

Impact Report 2020



music as therapy
international

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Executive Summary

In discussion with the Trustees, we recognised that new impact reporting mechanisms were needed to enhance how we reported on our expanding portfolio of activities. Consequently, we built the second strategic goal *‘to undertake a review of impact recording... and communicate the challenges and revisions to our approach to our supporters’* into our Three-Year Strategy (2020-22). This report outlines our progress one year on and presents our impact in 2020 using the enhanced impact reporting structure we have designed.

Context

As the charity has grown, the projects we deliver have been tailored to the specific needs of Partners who work across wide-ranging contexts, including countries, cultures, locations, care settings and client groups. With such breadth, it has become challenging to record impact meaningfully across all contexts. Our challenge this year has been to identify and distil the commonalities between our projects. Could reporting against specific outcomes or outputs serve to evidence our achievements - and those of our Partners - from introductory training through to years of independent practice, wherever and with whomever they might be working? And can this include both qualitative and quantitative reporting to meaningfully evidence our impact?

Method

In response, we identified three key starting points:

- 1) We would enhance our understanding of our Partners’ work and, specifically, their use of music.
- 2) We would use our enhanced understanding of our Partners’ engagement with us to improve the accuracy of our quantitative impact recording.
- 3) We would use Theory of Change to review and focus our qualitative impact collection.

From these we sought to distil the commonalities between our partners, our projects, our goals and those of our partners, the ways in which music is being used by all involved, the experiences for different service users, and the linked immediate, medium term and long term impacts.

Our Impact in 2020

Our top-line impact figures provide an accessible overview of our impact in 2020:



Our enhanced understanding of our Partners’ work enabled us to identify short, medium and long-term impacts that we – together with our partners – can achieve worldwide:

1) Short Term Outputs represent the impact we see during and immediately after a project:

- New skills and techniques are learnt
- Caregivers feel confident
- Caregivers feel supported
- Wider participation in music takes place

2) **Medium Term Outputs** represent the impact we see as Partners develop their music practice:

- Caregivers are more committed to using music within care
- Service users and caregivers get to know each other better
- Pride in care work grows
- Opportunities for agency to develop
- Opportunities for service users' meaningful experience of music occur

3) **Long Term Outcomes** represent the impact that this translates to over time:

- Care skills are optimised
- Care settings are able to extend the activities they offer their service users
- Music is embedded in care provision
- The therapeutic benefits of music are available to service users
- Opportunities for professional development are available to caregivers

[Detailed evidence collected from our partners demonstrating these is included in the full Impact 2020 Report, pp.10-19].

Future Impact Measurement: Achieving our strategic goal

Going into 2021 we will continue to **pilot our Theory of Change** as a tool to monitor and evaluate impact, and to inform the **design of common evaluation tools for use across different countries**. We will look for opportunities to collate **thematic qualitative evidence** to tell the stories of the impact we achieve - together with our Partners - and **align UK and international** data collection, where helpful, so we can report both separately and multi-nationally. We will find meaningful ways to **share our impact evaluation findings and wider learning** with contributing Partners. We will continue using new mechanisms to track our **Partners' engagement** and pro-actively seek to reach partners if they disengage from our support.

Introduction

During our September 2019 Trustees Meeting, the Board enquired about our impact collection and presentation, which thus far has comprised of the quantitative top-line impact statistics, accompanied by qualitative Partner quotes. The Trustees noted that our impact numbers were at risk of losing real meaning and wanted us to think about how we might better articulate our impact. Our Three-Year Strategy (2020-22) consequently included this as one of our organisation-wide goals.

Strategic Goal 2: Undertake a review of impact recording by consulting our Advisory Panel, project Partners, team and Trustees. Communicate the challenges and revisions to our approach to our supporters.

One year on, this report outlines our progress redesigning our impact collection to be able to better evidence the difference our work makes to vulnerable children and adults worldwide and those who are responsible for their education and care.

The context

Music as Therapy International is driven by the passionate belief that there are many vulnerable people worldwide whose opportunities do not include access to the benefits of music. We regularly encounter care providers who know this and want help to use music themselves. By forming partnerships with care providers, we have evidenced time and again that music training optimises care practice.

The charity was founded in 1995 to respond to the crisis in Romania's notorious institutions. It operated solely in Romania for 10 years before widening its reach to establish its International Programme extending to a total of 6 countries overseas. The charity started its work in the UK in 2010 with specific activities designed to make music accessible to very young children, however the UK Programme (including activities for vulnerable people across the lifespan), was not established until 2016.

As the charity has grown, the projects we deliver have been tailored to the specific needs of Partners who work across wide-ranging contexts, including countries, cultures, locations, care settings and client groups. With such breadth, it has become challenging to record impact meaningfully across all contexts. The enquiry from the Trustees was the prompt we needed to explore this more critically.

