge and experience. Consequently, the participants gave me the names and contact numbers of additional participants to enable me to further explore the research topic. Adding additional participants for "data generation" (Garnham, 2008, p. 193) allowed me to gain divergent views and perspectives to achieve a better and deeper understanding of the circumstances (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Garnham (2008) utilises data generation as a summary of how a qualitative researcher interacts with data in a social context. He explains that reality is a "social construction" (p. 192) where the researcher forges knowledge by using certain methods and techniques to obtain data. One of the methods used in "data generation" is interviewing, offering the researcher the opportunity to capture participants' perspectives, opinions, and observations, when they answer questions. A variety of ideas can emerge while an interview takes place. The interview questions compiled by the researcher initiate creative and critical thinking from the participant's side, thus leading to distinct and diversified outlooks on the phenomenon being studied (Garnham, 2008).

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are often used to capture qualitative data (Nieuwenhuis, 2016) as it guarantees interaction with the participants and, according to Pritchard and Whiting (2012), this data collection strategy is considered to be more ethical and efficient. Qualitative interviews open possibilities for the researcher "to explore the views, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of individual participants" (Gill et

al., 2008, p. 291), allowing a thorough understanding of the research problem. The main focus of an interview is to provide the researcher with an in-depth view of the participant's social experiences and perceptions (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016).

Interviews can be highly structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), and the researcher needs to select the appropriate type of interview to answer the research questions. While structured interviews have a pre-determined set of questions leaving little space and possibilities for additional questions, unstructured interviews are at the other end of the spectrum without any pre-determined questions or theories (Gill et al., 2008). These authors contend that an unstructured interview is only appropriate in cases where there is very little known about the research topic, otherwise, they may be inefficient. Semi-structured interviews lie in the middle of these two formats and allow the researcher to prepare a list of open-ended questions using keywords related to the research problem. An interview with open-ended questions may provoke a more faithful and individualised experience from each participant, thereby providing further validity to the study (Silverman, 2016). Moreover, Brinkmann (2008) describes "good questions" (p. 470) as being brief, simple, and open-ended. It was therefore important to me to structure the questions carefully to be able to retrieve detailed descriptions from the participants. Brinkmann (2008) suggests that semi-structured interviews require questions containing interrogative words such as "what" or "how" rather than "why" (p. 470). I, therefore, selected semi-structured interviews since they left more liberty for the participants to develop the discussion during the interview, revealing additional information. Moreover, semi-structured interviews enabled me to add follow-up questions to clarify concepts or to probe further to find out more detail (Gill et al., 2016). Brinkman (2008) suggests that, at the end of an interview, the researcher debriefs the session, thereby providing an opportunity for the participant to ask questions about the research or add comments.

A semi-structured interview schedule – prepared well in advance of data collection – guides the researcher to pose questions on all the important aspects related to the research problem. It also provides flexibility so that participants may elaborate on certain topics (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016). These authors advise that questions should be clear, sensitive, and unprejudiced. They also suggest further techniques that may aid the researcher during an interview, such as:

“**paraphrasing**” – where the researcher repeats the phrase of the participant to assist with the clarity and meaning of the phrase;

“**probing**” – to retrieve a deeper understanding, the researcher asks a series of questions after the participant has provided an initial response; and

“**funnelling**” – at the beginning of the interview, the researcher asks broader questions and at a later stage, questions that narrow down to the topic of the study.

(Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016, p. 120)

To ensure that I obtained a complete perspective of all the aspects related to the feasibility of an El Sistema-inspired music programme at a South African university, I interviewed both international and local participants. The international participants have all founded El Sistema-inspired programmes in other countries, while local musicians/music educators have established community music outreach programmes in South Africa as described in the sampling section. I employed individual semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Gill et al., 2008) that enabled the participants to develop their answers and encouraged them to “elaborate on their accounts” (Elliott & Timulak, 2005, p. 150) (See Appendix A for the semi-structure interview schedule of group 1 participants, and Appendix B for the semi-structured interview schedule of group 2 participants.).

Whitehead and Whitehead (2016) propose that the researcher conducts interviews in an environment where the participants feel at ease with minimal

disruption during the interview. Although the ideal would have been face-to-face interviews in their individual settings, the Covid-19 pandemic restricted direct personal contact. Furthermore, several participants live in other countries or provinces of South Africa, which made it difficult to organise face-to-face interviews. Therefore, I conducted all the interviews telephonically. As I used technology instead of face-to-face conversation, Tracy (2013) calls this communication method “mediated” (p. 163) interviews. While conducting interviews face-to-face could have facilitated a personal connection and rapport with participants, telephonic interviews offer several benefits. These include reduced time commitment and cost-effectiveness (Joinson & Paine, 2007). These authors suggest that, in certain situations, individuals might find it simpler to communicate openly during telephonic interviews due to a heightened sense of anonymity and privacy compared to face-to-face interactions. Even though I could not gather nonverbal cues during the telephonic interviews, the absence of body language and visual distractions compelled both me as interviewer and the interviewees to listen more attentively and concentrate on the dialogue (Joinson & Paine, 2007).

I interviewed four international participants and four local participants individually at a suitable time for each participant. I allowed the participants to take time to answer the questions so that they could provide as much information as possible. This encouraged them to be spontaneous. I audio-recorded all the semi-structured interviews with the permission of the participants. After the interviews, I thanked the participants, providing an opportunity for debriefing to ensure that I understood their views correctly and thus provided an opportunity for the participants to add further comments if they wished (Gill et al., 2008).

3.4.2 Data preparation

After collecting the qualitative interview data, I performed verbatim transcriptions of all the audio recordings while carefully listening to each recording (Khan 2014). While the raw data are the audio-recordings of the conversations I had with the

interviewees, the primary data are the transcriptions of the interviews (Brinkmann, 2008). Brinkmann (2008) describes the process of transcription as an analytical procedure that requires “prolonged practice and sensitivity to the many differences between oral speech and written texts” (p. 471). I therefore had to keep the meaning of the participants’ oral explanations in context when I performed the verbatim transcriptions afterwards. After completion of this process, I sent the transcripts to the interviewees for them to verify if I accurately represented their perspectives (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). To ensure that I attained the essence of each interview and the perspectives of the participants, I revisited the transcripts several times during the data analysis process (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

3.5 Data analysis and interpretation

For this study, I applied a thematic data analysis process. Thematic analysis finds its rationale in two primary factors, namely accessibility and adaptability (Braun & Clark, 2006). This analytical approach presents an avenue to engage with a research methodology that might otherwise appear conceptually demanding and intricate. This approach allowed me to gain an accessible pathway into the domain of qualitative research so that I could apply systematic coding and analysis of the qualitative data. I was then able to establish connections with extended conceptual dimensions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The first step in starting the analysis process was to code the raw data, viewed by Creswell and Poth (2016) as the core analysis technique in qualitative research as this allows the researcher to establish recurring themes found in the data. After transcribing the interviews, I read them several times, identifying smaller parts of meaningful segments and coded them. By categorising codes and identifying their regularity, these condensed codes could be organised by similarity to create themes (Leech & Onwuegbuzie 2007). These authors explain this constant comparison analysis process as inductive and repetitive, providing reliable findings. An “iterative review process associated within the coding cycle”

(Williams & Moser, 2019, p. 45) assisted me in identifying themes so that I could derive meaning from the findings.

Qualitative data can, at times, be “messy, discursive and voluminous” (Spencer et al., 2003, p. 202) when the research dossier contains many pages of transcriptions. In this instance, I reduced the data before I started the data analysis process. Thematic analysis is a technique utilised to reduce data and to find “implicit and explicit ideas” (Namey et al., 2008, p. 138). Therefore, I identified codes and themes during raw data analysis. As a result, I analysed the data in an iterative process that involved a cyclic approach to comprehend and interpret the gathered data. This method entails a series of repetitive cycles that helped me to develop, refine, and revise codes and themes, subsequently leading me to formulate more refined and nuanced research insights. Iterative data analysis underscores the dynamic nature of qualitative inquiry, wherein initial insights continually evolve and deepen through ongoing interactions with the data (Saldaña, 2021). Such an approach facilitates the identification of patterns, connections, and emergent concepts within the data, enhancing the overall rigour and credibility of the research findings (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). By iteratively revisiting and recontextualising the data, I was able to unravel the complex narratives and glean multifaceted perspectives that may have remained concealed within a static analytical framework (Saldaña, 2021). Figure 3 below illustrates the data analysis process as presented by Namey et al. (2008)

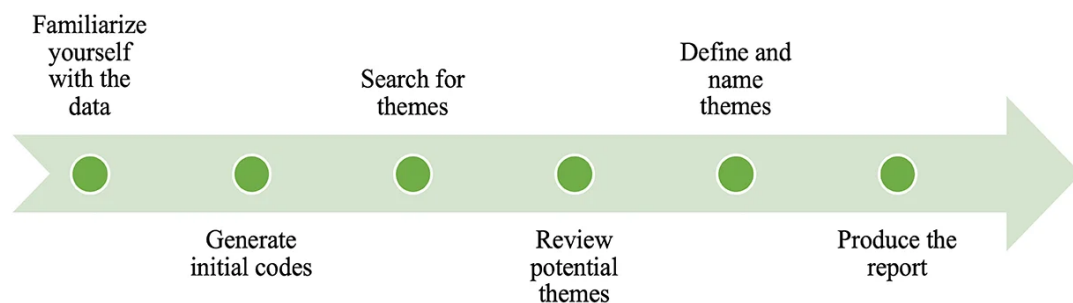


Figure 3: Data analysis process

In case study research, in vivo coding is frequently used to better understand the culture of the researched phenomenon (Manning, 2017). In vivo coding means that the researcher includes the actual language and terminology used by the participants themselves in the research report to ensure that the meaning and perspectives of the participants are true and not decontextualised (King, 2008). It also allows a deeper level of understanding of the ideas of the participants as the researcher has access to their personal views and perceptions. Therefore, this method provided me with the opportunity to immerse myself fully in the data (Manning, 2017) and to better understand the meanings participants shared regarding their experiences of community music outreach initiatives. This allowed me, as qualitative researcher, to retain connectivity to the data while utilising other established methods of analysis such as “concept and theory building” (King 2008, p. 473).

3.6 Research quality

To confirm the “reliability and validity” (Amankwaa, 2016, p. 121) of any study, the researcher needs to fulfill certain criteria. The validity of the current research was enhanced by utilising “well-entrenched procedures and strategies (Miller, 2008, p. 909). Flick (2007) believes that careful and detailed planning of the research process is crucial to ensure high-quality data collection and analysis. I therefore applied four criteria to assure research quality and “trustworthiness” (Amankwaa, 2016, p. 123) namely credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Williams, 2016). To assure “trustworthiness” throughout the research, Miller (2008) suggests that the researcher continues with certain strategies such as “member checking”, “self-reflection”, “peer debriefing”, and “theoretical thinking” (p. 909). I explain these four criteria, and how I applied them, in the following bullet points.

3.6.1 Credibility

Guba and Lincoln (1989) posit “if the inquirer ‘finds’ only what he or she expected to find, [...], credibility suffers” (p 238). Therefore, I opted to apply Jensen’s (2008, p. 139) five methods to ensure credibility:

- “Time”: to spend enough time with the participants to retrieve as much information as possible;
- “Member check”: communicating with the participants to ensure the data interpretation is correct;
- “Colleagues”: to have support from colleagues to comment and assess the data analysis;
- “Triangulation”: to investigate through diversified sources; and
- “Angles”: to interrogate the data from different angles and views.

I strived to remain open to all suggestions made by the participants when I conducted the interviews as well as during the data analysis process. Before starting with the data collection process, I piloted the two interview schedules with a small sample of peers to ensure that questions were appropriately phrased and that they would lead to answering the research questions (Anney, 2014). I ended each interview with a debriefing session to make sure that the way I interpreted the participants’ views correlated with what they were sharing with me so that I could report correct and trustworthy information.

After completion of the verbatim transcripts of the interviews, I shared them with the participants so that they could verify the accuracy thereof. Furthermore, after data analysis, I shared my findings with the participants for an additional member checking (Anney, 2014, Jensen, 2008) so that the community music leaders and El Sistema experts could confirm the findings or suggest changes to my interpretation of the data. Moreover, I assessed the credibility of the findings by

asking myself if the “designated participants were relevant to this study, and if they provided honest and trustworthy information. The credibility of this research was also heightened as the participants I interviewed were both from international and local backgrounds, thus providing information with different perceptions and viewpoints of the phenomenon being researched.

3.6.2 Transferability

Williams (2016) suggests that researchers provide a “thick description” (p. 69), a technique often used for transferability that gives a rich and detailed account of the data collection process. This description provided an in-depth understanding of the background and context of the study so that other researchers may apply the same techniques in similar contexts. Jensen (2008) provides two key elements to enhance transferability namely, to confirm that the participants are associated with the study, and to ensure that I, as researcher, fully understand the framework and background of the study. It was therefore important to select participants for this research who have been involved in El Sistema-inspired programmes or similar community music initiatives. As a musician and music educator, I have been involved in community music programmes and have intimate knowledge and experience about community music programmes.

3.6.3 Confirmability

To support and validate the research results, I discussed my findings in relation to related literature. Furthermore, by using several data collection methods namely interviews with two groups of participants and document analysis, I was able to confirm the results by comparing the data from the different data sets (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Jensen (2008) describes confirmability as a balance between “reliability” and “objectivity” in a qualitative study (p. 112). It is important to understand the participants’ views and outlook on the researched phenomenon and to recognise the connotation between the participants’ own perceptions and reality (Jensen, 2008). Another form of confirmability is “audit trials” where an external individual verifies if the data analysis is coherent and in line with the

literature and methodology. This step was part of the reviewing process by the ethics committee as well as the role of my supervisor (Jensen, 2008, p. 112).

3.6.4 Dependability

Dependability means that another person evaluates and assesses the quality of the data and research findings to verify that the data collection and results are true and coherent with the information collected (Williams, 2016). Dependability also serves to link the evidence with the data description, ensuring that the findings correctly present the views and interpretations of the participants (Jensen, 2008). Williams (2016) calls this technique a “dependability audit” (p. 70), performed by my supervisor as well as three external examiners who assess the final thesis.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The researcher needs to inform the participants about ethical concerns as they would not necessarily be aware of such matters (Kahn, 2014). Since qualitative researchers mostly work with participants “face to face” and over a certain period, Preissle (2008) mentions the critical importance of informing the participants about the ethical implications. Creswell and Poth (2016) suggest that the letter of informed consent includes the following aspects: i) the function of the researcher; ii) the intention and aim of the study; iii) assurance to the participants that all information they share will remain confidential; iv) that their participation is entirely voluntary with the option to disengage at any time; v) obtaining signatures from the participants to indicate that they understand and agree to the research procedures. These authors also recommend that the researcher debriefs the participants on all these matters before commencing with data collection.

To protect the participants, I followed the ethical principles governing research (Kahn 2014; Mouton 2001; Nieuwenhuis, 2016). I explained these principles in the Letter of informed consent and Reply slip (See Appendices C and D), including that the participants were involved voluntarily and that they could

withdraw at any moment (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Before commencing with data collection, I ensured that all participants fully understood the purpose and research procedures of this study as explained in the letters of information, after I asked them to sign an informed consent reply slip (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016). When compiling this thesis and other research outputs, I omitted institutional identification that may infringe on the confidentiality of participants' identities. I also replaced the participants' names with numbers to protect their identities (Kahn 2014).

Allmark et al. (2009) suggest a model of continuous consent during interviews to reassure the participants of the confidentiality of the information they provide by asking questions such as "Could we speak about this?" (p. 49). I also sent the participants transcripts of their interviews so that they could verify if I did accurately capture their perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Data will be stored electronically at the School of the Arts, University of Pretoria for a minimum duration of 15 years, during which time it may be reused for possible further research purposes.

Summary

Chapter 3 explained the research methodology including the approach and criteria applied in this study. The research design, sampling strategy, data collection techniques, data analysis process, and research quality considerations were debated and motivated as suitable techniques for this research. Finally, I clarified the ethical implications of the study.

In the next chapter, I present the data analysis and findings of this research study, explicating the themes and different categories that emerged during the course of data analysis.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the interview data as well as the findings that emerged. During the process of data collection and transcription, I gained a deeper understanding and comprehension of the information presented by the participants in describing their personal experiences and views of the topic at hand. During the semi-structured interviews with all the participants, I was able to explore and define the research area further and offer opportunities for the participants to elaborate on their experiences, all whom have substantial professional practices they could draw on. Thereby, they could provide rich information towards extending knowledge (Gill et al. 2008) in the focus area of the current study.

The qualitative data I gathered in this multiple case study research relates to in-depth semi-structured interviews with two participant groups, as mentioned in Chapter 3, namely:

- South African practitioners who are involved in El Sistema-inspired community music programmes;
- International practitioners who have established El Sistema community music programmes.

Table 1 presents the profiles of the four South African participants, and Table 2 provides those of the four international participants.

Table 2: Group 1 – South African Participants

Group 1: South African Participants
<p>Participant 1 Participant 1 is a professional musician, French horn player and conductor in South Africa. Since 2010, he has been actively involved in a community music programme at a magnet school in a township on the outskirts of Pretoria. He became Head of Music at the magnet school in 2017. His continued dedication has ensured continued growth and development of the music programme.</p>
<p>Participant 2 Born in the Netherlands, participant 3 is a conductor, percussionist, social entrepreneur and educator. He moved to South Africa in 2005 and established several community music projects in the Gauteng region. He served as percussion and conducting lecturer at a university in Pretoria and became the principal conductor of all the orchestras and ensembles at the institution. Relocating to the Netherlands in 2021, he remains involved in El Sistema-inspired community music programmes in both the Netherlands and South Africa.</p>
<p>Participant 3 As a professional jazz musician and head of the music department at a South African university, participant 3 has been actively involved in El Sistema-inspired community music programmes since 2007. He has founded community wind bands in two South African cities and currently manages multiple community music programmes in the Tshwane region.</p>
<p>Participant 4 This participant was in close contact with Abreu, the founder of El Sistema in Venezuela, which inspired him to generate similar music programmes in South Africa since 2003. He currently manages multiple community music programmes across South Africa.</p>

Table 3: Group 2 – International Participants

Group 2: International Participants
<p>Participant 5</p> <p>Actively collaborating with the founder of El Sistema, Jose Antonio Abreu, until his death in 2018, this choral director from Germany served as a liaison between the tertiary music faculty where he worked and Abreu in Venezuela. He frequently acted as translator for Abreu and has been actively involved in community programmes since 2008 in several countries, including Germany, India, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Austria, and Italy.</p>
<p>Participant 6</p> <p>As a professional viola player and lecturer from the UK, participant 6 has been involved in several community music programmes in India and England. In 2015, she established an El Sistema-inspired community music programme in South Africa named <i>Arco</i>, which involves an innovative alliance between a Conservatoire in the UK and the Morris Isaacson Centre for Music in Soweto.</p>
<p>Participant 7</p> <p>This professional violinist and professor of music has been working on a voluntary basis for El Sistema-inspired programmes since 2006. Establishing community music centres in Paraguay, India, Palestine, and Afghanistan, she has been a strong advocate for music education especially in Afghanistan during the recent oppressive times when the Taliban was persecuting musicians and destroying music instruments.</p>
<p>Participant 8</p> <p>This violinist, conductor and composer, whom I identified via snowball sampling, has established El Sistema-inspired programmes in five countries including Afghanistan, Egypt, Tunisia, Philippines, and Pakistan. He is also the founder of <i>Cultures in Harmony</i>, a USA based project with the aim to promote cultural understanding across the globe through music making and interconnection.</p>

Data analysis process

During each interview, I made an audio recording thereof, after which I compiled a verbatim transcription and returned them to each participant for verification. Before the coding process, I arranged the transcripts of each group and perused the raw data several times. Listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts several times was part of the pre-analysis phase, during which I started identifying codes and emerging themes. I then described and interpreted the data using a thematic analysis process to deliver credible answers to the research questions (Guest et al., 2014).

The overall intention of this study was to gain a better grasp of how El Sistema or El Sistema-inspired programmes function in various countries and in other parts of South Africa so that I could formulate a strategy for the establishment of an El Sistema-inspired programme at a residential University in Pretoria. I interviewed international El Sistema experts to obtain an overall understanding of the international El Sistema programme. Secondly, I interviewed participants who are involved in similar community music projects in South Africa. From this text-rich data, three main themes emerged providing me with a better understanding of what is needed to implement a similar music programme in the city of Pretoria. The three main emergent themes are associated with community development as perceived by the participants. The aspects represented by these main themes indicate the essential components of a successful and enduring El Sistema-inspired programme. They are:

- **Collaboration;**
- **Sustainability; and**
- **Development of human potential.**

All three themes are divided into subthemes, and in some instances, two or more subordinate themes emerged. Table 3 on the next page presents the main themes, subthemes and subordinate themes.

Table 4: Main Themes and Sub-themes

Theme 1: Collaboration
Subtheme 4.1.1 University involvement
Subtheme 4.1.2 Community involvement
Subtheme 4.1.3 Public domain involvement
Subtheme 4.1.4 Crossing cultural barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intercultural community music in South Africa • Marginalised communities and music programmes • Refugees and community music
4.2 Theme 2: Sustainability
Subtheme 4.2.1 Long-term planning
Subtheme 4.2.2 Teaching staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentors and tutors • Additional teaching staff
Subtheme 4.2.3 Potential tertiary music students
Subtheme 4.2.4 Finances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University funding • External funding
Subtheme 4.2.5 Location and venues
Subtheme 4.2.6 Music instruments
Subtheme 4.2.7 Ensemble groups and choirs
Subtheme 4.2.8 Transport
Theme 3: Development of human potential
Subtheme 4.3.1 Music skills
Subtheme 4.3.2 Social and personal development skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development for community youth • Skills development for tertiary music students

The following flowchart visually demonstrates the relationship between the main themes and the subthemes.