Traditionally, we have always shared 'top-line impact statistics' that cover the reach of our projects worldwide. However, as we have expanded, these numbers have also grown, and we share the Trustees' opinion that they would benefit from clearer grounding in the human impact of our projects. Traditionally, we have communicated the human (qualitative) impact by reporting on individual projects, sharing quotes, stories and case studies. However, as we have expanded, this style of reporting has become unwieldy - there is simply too much evidence to choose from, too many projects to report on. So, our challenge this year has been to identify and distil the commonalities between our projects. Could reporting against specific outcomes or outputs serve to evidence our achievements and that of our Partners from introductory training through to years of independent practice, wherever and with whomever they might be working? And can this include both qualitative and quantitative reporting to meaningfully evidence our impact?

Note: In this report you will see us refer to “Partners”. These are people who have participated in our training projects and may be employed in any care setting in any capacity. Within our network of Partners worldwide the majority are:

- Mainstream and special needs teachers, educators and support teachers
- Early years teachers
- Youth leaders
- Care and education managers
- Support workers for vulnerable people
- Music, art and instrumental teachers
- Speech and language therapists, music therapists, psychotherapists
- Psychologists
- Social workers
- Outreach workers
- Librarians
- Volunteers

We have also trained people in roles you might consider entail working behind the scenes of organisations, such as administrators, care setting managers, programme managers, and project co-ordinators. Whatever their role and wherever they work, our Partners all share a common motivation to embed music into the activities and care they provide.



Early Years teacher, Carolyn, delivering a music session as part of her learning on the Interactive Music-Making Course we delivered in the UK (March 2020)

Our Starting Point




1) We enhanced our understanding of our Partners' work and, specifically, their use of music

Fundamentally the number of people we have trained increases with every year that passes, but of course people's work changes over time. There is a natural ebb and flow in the number of Partners we count within our network. In some instances, they stop using music or even leave the caring profession. But often their work just re-locates or is interrupted temporarily. With support and opportunity, we have discovered that many introduce music back into their work when changes stabilise. We have always monitored the level of our Partners' engagement with our activities, but this year we were pro-active in seeking out relevant information.

Learning from the success of our UK Sustainability Review (2018)¹ we created a comparable International Partner Survey, which we disseminated to Partners working in 56 care settings in Romania, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Georgia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, India and Myanmar over the course of 2020. In the UK, our remit was slightly different: We had continued to use the Sustainability Review tools to collect medium term impact from 2018-2020. But we needed a new evaluation tool to explore the immediate impact of our activities for our Partners in 2020. To this end we had put together a "1-minute Music Survey" specifically investigating the role of music and of our activities for our Partners and service users during a year of lockdown.

2) We used our enhanced understanding of our Partners' engagement with us to improve the accuracy of our quantitative impact recording

To record this deeper understanding of our Partners' music activity and engagement with us, we created a new Partner Log. The accuracy of this data is critical to our confidence to quantify our impact and the new, comprehensive spreadsheet contains records of every individual Partner, their place(s) of work, their historic involvement in our projects, up-to-date information on their use of music and the number of service users who have opportunities to access music as a result. We have introduced a traffic light system to indicate a Partner's level of engagement at-a-glance. Additionally, it enables us to forecast and quantify impact of future or current activities, and may inform the development of projects²:

-  **Active engagement** indicates Partners we know to be currently committed to using music and engaging regularly with our activities.
-  **Intermittent engagement** indicates Partners who may not be using music actively but continue to engage with us and communicate their intention or desire to re-start using music in their work.
-  **No engagement.** Ultimately, Partners who remain red for 1 year are archived if they cannot be re-engaged.

A further benefit of consolidating and enhancing our records is that it is easier to identify where differences in record keeping and data processing between countries or individual care settings might confuse our reporting. We record when information was collected and anticipate when it would be timely to update it.

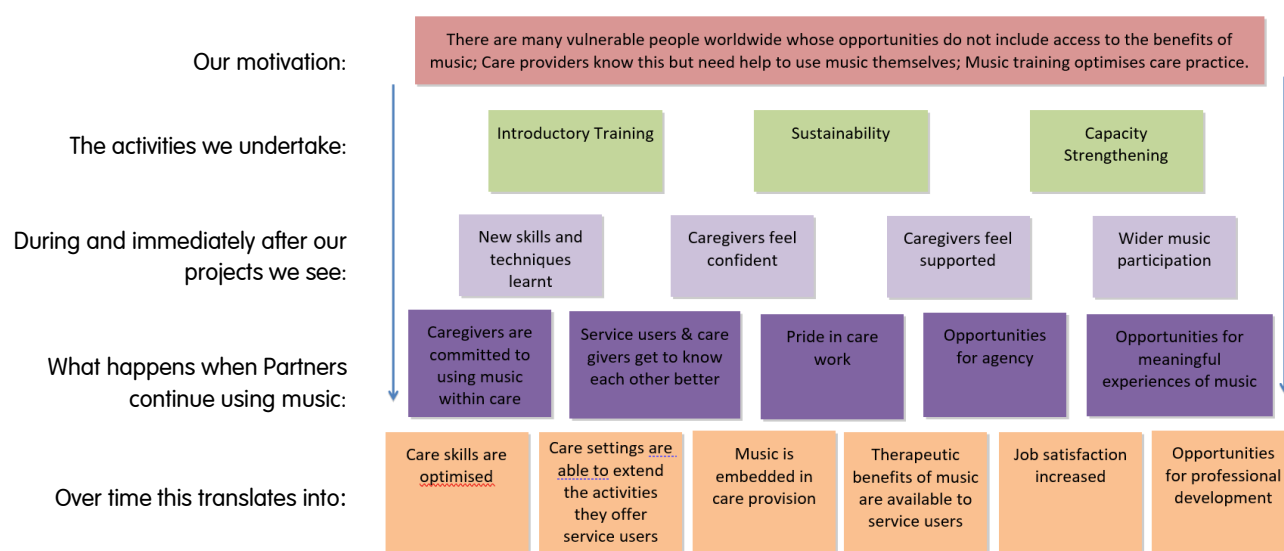
¹ Evaluating the medium-term impact of a series of Introductory Training projects delivered in the UK two years previously.