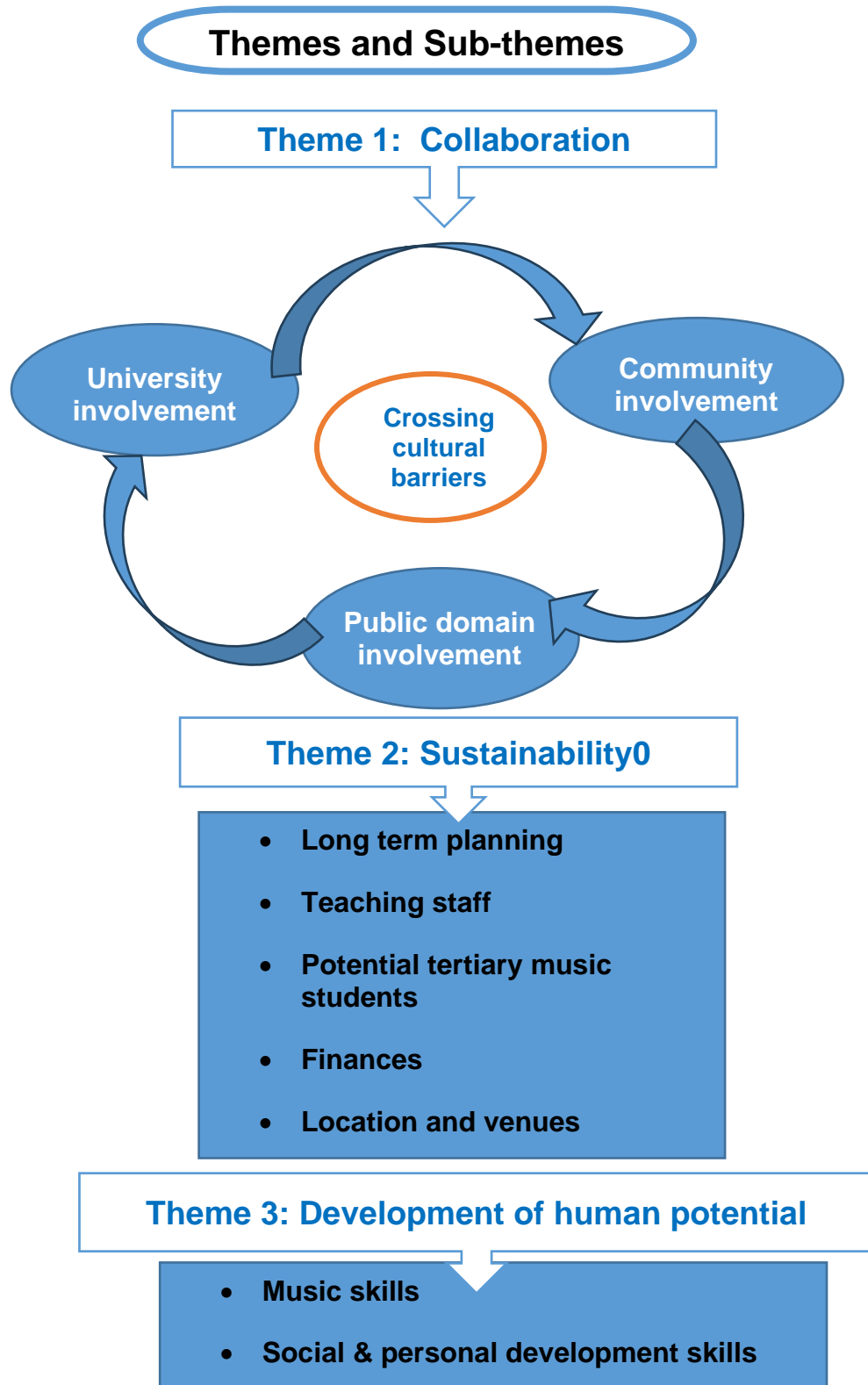


Figure 4: Themes and Subthemes

The flow diagram on the previous page shows the three main themes in white boxed arrows, and below each main theme, several subthemes. **Theme 1** relates to the collaborative partnership between three role players– with curved arrows between them suggesting that there is continuous interaction and collaboration between these role players. They are, firstly, the residential urban university in South Africa, secondly the community preferably in close vicinity to the university campus, and thirdly the public domain such as politicians, government officials and private investors. This collaboration needs to be underpinned by an approach of crossing cultural barriers, placed in the centre of the three role players. **Theme 2** refers to the sustainability that an El Sistema-inspired music programme needs to exhibit to make a viable and long-lasting contribution to the larger community. **Theme 3** refers to the benefits that such a sustainable community music programme may offer the broader community in the urban area or city, namely the development of human potential on different levels. In the following sections, I present and explain these themes and subthemes with verbatim quotes from the participants.

Theme 4.1 – Collaboration

This theme became evident throughout all the transcripts, as participants described the crucial aspect of collaboration to ensure the success of any community music programme.

It brings people together and enables people to do something together, and also, to find a sort of common interest which often means that people are distracted from other worrying and perhaps disturbing things in their lives. It is a place to meet. (Participant 6)

I think, altogether, this is the most important, that many people work together. (Participant 7)

Active participation from all stakeholders is essential, government, corporations, community leaders, students, parents, teachers.
(Participant 8)

While analysing the data, a strong indication arose regarding the importance of how community music programmes can serve as a platform to form bonds and merge a community together.

So, well, I think they [community music programmes] are important. They are definitely important. I think they can be a fundamental part of society. (Participant 5)

Collaboration towards a communal goal—a community music programme—involves several parties namely, an urban residential university in South Africa including the staff and students from the institution, the local community that lives in close vicinity to the university, politicians and other key role players who may support such an initiative, as well as benefactors or businesses who may invest in such an endeavour. All these parties should closely collaborate to ensure support and accomplishment of such a community music programme. Most of the participants' perspectives were that an El Sistema-inspired programme linked to a university will most likely succeed as a national academic institution on this scale provides an inherent infrastructure and support system. In their view, a music programme needs to be successful and well organised to have a positive impact on the community. If key persons at the university are actively involved in such a music programme, their commitment towards the sustainability and long-term enhancement of their tertiary music degree programmes provides security to such an initiative.

4.1.1 University involvement

This sub-theme relates to several aspects described by the participants, as they view a community music module as a viable and important aspect of all degree qualifications in music. For them, it is crucial that music students at tertiary level

are exposed to community work on a practical level, which can be facilitated if an El Sistema-inspired community music programme is linked to the university.

I think the most important is first that there must be a communication between the university who, I guess, is willing to establish these programmes. (Participant 7)

So, if the university wants to really impact the community, then this is pretty one of the best vehicles they could use. (Participant 3)

In general, I think it must be a [tertiary] programme where students have to be involved. Also teaching staff. (Participant 7)

I also think it is great if this is on the campus of the university and of course, it can bring the university and the town together; that the people who are not so close to music can understand better what the university, which possibilities they have, and that they are part of the community. (Participant 7)

But you know then I would say you need a very strong team of people who is not afraid. You need fearlessness. (Participant 2)

In pursuance of an urban residential university in South Africa investing in a community music programme, one of the participants suggested integrating community work as part of tertiary music studies. By means of this, music students would teach at the community music centre to promote their development of teaching and organisation skills.

You know, I think it is a wonderful idea, because those kinds of projects feed into the university programme (Participant 3)

During the semi-structured interviews, several participants described tertiary institutions or independent music colleges that have already incorporated community music into their curricula. For example, the following participant

commented on the internationally renowned Royal Schools of Music in London which incorporates a community music module in their curriculum.

Royal Schools of Music looked at El Sistema and adopted and adapted it into their existing curriculum for the same reasons; and that obviously strengthens my belief. (Participant 3)

Participants shared their views as to how the university would be able to reach out to the community and children, and not just to students who have already learnt how to play an instrument.

So, my advice would be to start talking to colleagues and [...] people that are already teaching and are also studying at the university or working at the university, start building a core. (Participant 4)

4.1.2 Community involvement

Several participants shared their views about what a music education programme presented on a university campus can imply for a city or town and its community members.

You have to build community (Participant 2)

It can bring the university and the town together; that the people who are not so close to music can understand better what possibilities [the university] have, and that they are part of the community. (Participant 7)

So, we have over the years developed a lot of content, intellectual, on why music is so an important focus area, develop people and to bring people together. [...] So, you have to concentrate on those aspects (Participant 4)

I think [youth community members] are important. They are definitely important. I think they can be a fundamental part of society. (Participant 5)

It brings a community together. It brings people together and there is a sense of community growth. [...] Also, there is a sense of [...] a purpose behind it (Participant 1)

The following participant concluded that the community would greatly benefit should a local university be involved. It is important to start a community programme where young people from local communities can develop their skills.

I believe in general it is a good thing at any university to establish such a programme. Also, to recruit, let us say, young people later. I mean, the music, especially the classical music, will keep alive and I think this is only possible if we bring children in already and involve them in some university projects, [so] that the university becomes more part of the community in your area. (Participant 7)

Some of the participants shared their views about what music education can offer a community.

Depending on the nature, scope, goals, and implementation, [community music programmes] are profoundly helpful. (Participant 8)

Any programme in South Africa involving youth and music is to be encouraged. (Participant 8)

On the one hand, suggestions were made that a community music programme should be offered on the university campus, while other participants suggested that the key to success would be that music students physically go to the

community area where they are involved in presenting music lessons to youth members.

Students should be in community, as in the township 'doing this thing', or you can have the entire philosophy across the board and in the entire bachelor's degree (Participant 2).

I think an integrated system where you have a community centre [supported by] the university. (Participant 1)

Offering music education to community youth members who otherwise would not have options to receive music lessons, can give them motivation. It encourages youth members to obtain goals, enabling them to plan for their future.

With communities becoming directly involved with the university, youth members may develop a finer perception of all the possibilities music can offer at a tertiary level. Music can later become a source of income for example, or can display further possibilities of other study fields. Not only can a community music programme inspire short-term goals, it can assist youth members to develop long-term ambitions.

Depending on the nature, scope, goals, and implementation, they [community music programmes] are profoundly helpful. (Participant 8)

Music education contributes towards the health of a community. (Participant 8)

Any programme in South Africa involving youth and music is to be encouraged. (Participant 8)

Participant 7 described how the current El Sistema-inspired programmes she is involved in internationally, form close collaboration and unity within the community.

I believe that the community music programmes are very, very important. I mean, it brings people together and I think this collaboration between students, music teachers, also maybe people who have not so much access to music, can become closer. (Participant 7)

There was a strong indication from the participants regarding how community music programmes can serve as a platform to form bonds and merge a community together.

This is an opportunity where they get together, and they are being exposed, and exposure with a common goal. This combination is a very strong way to bond people. (Participant 5)

It brings people together and enables people to do something together. [...] Also, to find a sort of common interest which often means that people are distracted from other worrying and perhaps disturbing things. (Participant 6)

And I think to play music together, to sing together, whatever, and/or to beat rhythms together; I think that brings people together. (Participant 7)

4.1.3 Public domain involvement

The following participant recognised the importance of collaboration with persons in the public domain. These include politicians or the mayor of the city, who could provide additional support to enhance the stability of a community music programme.

I think the most important is first, that there must be a communication [...] with the politicians. I think there must be a kind

of thing that they work together; that there is a good plan, that there is enough space for that. (Participant 7)

I think, altogether, it must be an involvement of politics [...] I mean, politics is important to work together. (Participant 7)

Many meetings with corporations, foundations, the government, and wealthy individuals will be key. (Participant 8)

From the participants' views it became evident that it is highly important to expose community participants to professional musicians. The university could be in collaboration with professional musicians who can demonstrate the outcome of studying music at a tertiary institute. This can provide future projection, goals, and role models to youth members from the community.

Also, with maybe some great soloists. Maybe the university can invite some, let us say famous musicians, to have a role model and that they show their support for this programme. (Participant 7)

All the participants are involved in community music programmes in South Africa or other countries, and shared their views with regards to collaboration in the public domain nurtured through music education in community settings.

I am 100 percent in support of community music [...] So it makes more sense, and given in a country like ours [South Africa] where it is solely lacking. (Participant 3)

It is a place to meet. [...] So, I think, you know, one cannot begin to say how much positive impact there is. (Participant 6)

4.1.4 Crossing cultural barriers

The findings of this study made it apparent that music education in a community can serve as a platform for people to meet and learn about each other's

differences. Even with many cultural differences, making music together becomes a neutral ground where everyone shares the same interests. This means that teamwork is developing, cultural barriers become less present, while understanding each other becomes important to have a successful performance, and therefore, social connections are starting to form. When a mutual endeavour such as collaborative music-making brings together communities, it becomes evident that culturally appropriate music enhances collaboration, and participating members become instilled with attributes such as tolerance, acceptance, and mutual respect towards each other.

Music really does involve the community [...] Music that is culturally connected rather than disconnected has been very, very, very important. (Participant 6)

- **Intercultural community music in South Africa**

With 11 official languages in South Africa, there is a broad spectrum of cultures and ethnical diversity. With multiple cultures present in most South African communities, it is important that people from different cultures and ways of thinking can communicate openly within a safe environment, a milieu that music-making can provide, so that successful and functioning communities can be established. Participant 2 describes a specific situation where he, as conductor, had to adapt his strategy with a youth orchestra in South Africa. He explains that, for the first time, there were youth members from different cultures and backgrounds in that orchestra, a situation that urged him to adopt a different approach.

It was a culture clash that could not be bridged by a normal rehearsal methodology, for instance. So, as a conductor, I had to choose to go the El Sistema route to approach the National Youth Orchestra in South Africa to get them to play a lesson differently and feel differently and engage differently, in order to bridge the two cultures. The one that came from the formalised training and

the other one came from other sources, so to speak, and in order to mix them and to still do Shostakovich's 9th Symphony and Benjamin Britten's Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra responsibly. (Participant 2)

This participant also described another project in Cape Town, where South African youth from an impoverished area were involved in an opera that won international acclaim.