² For example, Partner engagement could inform the rationale for a particular project, evidence demand/relevance, help identify the best location for project delivery, trends within target group of project participants, help forecast cost per head etc.

3) We have used Theory of Change to review and focus our qualitative impact collection

Building on an initial consultation with our Advisory Panel in January 2020, we undertook a facilitated “Theory of Change” workshop to help us identify what we believe the short, medium and long-term outcomes of our work can be. We have since used these newly defined outcomes to review qualitative impact data received from our Partners and have used the categories to evaluate the impact we – together with our Partners - achieved in 2020.

Our current Theory of Change (working model):



Given the extremely unusual nature of 2020, we have extended the pilot of this mechanism until September 2021; however, initial indications suggest our identified outcomes are highly relevant as evidenced in our Partners’ feedback.



Since participating in Introductory Training back in 2009, Audace and Alphonsine - subsequently joined by Fidele (2016) - have been running regular music sessions for their service users. In 2020 they further developed their skills as trainers, convening the first of 3 planned Locally-led Training courses.

Our Impact in 2020

Despite Covid-19 reducing our ability to turn all our proposals for 2020 into projects we could deliver as planned, we achieved our quantifiable impact to be proud of. The first quarter of the year saw us focus on Introductory Training then, as Covid-19 hit, our focus moved to honouring our commitment to Sustainability and supporting our existing network through the challenges of the pandemic.

For supporters of the charity, top-level statistics continue to provide an accessible overview of our impact:

We have created opportunities for



11,798

vulnerable children and adults to
access music as part of their care

We have trained and supported



252

caregivers around the world to use
music in the care they provide

Our projects have reached



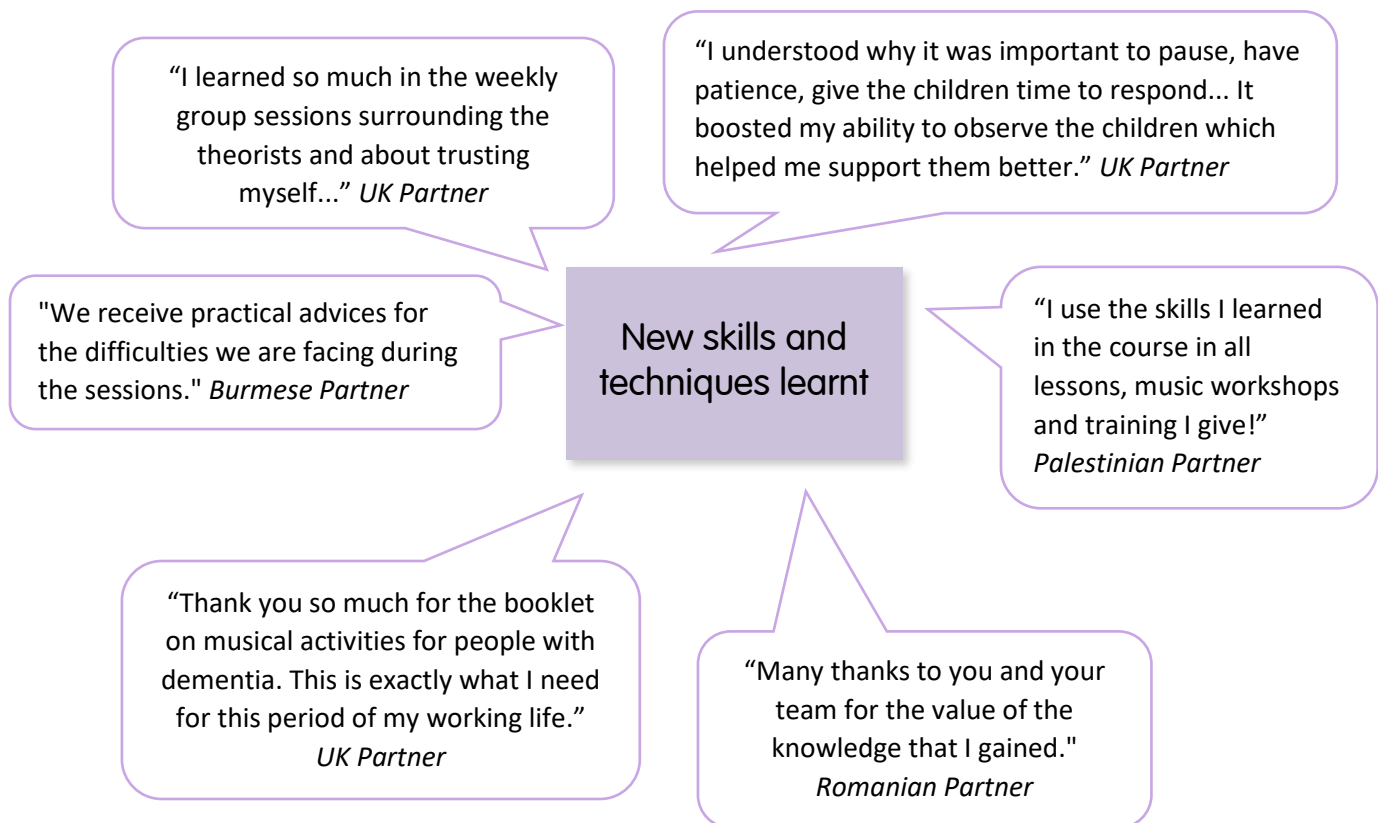
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care and education settings
around the world

Unsurprisingly these figures evidence a visible reduction in our impact when compared to the top-level statistics from 2019: 34% fewer vulnerable children and adults were given opportunities to access music within their care or education, 60% fewer staff were trained or supported and the number of care settings we reached decreased by 64%. Some of this difference is attributable to the impact COVID-19 had on our ability to deliver our work; some is attributable to greater scrutiny of the activities and engagement of our Partner network and the improved accuracy of our records. It will be interesting to monitor these top-level figures in 2021: To what extent will recovery from COVID-19 see our quantitative impact return to its previous level and to what extent will the accuracy of our new Partner Log pare down the sizeable top-line reach numbers we are used to seeing.

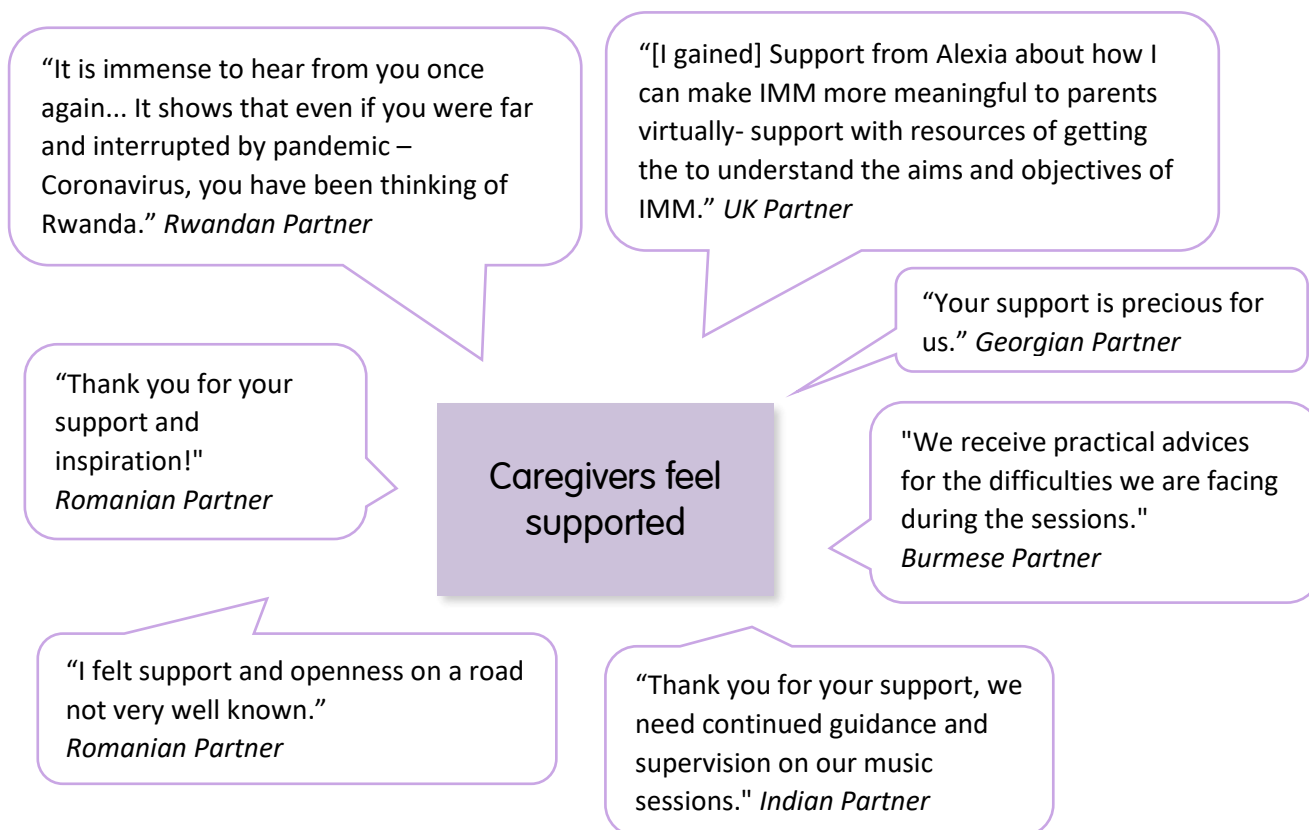
Mitigating the apparent reduction in our top-level figures is our enhanced understanding of our Partners' activities and engagement. This has enabled us to identify the commonalities between our partners, our projects, our goals and those of our partners, the ways in which music is being used by all involved, the experiences for different service users. This in turn has helped us evidence and articulate our short, medium and long-term impacts more comprehensively.