Shirley Apthorp, [...] with her I have done those street operas in Cape Town, in Khayelitsha and other places, in Jo'burg Theatre as well. [This gave] all the high school kids their first flying experiences and they also flew up to Czech Republic and do it there and won a prize even in international opera. These are high school kids from Khayelitsha, and they won prizes in opera competitions [...]. This is all proof that it really works, it is amazing.

Participant 6 has established a community music programme in Soweto, South Africa, and found that the music provides "a real outlet for many people" and that it can help people overcome difficult circumstances.

There is a lot of pain in Soweto and I mean, there is a lot of pain everywhere [...]. I think it is seen as a way to be expressive and original and it often leads some of the students to exploring other types of music, being brave enough to do that and kind of finding their own voice.

[Music] is a real outlet for many people. I think it is seen as a way to be expressive and original and it often leads some of the music students to exploring other types of music, being brave enough to do that and kind of finding their own voice. (Participant 6)

- **Marginalised communities and music programmes**

From the data analysis it became apparent that, as leaders of El Sistema-inspired programmes across the globe, the participants in this study had to deal with and manage severe differences in class and culture from different community members who joined their music programmes.

Then, thinking about Brazil, another project, two projects; one that had to do with two socially different classes where they got in touch. That is very positive and challenging. I mean, for instance, there was this love story between a girl from the upper-class and a boy that was from the favelas, you know, and the parents were confronted with all the fears, [...] because they do not have contact, unless it is, like, an employee at the house. (Participant 5)

Impoverished communities are often faced with social problems, such as gangs who are opponents to each other, and this forms a social barrier between community members.

In Columbia, actually, it was. There they call it invisible borders, which is basically [that] there is a lot of violence going on, and it was like gangs, drug gangs some of them, fighting for territories and it was a very violent place and they started a school centre with the music school there. So, it was education and music and it really changed the place. I mean, it is not publicly safe, but most of the crime is being outsourced, which is a very positive impact. (Participant 5)

One of the participants has been involved with a community music project in Palestine with the aim of easing out cultural barriers by bringing people from Palestine and Israel together through music. These people meet on mutual grounds, creating ways to nurture tolerance and to better understand each other.

Then, in the same year, I went to Palestine [...] And they, how can I say, they bring Israelis and Palestinians together. As you know, there is a big fight in Israel always between the Arab musicians and the Jewish musicians and we tried to bring them together. (Participant 7)

The variety of El Sistema community music programmes that Participant 7 engages in across the world, such as India, Palestine, Israel, Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina, offered an opportunity for her to observe a social change transformation unfolding through music education. Her shared experience clearly indicates the development of tolerance and understanding between different people within a collaborative music community.

I think there is more peace and not so much fights between the people and not so much criminality. This is what I saw in all projects; that there is more an understanding to the enemy, to the other people. And together, it works together. And, I think, this is a great thing and this I saw in all different [El Sistema] projects all over the world. (Participant 7)

In 2005, participant 8 founded the *Cultures in Harmony* community music programme in the USA. He shared details about this music programme and how relevant the current study is in terms of their programme's mission and accomplishments. The main aim of the *Culture in Harmony* programme is to bring people with different cultures together through music, as read from their mission statement by him:

To improve international cultural understanding through music; to expose citizens to international cultures from foreign countries; to form collaborations between citizens and humanitarian organisations through music; and to create an international cultural awareness accomplishing inter-cultural social bonds. (Participant 8)

Since 2005, *Culture in Harmony* has conducted several music projects internationally, for example in Zimbabwe, Cameroon, China, Turkey, Tunisia, Mexico, and Egypt. Their current focus is to assist Afghanistan musicians as the Taliban recently started persecuting musicians and destroying music instruments. Most of the Afghan musicians lost their livelihoods which forced them to flee from their own country (Participant 8).

Other participants shared their views of community music programmes facilitating cultural exchange.

So, it is dialogue, an intercultural dialogue through music, and that is always the important thing in our country [South Africa], because we always have to think on how do you cross the barriers. (Participant 4)

We use it as a way of cultural exchange, [...] learning about other cultures. (Participant 6)

- **Refugees and community music**

Participant 5 explained how refugee children were feeling welcome at the community music centre in Italy.

In Italy, for instance, it is just refugee kids. They have not so much to do and they felt welcome and that brings immediately like a positive sense to that otherwise not very positive situation. (Participant 5)

Participant 2, who are involved in several El Sistema-inspired community music projects in South Africa, has also been involved in providing community music sessions in the Netherlands with refugees from the Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine actually, [...] kind of casts another shadow on life here, and there is even more fear. Now, last week, I worked with 200 refugees from the Ukraine. I organised that they could sleep, that they get houses, and it is mostly women and children, because the men are fighting. So, these are disrupted families. So, we are doing a lot of therapy with them, a lot of djembe workshops and classical music concerts, because they are very cultured. So you must not treat them as asylum-seekers. They are very intelligent people who just had to leave their country, but not because they are poor or something or poorly educated. So now we are using a lot of our ways of approach, more the El Sistema philosophy to see if we can use it for special methodologies for the refugees, because they all stay here. (Participant 2)

This participant also shared his views on the importance of creating a safe space for youth community members.

It is about the heartbeat and turning that into music. It is about being able to sing a melody because you are not threatened, being able to sing songs and measure without dissonance, because life is a little bit better than last week, you know, so you connect life and music the whole time. (Participant 2)

Theme 4.2 – Sustainability

Sustainability is the avoidance of depletion. From the participants' views, it became evident that the involvement of a tertiary institution such as a university, as well as its staff members and tertiary music students, enhances the long-term sustainability and success of a community music programme. The educational and social benefits that both music students and youth members from the community may receive from a community music programme are not instantaneous, but rather develop over time. Several indicators of sustainability

and long-term planning emerged during the data analysis, namely: a long-term planning strategy, teaching staff, potential music students to enrol for music degrees at the university, finances, the location and venues required, as well as music instruments and transport for community youth members. In the following bullet points, these indicators are described and illustrated with verbatim quotes from the participants.

4.2.1 Long-term planning

Long-term planning and in-depth research are important factors to ensure the sustainability of a community music programme. The data analysis clearly demonstrated that careful planning and research before implementing a community music programme is needed for such an endeavour to be sustainable.

Research [on a project] is very important. I did six years of research in South Africa before I had the guts to do something, really. Take your time, because when you do it, it needs to be sustainable. (Participant 2)

All has to be first planned and established. (Participant 7)

It should be structured. (Participant 4)

I believe that, well, a community music programme must have a good support system. (Participant 1)

Participant one presented relevant reasons why a university should regard a community music programme as a long-term investment.

I think an integrated system [is ideal], where you have a community centre through the university (Participant 1)

So, I would say that universities, you know, the university has to invest actually a lot in a community music centre, you know, to

actually have those students come through the system and eventually play in the orchestra, which I think would benefit the university, you know, massively. (Participant 1)

4.2.2 Teaching staff

Most of the participants agreed that it is important to provide staff members with the correct mindset. The intention is that such staff members or music educators provide music lessons to youth community members within a safe space to initiate personal and social development for these youths through music-making. There were two points of view regarding the allocation of teaching staff in a community music programme at a South African university. Some suggested that music lecturers and students – acting as tutors with the guidance of their lecturers – are involved in the teaching of music to the community members, while other participants suggested that independent teaching staff are appointed and paid a salary.

- **Mentors and tutors**

The participants who suggested that students are involved as tutors saw this is an ideal way for pre-service students to gain teaching experience in a mentored environment. University staff members who are responsible for music pedagogy subjects should then be involved to provide support and guidance to the students facilitating the practical music sessions with youth members.

The easier things to cope with is to integrate it with some of the music educating so that those music ed students go and teach or that the practical students can take some of the teaching for credit. So, put the teaching into practise. (Participant 3)

So, my advice would be to start talking to colleagues and already, people that are already teaching and are also studying at the university or working at the university, start building a core. (Participant 4)

The following participant stressed the importance of involving tertiary music students as tutors in a community music programme, where they gain valuable teaching experience and can apply their music pedagogy knowledge on a practical level.

I think it must be a programme where students have to be involved, also like teaching staff, [...] together with pedagogy students [...]. The students must work together with the teachers. (Participant 7)

The recruitment of the pedagogy people, it really depends. It could be some students who already want to become a professional teacher (Participant 7)

Participant 6 from the University of Birmingham in the UK explained how she merged community work with tertiary music studies. Students have to teach music to community members, and in this process, they are trained to become music educators in a mentored environment with continued support from their lecturers.

Well, we kind of use it as a teacher training programme at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, run mentoring sessions, [develop] teaching skills. (Participant 6)

But I think [such a community music programme] is definitely enhancing teaching skills, teaching knowledge, and certainly from the Birmingham side. (Participant 6)

- **Additional teaching staff**

Other participants felt that it was important that the university appoints additional staff members specifically to cater for the community music programme.

I would say the best form of starting a community music project is actually to hire people full-time. (Participant 1)

A qualified conductor is needed. (Participant 8)

You need to source. So, the first thing you need to do [...] is to source the right people that understand this, that do not see music as the goal, but [music education] as a means to get to a better quality of life. (Participant 2)

Also, it can be some orchestra musicians who help. (Participant 7)

So, I would say the university have to be able to offer teachers a salary, and [...] you know, that income is not going to come from students. It has to come from within a budget in a university that generates those funds, you know, because the teacher is able to permanently work at that system, and I think like, that it would in the long run definitely have better benefits, because we have someone or a couple of people full-time working on that project and building it up. (Participant 1)

Maintaining a happy and motivated volunteer staff is essential at the beginning, but the need to pay them will arise sooner than you think. (Participant 8)

4.2.3 Potential tertiary music students for the BMus degree

A community programme could generate future students for the university, enhancing the sustainability of BMus degree programmes.

You start absolutely from the beginning, but those teachers working with those kids with the idea that those kids eventually come into the, you know, system of studying BMus or being able to have that opportunity. (Participant 1)

To see if we can link the university to the existing projects, to see if we can notice that talent, and come from a different angle and bring it into the academic level eventually (Participant 2)

You know, I think it is a wonderful idea, because those kinds of projects [can] feed into the university programme. (Participant 3)

4.2.4 Finances

The responses from the participants clearly indicated that the finances of a community music programme are crucial if it is to be sustainable. In the financial planning of a community music programme, stakeholders must take into account various aspects, such as funding for teaching staff, musical instruments, transportation for community members, and venue expenses.

There has to be a dedicated budget that is set for minimum five years. To say, okay, for five years we are going to commit X amount; a million rand, two million per year, that is going to cover tutors. It is going to cover instruments, the repairs of instruments, transport, rental of a facility or a venue. (Participant 3)

Well, you have to have a budget, or you have to have, you know, obviously, an annual budget that caters for infrastructure (Participant 1)

I do not start it and then six months down the line: 'oh, we have to stop it because there is no money, or nobody wants to do it anymore'. I would not be able to look in the mirror if that happens, you know. (Participant 2)

Moreover, the research findings indicated that, without financial support from a tertiary institution such as a residential university, as well as some form of external funding, a community music

programme cannot be sustainable, as is evident in the perspectives shared by the participants.

- **University funding**

It became evident that a community music programme would greatly benefit from the participation and involvement of a local university, as such an institution can provide the location within reach of the local community, as well as sufficient venues and teaching staff.

It should be funded by the university. It should really be a serious, serious, serious effort. (Participant 4)

Most programmes run out of money after two to three years, so I would try to attach one to institutions that have secured funding, at least for about five years. (Participant 5)

The university has to invest, actually, a lot in a community music centre. (Participant 1)

Rentals, PR, [...] all sorts of logistics (Participant 5)

So, I would say, you know, facilities, funding, (Participant 3)

Make sure to use some resources that the university offers and put in a clear structure. (Participant 5)

- **External funding**

The participants indicated that there is a continuous need for funding and that programme managers should explore alternative avenues in this regard. External sources of funding, such as insurance companies, could provide solutions to overcome financial limitations.

Find people who are passionate about the project and use every network available, organise events, do marketing, use online platforms such as crowd funding. Never stop and always rely on many horses. (Participant 5)

There are banks that have invested. There are big corporations that have invested nationally, internationally. There is a bunch of tutors from different countries that invest in the content and the curriculum. (Participant 2)

Apply for European money and do lots of lobbying. (Participant 5)

Some of them, [for example] banks, you convince with statistics, you know, and other companies you convince with stories. Other private persons you convince [...] maybe, or concerts or letting the choir from Mamelodi sing, and they all are moved to tears, and there is a cheque book. There are different avenues that I choose or chose, but I had a sponsor from the first week and ten years down the line, I still have a sponsor. (Participant 2)

Maybe it is necessary to bring some sponsors together and involve them in the whole project. I think the planning is very much important to bring politics together with a community together with those people who have money and to sponsor something. (Participant 7)

If you become a member of Virgin Active, you pay less insurance, right? You get a discount. This does not exist in the orchestra music world. So, that is your niche, that is where you can get a lot of money in South Africa, to say that: 'Why do you sponsor sports facilities and organisations and fitness clubs? Why do they get money from insurance companies with a discount for the clients? Why not when you start a choir with people who cannot read or

write notes, who cannot even sing; why do not you start an orchestra? It is the same as for the fitness clubs. Think about it; same philosophy. This is very El Sistic! (Participant 2)

You apply [for funding] everywhere. So, we have had, over the years, we had corporate funders, we had government, we had organisations. I mean, we had the Swedish international development aid, SIDA. We had the Southern Africa development aid. We had the European Union. We had government and smaller partnerships, and there are corporate sponsors such as Total, Nokia, over the years. (Participant 4)

I mean, to find sponsoring is very, very, very important. So, it could be a bank who is interested to help arts in general. Maybe there are some private people who have some money and who are excited to bring music together with arts. (Participant 7)

It could be also a kind of organisation, let us say any social organisation [...] it depends. It could be Amnesty International. It could be any kind of [...] children's right[s] organisations. It could be some organisations who are for peace and [...] against criminality. Those organisations could support, also, because it is a kind of programme where you bring people together and as a kind of prevention programme against criminality. (Participant 7)

So, I approached insurance companies and within one meeting they said, 'That makes perfect sense' [...] We are trying to prevent spending all that money by saying to the insurance company, it is much more expensive to pay for therapy and for psychiatry and for a psychologist, or treat depression [...]. That is much more expensive than when you give them 15 or 20 percent discount on insurance by going to an orchestra or a choir where there is no

stress, and it is just stress relief for the wellbeing of a person.
(Participant 2)

4.2.5 Location and Venues

This theme relates to a suitable location and spaces or venues that make a community music programme viable and sustainable.

So, those are, you know, some of the logistics that you have to think about when you set up the system at a university. Where is it going to be based? [...] I would say you have to identify a good venue that is as [...] secure as possible, because that is going to be the biggest challenge. (Participant 3)

Participants also shared their views that a university campus may provide a stable support system that needs to be in place to successfully run a community music programme.

They [marginalised communities] do not always have the opportunities to explore, you know, the music scene or the music careers of, you know, let us say a performer or a teacher or a producer or whatever. They do not always understand or always know the options. And, I think, through university, because I think the university will [provide] more exposure [...] to those students.
(Participant 1)

Yes, I think the facilities and accommodation for such projects, it must be a kind of school. It could be any kind of school where there are classrooms where you can teach, where you can bring musicians together. There must be, I think, one big hall where you can, let us say, bring some bigger projects together so that the students have some single lessons, or let us say individual lessons or lessons in small groups. And also, that there is a possibility for a

big meeting. It could be a yard or [...] a kind of place where you meet outside, but it could also be a kind of a hall. Let us say any kind of gymnastic hall, but also where you can [...] make some rehearsals with orchestra. So, I think there must be a kind of school [...] to accommodate that. (Participant 7)

If the proposed programme would be hosted by a university in Pretoria, they probably have adequate facilities. A mixture of small, medium, and large-sized rooms is ideal. (Participant 8)

Rooms for individual lessons, but especially rooms for groups. Pianos, a place for performances, and a teacher's room. (Participant 5)

Where you have, you know, an X amount of music teaching rooms or teaching classes. You know, a semi, a big space for, like a hall, where you can have concerts and then another two, one or two bigger classes where you can have group classes or theory classes or rehearsal, you know, ensemble rehearsal or whatever it could be. (Participant 1)

And then lastly, a big enough storeroom where you can lock up your instruments (Participant 1)

4.2.6 Music instruments

In terms of music instruments, participants mentioned that purchasing instruments can be costly in the early stages of a community music programme.

Purchasing instruments, you know, investing. And I think that costs a lot of money, because you have to see that it is an investment [...]. You know you are investing into education, you are not going to make money out of that business. It is not something that you

are going to say you are going to make money out of this
(Participant 1).

So, purchasing of the instruments become expensive, because you
have got to have a significant budget if you want to really start. [...]
So, the kids play in an ensemble. You need instruments.
(Participant 3)

Instruments, all sorts of equipment. (Participant 5)

The funding for it, instruments, access to music, sheet music.
(Participant 3)

And then of course, how to care about the musical instruments.
There must be people who repair the instruments. (Participant 7)

4.2.7 Ensemble groups and choirs

The data analysis brought to light a noteworthy phenomenon – the efficacy of ensemble groups and choirs in cost reduction. This stands in stark contrast to the prevalent practice of individual music tuition conducted on a one-on-one basis, which has traditionally been the norm in the South African music education context. Participant 2, who arrived in South Africa from the Netherlands, emphasised the pivotal role of ensemble playing or communal music-making as a vital component of a community music programme. According to the participants' perspectives, ensemble playing offers several advantages over individual instruction.

In South Africa it was, and still is, very much focused on one-on-one [teaching] and a lot of competitions and a lot of exams and diplomas. So, this is a very, actually, old European approach obviously from the colonial times. [...] When I came to South Africa, I thought, 'why on earth are they implementing these systems that

I have been hating since I was seven years old in Holland and England?’ It does not make sense to me, except for the exceptionally talented, or on the exceptionally not-talented scale, or autism spectrum, or the exceptions. But, for the bulk of the kids, the peer-to-peer learning aspects and the social aspects and the safety aspect of being in a group with your peers is what makes you more relaxed as a human being, and with that, there is less shame to express oneself in music, as little as you are. (Participant 2)

So, you have got to start with an ensemble. You cannot start with one or two kids. I mean you can, but ideally you start with an ensemble. (Participant 3)

It creates friendships, playing in ensembles; you know, gives people a sort of common thing to hold on to. (Participant 6)

Since orchestral instruments are expensive and costly to maintain, some of the participants suggested that choir ensembles are a viable alternative, especially in South Africa.

I just know that South Africa has an incredible potential, you know. Just from the singing that I see in choirs and solos, there is so much talent out there throughout all the different cultures that live in the country. (Participant 5)

I think playing in ensembles, singing in choirs, has a lot of resonances for people. (Participant 6)

4.2.8 Transport

Participant 3 described an issue that one of his community music programmes regularly experiences, namely transporting the children from a local township to a central venue.

The other big challenge is going to be transport, because the kids cannot walk. If a kid walks with an instrument, even during the day in the townships; they are soft targets. (Participant 3)

The problem is getting the kids five days a week, because they have got to go to school. The transport becomes an issue. So, you are going to have to have transport to get them to one central venue. In Venezuela they all walk to the closest centre. (Participant 3)

Getting the kids there is always a big one, especially for us in the townships. We have a bus, [...] a 21-seater bus that we use to transport kids around full-time with a driver in order to make it work. [...] We cannot transport, you know, 100 kids every Saturday. (Participant 3)

He then explained how they overcame the problem with transport.

The orchestra director [...] is working with about 25 to 30 kids in four different centres, but he does exactly the same thing. So, he would do the same tuning, the same technical, the same pieces. So, all four centres or nucleos is working on the exact same thing, same repertoire. And then, what they do, they bring them all together once a month, and now it is like they have been rehearsing together, because they will be playing the same thing. For somebody having 25, 30 kids; now you have got 100, 120 kids playing the same literature. (Participant 3)

And with them it must be based in the community. So, it is best if they are in that physical environment, because there must be social support from the parents who are there. (Participant 3)

Theme 4.3 – Development of human potential

The current economic situation in South Africa necessitates community programmes to develop human potential. This theme emerged to indicate an urgent need for tertiary institutions to invest in their surrounding communities.

It is totally to do with, you know, community development. That is something that is part of education, and it is something that is an investment in the end. (Participant 1)

Growth of human potential via a community music programme exists on at least two levels, one being growth of music knowledge and skills, and the other, social and personal development skills. Both these areas can enhance the health and well-being of all citizens.

4.3.1 Music skills

A successful community music programme requires dedication and commitment from youth community members, which instils discipline and self-regulation skills in them, as indicated by the following quote from one of the participants.

They see that it is hard work to be able to practise an instrument. It is hard work coming to music theory. It is hard work actually progressing. So, you have to put in lot of effort to be able to progress and that is what we demand of the students. [...] But the kids who do progress or the kids that do stay, they realise the importance of the discipline and also self-discipline, because they are able to go home and practise. (Participant 1)

Several participants referred to how community music programmes allow the development of music skills, in particular, and the ways in which these skills may translate to other fields in education.

The determination, you know the practise, the skill, the attention to detail in music translates into other areas. So, whether it is mathematics or schooling or personal life; you know these skills tend to transfer. So, we have seen tremendous motivation, delegation with our students in finishing-up firstly their high school studies, but then in pursuing music at a later stage. (Participant 3)

And it is not only the fact that you learn music skills on all of that, but it absolutely develops the community and those children. (Participant 4)

Music education definitely helps [...] the skill of listening, you know, musically, rhythmically, actually progressing you know. And, also, the ability to sing. (Participant 1)

The common things are that they are all poor people, those people who have no access to music, to learn something, [...] to play in rhythm, to play together. (Participant 7)

A community music programme could open-up ways to identify potential students who have music talent and who may wish to continue with music studies at tertiary level.

See if we can notice that talent, and come from a different angle, and bring it into the academic level eventually. (Participant 2)

And then, maybe, some of them, and by the way lots of them [members of community music programmes], actually did land at universities and music faculties. [...] So, you know, in South Africa

there is one thing you have to [remember], I never worried about talent in South Africa. (Participant 2)

A choir that we started there has stood internationally already, because it is brilliance. (Participant 2)

I think my view is that it would definitely benefit the university in terms of [...] reaching out to students who would not have the opportunity to study music. (Participant 1)

The following participants specifically mentioned what the benefits are for community members.

And for the kids in South Africa and the older students in India, it is a way to build skills. Think of future places where they might go and study, meet teachers, musicians from other countries. (Participant 6)

So, you know, in South Africa there is one thing you have to [remember], I never worried about talent in South Africa. (Participant 2)

4.3.2 Social and personal development skills

When analysing the data, I realised that there were social and personal development skills benefits to all parties involved in a community music programme at an urban residential university in South Africa.

Looking at the role of music education within a broader community. Well, I think it is really, it is a life education and I think it looks after mental health, physical health. It encourages focus and concentration, helps intellectual capacity and through learning different coordinations. You know, music is a complex thing and reading music itself is like another language. I think, within the

broader community, it serves as something inspirational and aspirational. It gives people an interest, a passion. (Participant 6)

Within an El Sistema-inspired music programme, not only the youth members of the community may benefit, but also the tertiary music students who act as tutors.

- **Skills development for community youth**

The participants' perspectives revealed that, apart from their own motives for being personally involved in community music programmes, such projects benefit youngsters from the community by growing their personal development skills.

I want a life in which music would be an active agent of positive social change. (Participant 8)

To get education, to learn how to concentrate. [...] This is the same spirit behind it (Participant 7)

And for the kids in South Africa and the older students in India it is a way to build skills, think of future places where they might go and study, meet teachers, musicians from other countries. (Participant 6)

Music education contributes towards the health of a community. (Participant 8)

The peer-to-peer learning. (Participant 2)

So, not just the qualities within a student, you know, all these benefits that music lessons bring (Participant 1)

It creates friendships, playing in ensembles; you know, gives people a sort of common thing to hold on to. (Participant 6)

And so, I think, [a community music programme] has a wonderful social component. Also, I believe, music is the best communication (Participant 7)

A community that can share common interests, have meeting places, or have a platform to socially interact, is certainly a key to a healthier and more flourishing community. Participant one shared his views on the positive impact of music education offered in a township community.