1) Short-Term Outputs: During and immediately after our projects we see...



95% of our Partners worldwide reported feeling more *confident* since their introductory training from Music as Therapy International.





Our Local Partners worldwide can currently give **11,798 people** the opportunity to access music as a part of their care or education. This number is predominantly children, but our Partners' service users are spread across the lifespan - as shown in *Figures 1 and 2*.

Figure 1: International Partners *please note the sum of percentages is higher than 100% because many of our international partners work with more than one client group.

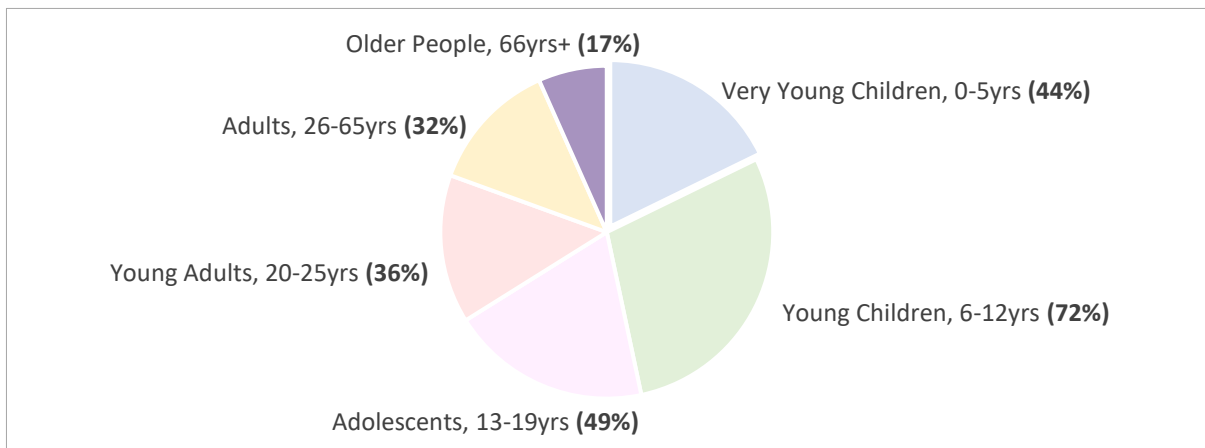
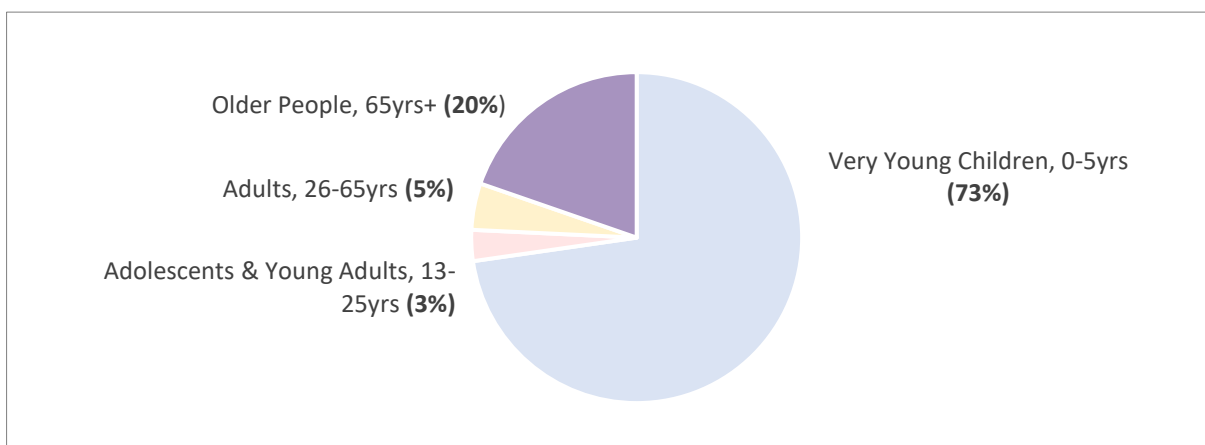


Figure 2: UK Partners



Our International Partner Survey evidences the wide-ranging service users who are now participating in music sessions established following our training projects (Fig. 3):

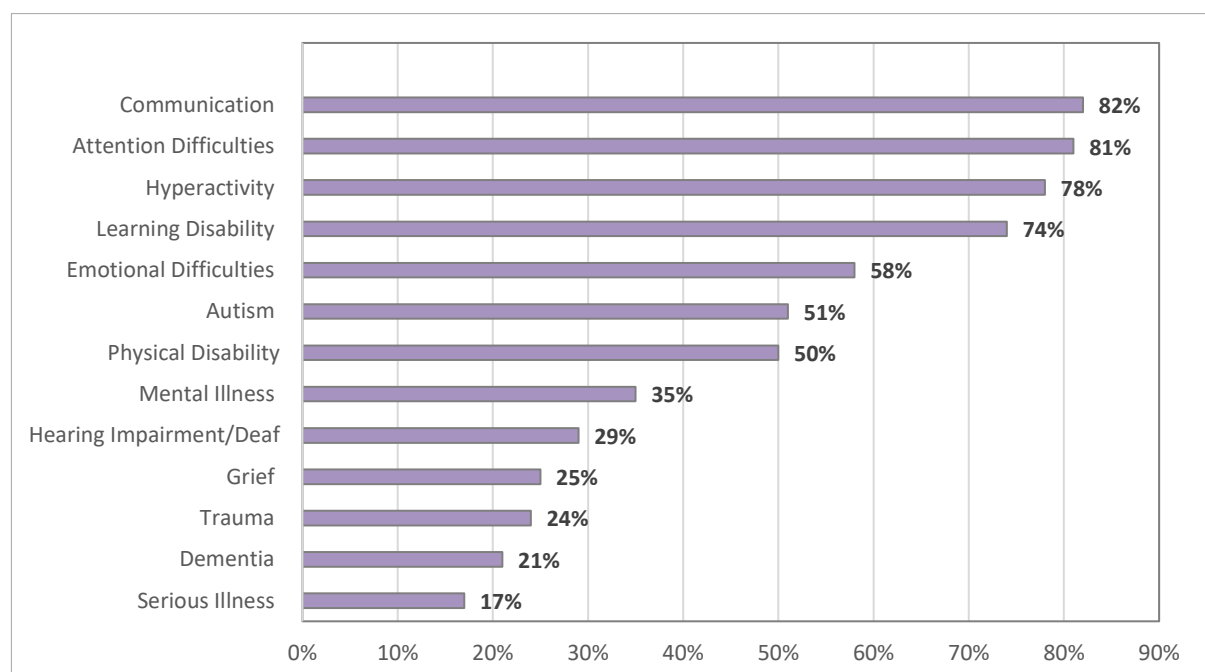
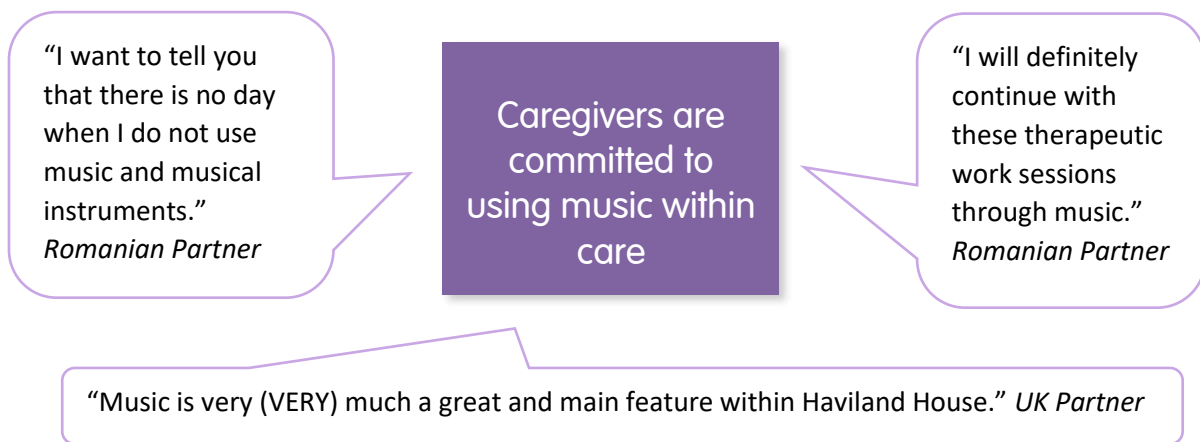