So not just the qualities within a student within, you know, all these benefits that music lessons bring, but also it brings a community together. (Participant 1)

The data analysis also demonstrated that, not only does the community as an entity benefit from music education, but also individual learners who receive music lessons.

You do see kids, in the beginning; most of the time kids are very shy and they are usually restricted, you know, they do not really open much, they do not talk much. So, that is definitely the case in the beginning. And as the lessons go by and, you know, let us say a kid that takes lessons for a year or two. When they understand that there is progress and they have played at [...] one or two concerts, that self-belief and that self-confidence and the self-discipline is a bit more structured because of the music lessons that are like that. (Participant 1)

There is definitely a positive attitude, because that student feels that, you know, coming to the music centre you belong somewhere. You belong, you are a music student. It gives you some sort of purpose, some sort of status almost that, you know, coming to the music school, you are proud of that. (Participant 1)

- **Skills development for tertiary music students**

Students enrolled for tertiary music studies at university can learn much from engagement in a community music programme. The following participant suggested that postgraduate students focus on research projects in communities to enrich their understanding and develop research skills. In turn, postgraduate students can supplement and fast-track the youth members' practical and theoretical music skills.

I think we need to go into the townships and the university gets [involved in] existing projects, to have master's and doctoral students do research there. [...] I think it is the way to go in South Africa, to eventually balance that whole music education problem out, so that you have 'both and' [not either or]. [Then], all kinds of people can get into a system of music education and not just the one that fit the colonial box. Whether you are black or white does not matter. (Participant 2)

The purpose of a community music programme is mainly to offer music education, but very often serves as a place for personal and social development of the tertiary music students who are involved as tutors.

It is a place to meet. It creates friendships, playing in ensembles, you know. [It] gives people a sort of common thing to hold on to. (Participant 6)

I would say, music education definitely helps that. Self-confidence, [...] or the ability to explore, or the actual creativity within a person, [...] that is something that naturally happens with music lessons and within a constant structure. (Participant 1)

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the data analysis strategy and organised the data into themes, subthemes, and subordinate themes. The personal perspectives and views of the participants were added to provide evidence from the real world, indicating the importance of the establishment of an EI Sistema-inspired programme at an urban residential tertiary institution in South Africa.

In the next chapter, I discuss the findings in relation to relevant research literature. Apart from answering the research questions, I point out the limitations of the study and present recommendations for community music programmes in South Africa as well as suggestions for future research.

Chapter 5:

Discussion, recommendations and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I firstly present a coalescence of the entire research project. Thereafter, I discuss the research findings in relation to relevant literature. The research questions conferred in Chapter 1 are answered, after which I provide recommendations for community music programmes in South Africa and add suggestions for further research.

This research study investigated the feasibility of introducing an El Sistema-inspired programme at an urban residential university in South Africa. Throughout the study, it became evident that the university could be a sustainable, beneficial, and educational source for the broader community through an El Sistema-inspired programme. By integrating the El Sistema-inspired programme into the music course of the university, community music would become sustainable and long-term to the benefit of all parties. A sustainable community programme would have a greater impact on the broader community, and consequently, contribute towards a more flourishing and fulfilled society.

The themes that emerged through data analysis enabled me to establish a specific point of view so that I could present the findings in a valid and verifiable manner (Creswell & Poth, 2016). I applied an interpretivist approach as I aimed to understand, describe, and interpret the participants' lived reality. I used my subjective insights indicating how it contributed to my understanding of their personal experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The three main findings that emerged as themes during data analysis are:

- **Collaboration**

- **Sustainability; and**

- **Development of human potential.**

In the following sections, the three main themes are discussed in relation to current research literature.

5.1.1 Discussion of Theme 1: Collaboration

Effective collaboration stands as a pivotal component for the success and societal benefit of a community music program. This efficacy is heightened when the program is intricately linked to the community, implying that the music centre should be strategically situated in close proximity to the youth members of the community for optimal impact. The educational benefits of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme would be even greater if it is associated with a tertiary institute such as an urban residential university in South Africa. This implies that two groups of participants may benefit from it namely the youth community members that live in close vicinity to the university campus, and students and staff of the university.

The community music programme opens avenues for individuals to access music education in circumstances previously deemed unattainable. Moreover, the programme can serve as a platform for social interaction, breaking down cultural barriers, and fostering mutual understanding, thereby contributing to the creation of fulfilled citizens. This interaction is anticipated to cultivate tolerance and acceptance among community members from diverse backgrounds. Tunstall and Booth's (2016) findings align with this perspective, highlighting that the overarching objective of El Sistema and El Sistema-inspired programmes is to cultivate fulfilled and successful citizens.

The involvement of a residential university in a South African city could create opportunities for youth members from the community to advance their music studies at tertiary level. Such an environment may stimulate an educational continuity in music studies. The purpose of such an initiative is to offer options to formerly disadvantaged students, who show interest in pursuing music studies,

to make a career of music. Tunstall and Booth (2016) confirm that it is important to be able to guide students who are interested in music with options to further their musical studies so that they eventually become professional musicians.

The university could also benefit from being involved in a community music initiative such as an El-Sistema-inspired programme. Potential music students from the community who demonstrate certain talent and commitment can be eligible for enrolment as BMus students at the university. The El Sistema-inspired programme can therefore serve as a platform to identify potential students, leading to sustaining the tertiary music degree programme on a long-term basis.

Community music programmes focus on music education by teaching students to play musical instruments and to participate in ensemble playing, but it also becomes a tool for social and personal development. To be able to cross cultural barriers, tolerance is the first step towards successful social interaction. Thereafter acceptance is equally important. To increase the success in an educational context, it is essential that there is a “positive psychosocial adjustment” to endorse the feeling of being accepted (Luna et al 2020). In an educational framework, it is therefore vital to feel accepted which will enhance a successful platform for social interaction and cultural acceptance.

5.1.2 Discussion of Theme 2: Sustainability

In order for a project to be sustainable, commitment is vital from all aspects such as the involvement of the university, involvement of the teachers and the commitment of the students. Sustainability is the key to a successful community initiative where the community and the university would obtain long-term benefits and eventually effect social change in society in the broader scope.

Jose Antonio Abreu, founder of El Sistema, stressed that it is critical to ensure that “vital music projects” such as El Sistema and El Sistema-inspired projects are sustainable and long-term projects (Tunstall & Booth 2016, p. 34). A sustainable community initiative implies that long-term goals can settle in for the

student, the El Sistema-inspired programme and the university. The vision of when a student commences with music lessons can be short-term or long-term. For the short-term, some students would prefer to receive music education as an enrichment with regard to their holistic development towards adulthood. For those students who present interest in pursuing a musical career, an El Sistema-inspired programme would offer them a prosperous pathway of training and knowledge guiding them through the El Sistema-inspired programme into the university.

The El Sistema-inspired programme would largely be more sustainable if it is supported through an institute such as a university. A music programme is a long-term project that cannot be effective for the community if there is no guarantee of financial and logistical sustainability. With these elements in place, community projects such as an El Sistema-inspired programme would be efficient in providing music education to the community on a long-term basis. The results and effectiveness of music education in a community can only reveal its impact on the community after a certain amount of time, as Participant One mentioned it during the interview.

Sustainability also signifies a stable panel of teachers devoted to the El Sistema-inspired programme. A successful programme relies on professional and experienced music educators who contribute to the quality and effectiveness of lessons. The involvement of a residential university in a South African city would enhance the ongoing supply of music educators, provided through full-time music lecturers who act as mentors for undergraduate as well as postgraduate music students. In turn, such music students gain significant first-hand experience to improve their teaching skills while contributing towards community enrichment.

A university in the Western Cape, South Africa, combined community music with their tertiary music degree programme. Their aims correspond with the perspectives of the research participants in this study, namely that a community music programme i) is sustainable; ii) provides a platform for community

members to receive music training, enabling them to enter tertiary music studies; iii) allows opportunities for music students to develop their teaching skills, and iv) provides research opportunities for university staff and students (Unit for Community Music | US Music).

In economically disadvantaged communities, criminal activity is prevalent. The youth within these communities frequently encounter limited sources of inspiration, a lack of extracurricular activities, and pervasive boredom (Elpidorou 2021). Several participants involved in El Sistema or El Sistema-inspired programmes across the globe revealed how youth members participating in their programmes are subjected to crime and gangster activities, and how their programmes provided interest and a common goal to strive towards. Similarly, researchers found that community music programmes are successful in lowering the crime rate (Henley 2014). Improvement of social and human capital in deprived areas enhance self-confidence, self-discipline and personal change. Participant 2, the founder of a community foundation in Pretoria, confirmed that crime rate statistics improved over time in that area. Community music programmes draw children off the streets and involve them actively in music-making activities, forming social relationships and increased “social consciousness” (Rose 1991: 1).

In the context of a community music programme, the orchestration of events, particularly concerts, serves as a nexus for the congregation of family, friends, and community members, facilitating meaningful social interactions. These occasions afford family members the opportunity to express commendation for the musical accomplishments of their children. Notably, this platform extends the reach of music to the broader community, providing an environment conducive to social engagement and the cultivation of interpersonal trust (Eulacio-Guevara, 2018).

The findings of this study distinctly illustrate that an El Sistema-inspired programme embodies transformative learning. Such a programme garners

voluntary participation from individuals with shared interests, fostering collaboration between youth community members and music students/staff at the tertiary institution (Langston & Barrett, 2008). This collaborative effort extends beyond the immediate participants, involving family members and friends during youth performances on the university campus and beyond. Additionally, both youth community members as well as the music students acting as tutors have opportunities to establish networks when they partake in performances at various venues.

5.1.3 Discussion of Theme 3: Development of human potential

Upon further examination during the data analysis phase, it became apparent that the efficacy of the EI Sistema-inspired programme in serving the community at its maximum potential hinges on the durability and reliability of Theme 1 – integration, and Theme 2 – sustainability. With these integral elements in place, the music programme has the potential to evolve into a sustainable, long-term project. The enduring nature of such a project not only ensures the provision of music education for youth community members and teaching practice for music students, but also facilitates the simultaneous development of essential life and social skills to both groups of participants. These acquired skills are then applied in their daily lives. Subsequent research supports the positive impact of music education on an individual's mental health. Elevated mental well-being facilitates smoother integration with the community, consequently fortifying the cohesive community fabric and contributing to the overall development of human potential.

Being situated within a collective of contemporaries fosters a heightened sense of ease within the human psyche. Consequently, learners are more relaxed in an ensemble group, which diminishes their inhibitions and assists them to be less self-conscious when they engage in musical expression, even when they have limited musical proficiency. Similarly, Luna et al. (2020) explain that success in an educational context can only increase if there is a “positive psychosocial adjustment” (p. 1305) to endorse the feeling of being accepted.

A long-term El Sistema-inspired programme would therefore serve the purpose of uplifting a community through music education. Two purposes would be served namely: community youth members who grow into self-confident and fulfilled individuals, and tertiary music students who develop into prosperous and competent music educators. This provokes easy integration for your members as well as tertiary music students into the community, thus leading to a united and actualised community.

The fundamentals of El Sistema and El Sistema-inspired programmes are to provide music education to those who would otherwise not be able to reach it. In turn, music education provides simultaneously life skills to individuals initiating positive social change in the community (Booth, n.d.). With the involvement of an urban residential university in South Africa, the El Sistema-inspired programme represents itself as the brainchild of the university. Not only will the university initiate community upliftment through the programme, but also contribute towards the arts by recognising potential talent in the community and train them up to a tertiary level.

El Sistema-inspired programmes strive to create safe, positive, joyful, hardworking and high-aspiring home base for all students. Faculty and programme leaders continually invest themselves in finding additional ways to make the environment more motivating and positive. El Sistema-inspired programmes have active connections to families and community and always seek their greater involvement. (Tunstall & Booth, 2016, p. 490)

5.2 Answering the research questions

To gain a better understanding and objectivity of the main research question, the secondary questions served as a starting point to gain a broader perspective in the context of this study.