Figure 3

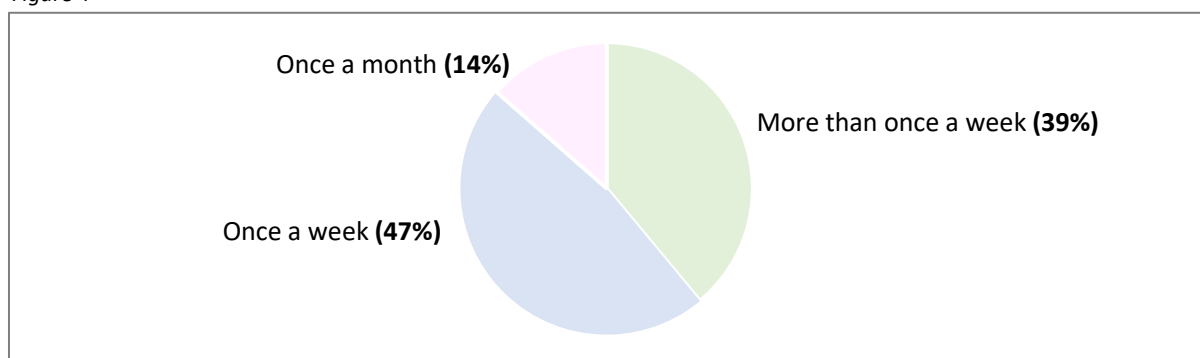
2) Medium Term Outputs: What happens when Partners continue using music



92% of our Partners worldwide indicated that the Music as Therapy International training had led to their increased *commitment*

Our International Partners tell us they use music regularly, either monthly, weekly or once a week:

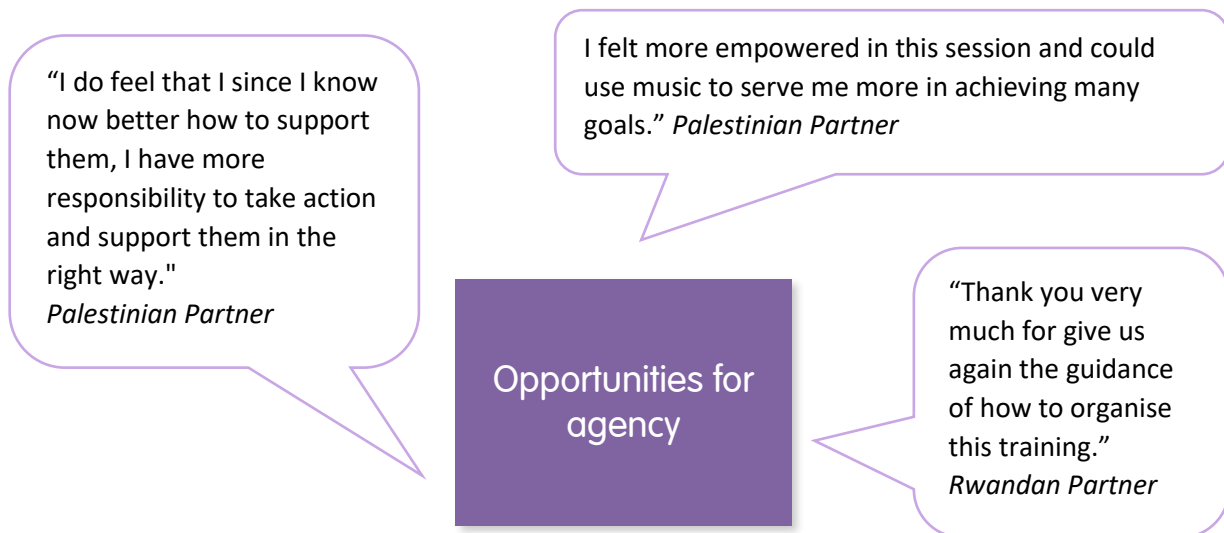
Figure 4



96% of our Partners worldwide told us they were **proud** of their work with music.

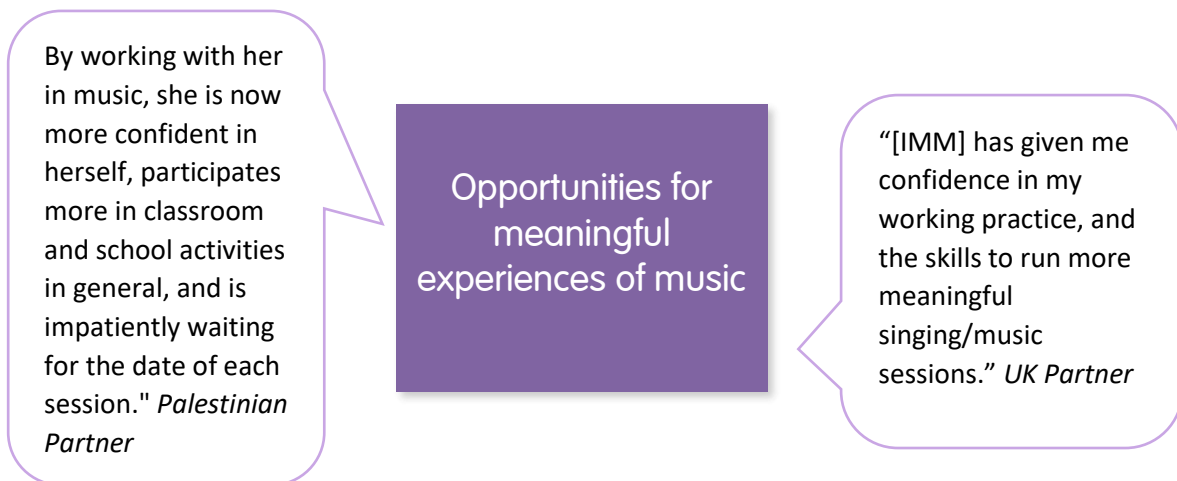


88% of our Partners worldwide report they have enjoyed more **responsibility** following their introductory training from Music as Therapy International.