5.2.1 Secondary research questions

The three sub-questions are presented in bullet points, each followed by a corresponding elucidation of the results to expound on how each question was addressed.

- **What physical and human resources would be required to establish an EI Sistema-inspired programme at a South African university?**

During the interviews, it became evident that the first important physical resource would be a large room to accommodate ensembles. Because the EI Sistema philosophy is based on learning to play an instrument in group formation, a large room or rooms would be the first important aspect to have. Participant One also suggested to include smaller rooms for individual practicing, smaller ensembles and even theory classes.

Participants specified that the location of the EI Sistema-inspired programme should be strategically based for the community to have easy access. Participant One mentioned that safety is also an important facet. In order for the EI Sistema-inspired programme to function to its fullest capacity, safety is important for the students, teachers and the music centre itself.

If a residential university in a South African city hosts an EI Sistema-inspired programme, human resources would be sustainable and reliable. Some participants proposed to integrate the community programme as part of the music course requirements at the university. One of the participants explained that some universities in England have already merged community music with tertiary music studies. This process involves that tertiary music students are required to teach at the community centre to develop their teaching skills while university staff members oversee the process. In terms of providing teaching staff, the EI-Sistema-inspired programme will be sustainable and serve the principal elements of community music and social change.

Furthermore, one of the participants emphasised that the university would be in an ideal position to identify raw talent from the community. Youth members from the community could be potential tertiary music students who gain the opportunity to receive extensive training to prepare for entry at the university.

- **How should an El Sistema-inspired programme be adapted to fit the unique context in South Africa?**

While the term "El Sistema" implies a systematic structure, it more accurately embodies an approach or pedagogical philosophy. Recognition as an El Sistema-inspired program does not hinge on specific requirements or predefined criteria; rather, each program adjusts to its contextual demands. Given the substantial costs associated with orchestral instruments, exploring alternative ensemble groups becomes a worthwhile consideration. In South Africa, choirs, djembe groups, and marimba bands have gained popularity, drawing significant participant numbers. This adaptability underscores the flexibility inherent in El Sistema-inspired initiatives, allowing for adjustments that align with both financial considerations and local musical preferences. Van As' (2012) research, for example, involved a choir competition with participants working at Absa Bank in South Africa. The study findings revealed a discernible consensus among the Absa workforce, instrumental in fostering connections with co-workers from diverse races, cultures, linguistic origins, and from different departments within the bank's organisational structure. Similarly, choirs or other ensemble groups are contextually and culturally fitting in South Africa and can be financial stepping stones towards creating a symphony orchestra once an El Sistema-inspired music programme has settled and become sustainable. The result would be for the programme to offer a variety of instrumental choices, from African instruments to orchestral instruments.

El Sistema is flexible to each country's culture and context, and should not be a "carbon copy one-on-one" model, as Participant 2 emphasised. However, Tunstall and Booth (2016, p. 490) identified six key factors that act as guidelines for an El Sistema-inspired programme. These key factors, explained in the

following paragraphs, include i) social principles; ii) inclusiveness; iii) learning in ensemble; iv) intensiveness; v) mentoring and peer learning; and vi) learning environment.

Social principles

The initial intention of an El Sistema-inspired programme is to utilise music education as a tool for social change but also to provide an opportunity for disadvantaged communities to receive music education.

Inclusiveness

All members of the community are welcome. There are no auditions or financial commitments to be able to participate. This will ensure that anyone can have the opportunity to come and learn.

Learning in ensemble

Ensemble work serves as a platform for a group of students to perform together. During this time, many social and life skills are developed since teamwork, collaboration, discipline and so forth are acquired to have a successful ensemble. Individual lessons are also offered. Participant Seven recommended that both ensemble and individual lessons be offered since teachers and student often also form deep emotional bonds with each other.

Intensiveness

The aim of El Sistema-inspired programmes is to generate commitment over a lengthy period from the student. These programmes require multiple lessons during the week over a certain amount of years since social development and learning an instrument gradually develop over the years. This explains the crucial reason to ensure that an El Sistema-inspired programme is sustainable over a long period.

Mentoring and peer learning

El Sistema-inspired programmes encourage more experienced students to teach their peers who are on a lower level of technique on their instrument. Together with the teacher, they would act as mentors which creates the phenomenon of sharing, caring and collaboration between each other. I have witnessed many times during the period I taught at a community centre where older students automatically develop a sense of musical guidance and assistance towards the younger students.

Learning environment

The most important aim is to create a safe, jubilant and motivation-seeking platform for the community. Most marginalised communities have the lack of extra murals, activity centres or any other platform to channel and focus their energy on. From my own experience, I observed the same lack at the community where I taught. It is thus remarkably important to ensure that a platform such as an El Sistema-inspired programme provides a safe space to ensure that students can learn and develop to their fullest capacity. This automatically links the music teacher who would be teaching with a certain mindset of uplifting and motivating students.

- **In what ways can an El Sistema-inspired programme offer music education opportunities to youth members from communities within close vicinity to a South African university campus?**

An El Sistema-inspired programme can provide future opportunities such as a career in music to youth members from the community. Those who show potential, and a particular interest, would be able to receive guidance and extensive training for entry at the university. Apart from future music opportunities, the programme also serves as a platform for social change, well-being of the community, a connection between the community and the broader world and creating a safe space for youth members thus uplifting a community.

The involvement of the university in the programme would be a gateway for many students to plan and project their future.

One of the participants keenly observed the significance of establishing a connection between community centres and tertiary institutions. His views were that numerous individuals within his community exhibit a strong inclination toward music yet encounter impediments in pursuing their passion due to the lack of preparation for entry to music degree programmes, or collaborative ties with higher education institutions after high school graduation. Furthermore, he underscored the community's limited comprehension and tepid disposition toward tertiary music studies. From his perspective, the integration of a community music programme within a university context would allow access to tertiary education more attainable for local youth, thereby expanding the prospects for future careers in the realm of music. Most of the participants also recognised the value of educational campaigns in introducing El Sistema-inspired music projects to youth community members. Such endeavours would empower youth members to make informed and responsible decisions so that they can realise their inherent music potential.

5.2.2 Answering the main research question

The responses to the three sub-questions afforded me a deeper understanding, contributing to the elucidation of the primary research question, as articulated subsequently.

- **What is the feasibility of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme for a South African university?**

El Sistema transcends a mere instructional system; rather, it constitutes a philosophy fostering community upliftment through music education. Its adaptability to the distinctive contexts of various countries recognises the need for a “culturally connected rather than disconnected” (Participant 6) music programme that resonates within each community. In collaboration with a

residential university in a South African city, an El Sistema-inspired community music programme emerges as a promising means to address this gap, offering continuous and meaningful music education to the community.

The consensus among participants in this study underscores the feasibility of integrating community music with tertiary music studies. This alignment presents a compelling rationale for universities and potential sponsors to invest. The resulting financial stability not only ensures the sustainability of the music programme as a long-term endeavour but also contributes to community upliftment, the pedagogical skills development of tertiary music students, the music industry, and the cultivation of local talent.

The participants' affirmative responses underscore the viability and pressing necessity of an El Sistema-inspired programme in South Africa. Given the economic landscape of the country, numerous underprivileged communities stand to benefit from such a community music initiative. Participant 4, in particular, emphasised the potential acceleration of economic growth through investment in human capacity. Recognising that human capacity contributes to societal development, and society is integral to a prosperous and dynamic nation, larger institutions and educational platforms, such as a residential university in a South African city, have the potential to establish enduring community programmes. These initiatives, in turn, promise a lasting impact on society, reinforcing the interconnected relationship between educational institutions and societal advancement.

5.3 An El Sistema-inspired programme for South Africa

El Sistema-inspired programmes are currently present in multiple countries around the world. In Central America, Guatemala is one of the countries actively involved in providing music education to deprived communities. Guatemala has many El Sistema-inspired programmes from which many students evolved later as ambassadors and representatives for El Sistema. The Brooklyn Theatre in

Pretoria contacted El Sistema ambassador, Bruno Campo, after which he was invited to conduct the Gauteng Philharmonic Orchestra. As a member of the Gauteng Philharmonic Orchestra, I had the privilege to meet Campo. In 2019, Campo arranged a meeting with the artistic director of Brooklyn Theatre to discuss possibilities for founding an El Sistema-inspired programme in South Africa. Unfortunately, in 2020, the logistics and planning could not concretise due to the Covid-19 global pandemic.

During this research process, I contacted the internationally renowned conductor, Bruno Campo, to gain insight into his vision and knowledge concerning the process of implementing an El Sistema-inspired programme in a South African city. Campo (2022) corresponded with me via email and provided personal documents outlining the prerequisites and essential procedures for the successful initiation of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme.

The initial step would involve securing an urban residential university's participation with the objective to strategically integrate the El Sistema-inspired programme with tertiary music studies, incorporating community engagement as a requisite for earning a music degree. This approach not only lays the foundation for sustainability but also facilitates long-term planning. The university's involvement holds the potential to alleviate financial constraints and streamline the implementation of the El Sistema-inspired initiative. Additionally, Participant 2 recommended that programme organisers approach influential external entities such as banks, insurance companies, or mobile companies for support to ensure and sustain financial viability. Depending on the availability of these resources, the university campus and its facilities emerge as the optimal choice for hosting an El Sistema-inspired programme, particularly for communities in close proximity to the university campus, minimising concerns related to transportation.

Several participants, along with Campo (2022), concur that considering the economic context and cultural landscape of South Africa, it would be advantageous to initiate a community music programme with ensemble activities

such as choirs, which are financially more manageable. Additionally, djembe groups and marimba bands can follow at subsequent stages. Best (2014), for instance, proposes that marimba bands serve as a significant catalyst for fostering identity, ambition, and inspiration. Campo (2022) further recommends viewing the establishment of an orchestra as the next step in the progression of developing a community music programme.

Recruiting staff members with the correct mindset and intentions, would be an important step to ensure a successful EI-Sistema-inspired programme. Several participants noted the vital importance of recruiting equitable and enthusiastic staff members. In their view, an EI-Sistema-inspired programme would greatly benefit if music staff involved with pedagogy are involved as mentors to tertiary music students who act as tutors. These students, in turn, gain credits for their involvement in the programme as part of their degree requirements. Furthermore, music staff and students would be ideally placed to observe and recognise potential talent in youth community members participating in the programme.

Once the EI Sistema-inspired programme runs successfully and has established ensemble groups, for example choirs, djembe or marimba ensembles, Campo believes that an EI Sistema-inspired programme should work towards a performance outcome, for example to perform with the university orchestra. This provides opportunities for a variety of cultures to meet and work together. During the growth and development of the EI Sistema-inspired programme, the formation of an orchestra could be initiated with community youth members aiming to join the university orchestra for performances. This would encourage community youth to improve their skills and proficiency so that they may enrol as future university students to become professional musicians and music educators.



Figure 5: Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra with Bruno Campo in Milan, 2015

5.4 Limitations to the study

When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in early 2020, I faced limitations in conducting face-to-face interviews with participants due to the imperative of minimizing physical contact and mitigating virus transmission. My data collection efforts were initially constrained by the prevailing COVID-19 protocols. As a result, I conducted telephonic interviews as an alternative approach to circumvent the risk of viral transmission. Personally, I would have preferred in-person interviews as they generally facilitate a more relaxed and natural interaction. Such interviews enable a deeper comprehension of nonverbal cues, including facial expressions and body language, which enhances the interpretation of participants' responses.

Interviewing international participants was at times complex since most of them had busy schedules. I had to phone back a few times to be able to continue the interview.

To gain a comprehensive grasp of El Sistema within its complete framework, a visit to its Venezuelan headquarters would have been invaluable for this study. Regrettably, financial constraints and the prevailing global pandemic rendered

this opportunity unavailable at the time. Nonetheless, this unexplored avenue of investigation remains a significant consideration for the expansion and enrichment of this study.

5.5 Recommendations for community music in South Africa

Throughout my research, I recognised the applicability of El Sistema-inspired programmes to countries like South Africa. El Sistema encompasses three fundamental elements: offering music education to disadvantaged communities, fostering personal and social development through group learning, and identifying local talent to contribute to South Africa's music industry.

South African statistics reveal that more than half of its children endure financial strain, health challenges, and educational disadvantages (Africa, 2020), underscoring the importance of targeting youth in communities. These young individuals are the future representatives of the nation, and music education can serve as a platform to enhance community well-being and nurture prosperous individuals. El Sistema's inclusive approach invites all to join and learn music, with ensemble instruction serving as the initial step. This setup enables a broad spectrum of students to engage in music, while group sessions cultivate essential personal and social skills for holistic development. As students progress, individual lessons could be added to refine their technical abilities. By prioritising ensemble instruction, El Sistema reaches a wider demographic, effecting broader social change. Group learning fosters a sense of belonging, teamwork, discipline, and collaboration, aligning participants toward shared objectives (Dalisay, 2018).

5.6 Recommendations for future research

To enrich this study, I recommend further field research at the El Sistema music programme in Venezuela. This immersive approach would facilitate a deeper comprehension of student experiences. Observing interactions among teachers, students, and the community, as well as engaging with community members

beyond the school, would provide insights into El Sistema's broader social impact. Direct interactions with current El Sistema founders would yield valuable information on logistical and financial requirements for launching a successful El Sistema-inspired programme in South Africa. Additionally, I propose the following study topics to continue research on El Sistema in South Africa:

- A comparative study between El Sistema and other community music programmes in South Africa to determine the efficacy of ensemble classes in comparison to one-on-one lessons for personal and social development.
- Unveiling the potential of El Sistema music education: Alleviating poverty and fostering socioeconomic growth.
- A case study on the personal development of six individual music learners attending an El Sistema or El Sistema-inspired programme.
- Exploring the possibilities of combining an El Sistema-inspired programme with the music curriculum as required for South African schools.

Conclusion

In summation, El Sistema stands as a pioneering exemplar of music education's transformative potential (Bowman & Frega, 2011). Its innovative methodology, encompassing ensemble engagement, equitable access, and community-focused nucleos, has led to demonstrable positive outcomes for participants and communities. As its legacy endures, El Sistema continues to underscore the profound intersection of music and social development. Music education truly plays an important role in society. Self-esteem, discipline, a sense of belonging, self-respect, pride, dignity, are to name a few of these valuable social and life skills that music education can provide to an individual. In return, these individuals form part of a broader community in which they can consequently instil knowledge and social skills in their surroundings, thus initiating social change. Music, in this

narrative, emerges as an indispensable pillar in nurturing vibrant and resilient communities, particularly those facing adversities.

Sustainability is the crucial factor and key element for a community music programme to have an efficient and positive social impact on the community, as evident from the findings of this study. By ensuring sustainability, a tertiary institution in a South African city can combine an El Sistema-inspired community music programme with tertiary music studies. This means university music students will have the opportunity to teach at the community music centre as part of their music degree requirements. The benefits of this combination would be two-folded, namely: university students would develop their practical teaching skills, organisational attributes, and build up teaching experience in a mentored environment while community members have access to free music education. This also allows the university to recognise potential talent within the community as individual learners receive extensive musical training in preparation for entering tertiary studies in music at the same institution. As part of El Sistema's philosophy, group work forms a complex social network of many individuals required to work together so that they may evolve as a united group obtaining the same goal. This allows for collectivism to develop rather than individualism, an integral part of El Sistema's philosophy. An El Sistema-inspired programme is therefore a much-needed investment in human capacity through music for the betterment of a future for the next generation in South Africa.

You invest in human capacity. Human capacity is sustainability, and sustainability is economic growth. (Participant 4)

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Appendix A: Semi-structured interview schedule

South African Community music founders

- 1 What is your view of community music programmes?
Prompts: involvement of communities, music teachers, music students
- 2 How do you view the role of music education within a broader community?
Please explain
- 3 Please explain your background regarding the community music programme you founded.
Prompts: How did you become involved? Where is the programme located? What is your role? Have you done similar projects elsewhere in the country?
- 4 What is your perspective regarding the way that community music programmes are implemented in South Africa? Please describe.
- 5 What have you witnessed at the music programme regarding how it affected the youth members and community? Please describe.
- 6 In what ways have your involvement in this programme affected your life personally?
- 7 What are your views regarding the establishment of an El Sistema inspired programme at a university in Tshwane, South Africa? Please explain.
- 8 What are the first steps to be taken when such a community music programme is planned?
- 9 What would the financial implications of such a programme be? Please provide details of all the aspects and costs involved.
- 10 What type of facilities will be required to be able to accommodate such a programme?
- 11 How do you recruit sponsors for your community music programme?

- 12 What human resources would be necessary to be able to implement such a programme at a university in Tshwane, South Africa?
- 13 How do you recruit youth members from the local community to enrol for the music programme?
Prompts: Musicians giving demonstrations of the programme at schools, motivational talks by university music students at schools, performances of musicians in public spaces in the community to advertise the programme.
- 14 How do the learners choose their instruments?
Prompts: Who subsidises the instruments? Do the learners have to pay a certain amount to keep the instrument at home to practice?
- 15 How are music lessons organised with learners?
Prompts: Do learners have individual or group lessons in their chosen instruments? Do all learners come on the same day or on different days?
- 16 How are the ensemble playing and orchestral playing sessions structured?
Prompts: Who takes the lead in the large ensemble- or orchestral sessions? What is required of the leader/conductor of such large ensemble/orchestral sessions?
- 17 Do the learners receive lessons in music theory? If so, how are such lessons organised?
Prompts: Individual or group sessions/ According to age or level of music knowledge?
- 18 How do you recruit music educators or tutors to teach the youth members?
Prompts: Who have you involved to be music educators or tutors in your community music programme? How many learners do each educator/tutor teach? Are tutors mentored? If so, by whom?
- 19 How is the transport for the youth members organised?
Prompts: Who organises the transport for weekly lessons and rehearsals?

Who sponsors the transport? How do you make sure that children regularly attend the weekly lessons and ensemble sessions?

20 What opportunities do you think there are in a community music programme for learners to select or create music according to their personal preferences?

Prompts: Do you think this is advisable or not? Please describe your views.

21 Reflecting on your own experiences, what is your perspective of the way that such a programme may influence the wider community in close vicinity to the university?

22 In what ways do you think a community music programme at a South African university should be adapted to the unique context of the country?

23 What would your advice be to the university should the establishment of such a programme be considered?

24 Please comment on any other further relevant information related to this topic.

Thank you for participating in this research and sharing your expertise with me!

Appendix B: Semi-structured interview schedule

International El Sistema founders

1. What is your view of community music programmes?
Prompts: involvement of communities, music teachers, music students
2. How do you view the role of music education within a broader community?
Please explain.
3. Please explain your connection and background regarding the El Sistema programme of Venezuela?
Prompts: How did you become involved? Where is the programme located?
What is your role?
4. Tell more about the El Sistema-inspired programme/s you have already implemented and in which country/countries.
5. What is your perspective regarding the way that El Sistema-inspired music programmes are implemented in other countries in comparison to how it functions in Venezuela? Please describe.
6. What have you witnessed at the El Sistema-inspired programme/s regarding how it affected the community? Please describe.
7. In what ways have your involvement in El Sistema affected your life personally?
8. What are your views regarding the establishment of an El Sistema inspired programme at a university in Tshwane, South Africa? Please explain.
9. What are the first steps to be taken when such a community music programme is planned?
10. What would the financial implications of such a programme be? Please provide details of all the aspects and costs involved.

11. What type of facilities will be required to be able to accommodate such a programme?
12. How do you recruit sponsors for an EI Sistema-inspired programme?
13. What human resources would be necessary to be able to implement such a programme at a university in Tshwane, South Africa?
14. How do you recruit youth members from the local community to enrol for the music programme?
Prompts: Musicians giving demonstrations of the programme at schools, motivational talks by university music students at schools, performances of musicians in public spaces in the community to advertise the programme.
15. How do the learners choose their instruments?
Prompts: Who subsidises the instruments? Do the learners have to pay a certain amount to keep the instrument at home to practice?
16. How are music lessons organised with learners?
Prompts: Do learners have individual or group lessons in their chosen instruments? Do all learners come on the same day or on different days?
17. How are the ensemble playing and orchestral playing sessions structured?
Prompts: Who takes the lead in the large ensemble- or orchestral sessions? What is required of the leader/conductor of such large ensemble/orchestral sessions?
18. Do the learners receive lessons in music theory? If so, how are such lessons organised?
Prompts: Individual or group sessions/ According to age or level of music knowledge?
19. How do you recruit music educators or tutors to teach the youth members?
Prompts: Have you involved tertiary music students to be tutors in an EI

Sistema programme? How many learners do each tutor teach? Are tutors mentored? If so, by whom?

20. How is the transport for the youth members organised?

Prompts: Who organises the transport for weekly lessons and rehearsals? Who sponsors the transport? How do you make sure that children regularly attend the weekly lessons and ensemble sessions?

21. What – if any- opportunities are there in an EI Sistema-inspired programme for learners to select or create music according to their personal preferences?

Prompts: Do you think this is advisable or not? Please describe your views.

22. What is your view of such a programme – on the university campus – influencing the wider community in the city?

23. In what ways did you have to adapt the EI Sistema-inspired programme for the specific context of the country where it was established?

24. How would you suggest an EI Sistema-inspired programme should be adapted to the unique context of South Africa?

25. What would your advice to the university be for the establishment of an EI Sistema inspired programme?

26. Please comment on any other further relevant information related to this topic.

Thank you for participating in this research and sharing your expertise with me!

Appendix C: Letter of informed consent



Faculty of Humanities
Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo



Date:

Dear Community Music Founder

I am currently enrolled as a doctoral student in Performing Art at the University of Pretoria and would like to invite you to participate in my study.

Research title:

Exploring the feasibility of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme for a South African university.

Rationale/Aims of the study: This study aims to understand the feasibility of establishing an El Sistema-inspired community music programme at a South African university.

What will be expected of you? Your participation will involve a semi-structured interview which will take approximately one hour. The interview will take place telephonically and will be audio-recorded. After the interview, I will carefully transcribe the interview and share the transcript with you to verify that it is a true reflection of your views. The information will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Approval: The study will only begin after ethical approval by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria, has been obtained.

Remuneration: There is no payment for participating in this study.

Risks and benefits: The expected benefits of your participation will be that you will be contributing to knowledge regarding the feasibility of an EI Sistema programme at a South African university. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no negative consequences to you, nor will you need to explain your reason. You are encouraged to ask any questions you may have about the study.

Confidentiality: The information you share as well as the audio recordings will be treated with strict confidentiality and your identity will not be revealed in any of the research outputs.

Who will have access to the data? The data will be handled by me as principal researcher, and my supervisor. It will be used for academic purposes only. The raw data will be safely archived at the School of the Arts, University of Pretoria for a minimum period of fifteen years. During this time, the raw data may be reused for possible further research. You will have access to the data and, should you be interested, the research findings will be shared with you on completion of the study.

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor if you require more information about the study.

Kind regards

Nathalie Roué

(Signature of student)
Researcher name: Nathalie Roué
email: nathalieroue.za@gmail.com
Tel.: 083 391-1643

(Signature of supervisor)
Supervisor: Dr Dorette Vermeulen
dorette.vermeulen.music@gmail.com

Appendix D: Participant Reply slip



Faculty of Humanities
Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo



Date:

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign the informed consent reply slip below.

Name of researcher: Nathalie Yvette Roué

Research Topic:

Exploring the feasibility of an El Sistema-inspired community music programme for a South African university.

I, _____ hereby give my consent to participate in the aforementioned research project. I confirm that I understand what is required of me in this research project.

I acknowledge that the data may be used in current research and that it may be reused in possible future research. I am aware that I may withdraw from the study at any time, should I wish to do so.

Yes	No
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I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview:

Signature of participant

Signature of DMus student

Date: _____

Date: _____