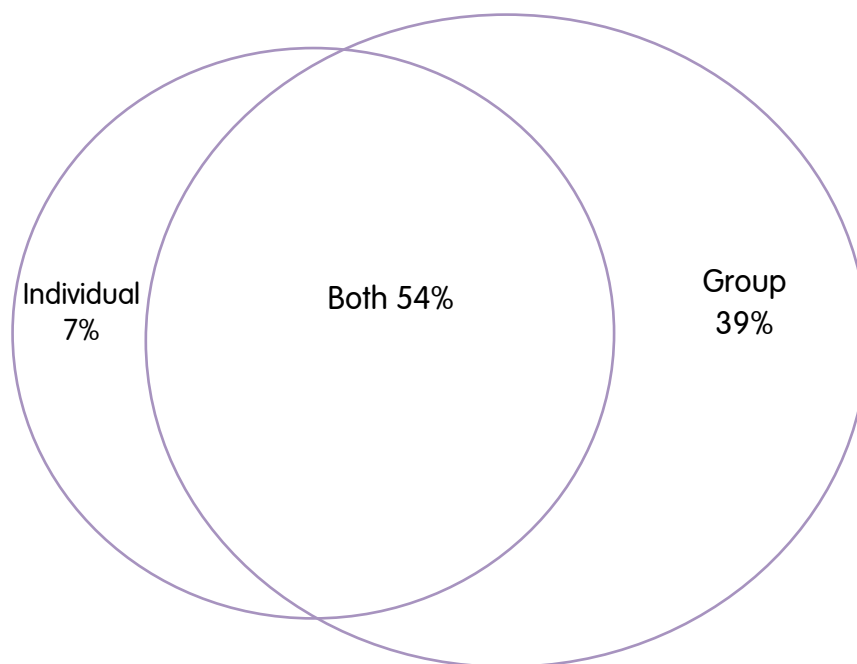


92% of our International Partners tell us they have **shared their skills with colleagues** to extend local capacity to make opportunities for music available to the children and adults in their settings.

60% of the 1-Min music respondents (UK) said they were **able to use music during lockdown** (most commonly, this was recorded music and singing in everyday care).

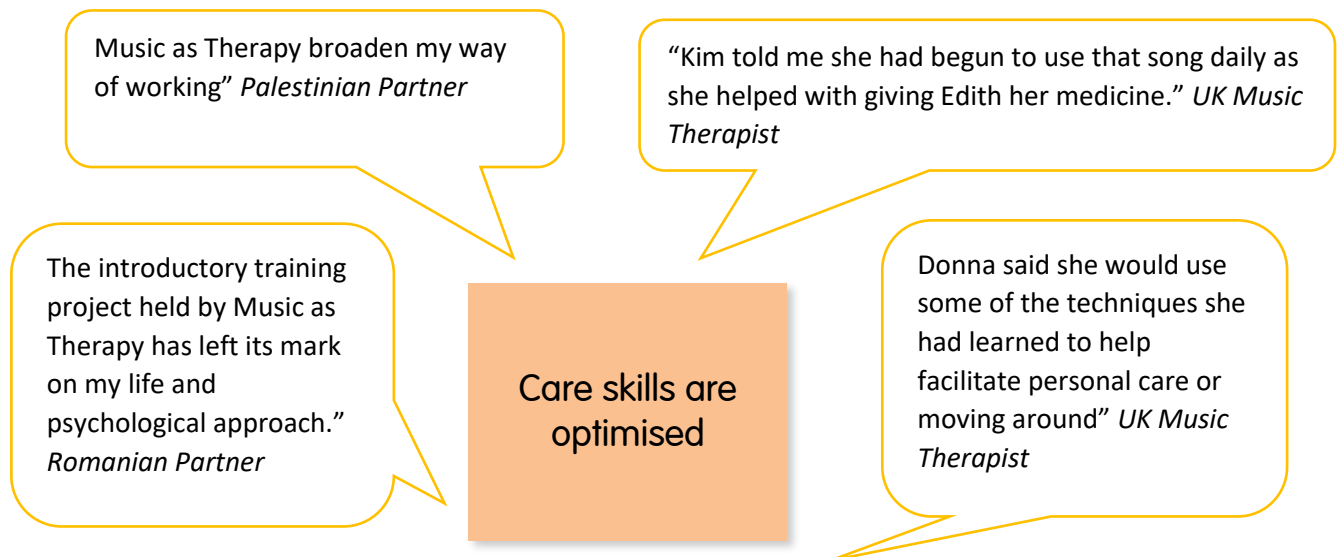


On average our International Partners use music within a mix of group and individual sessions:

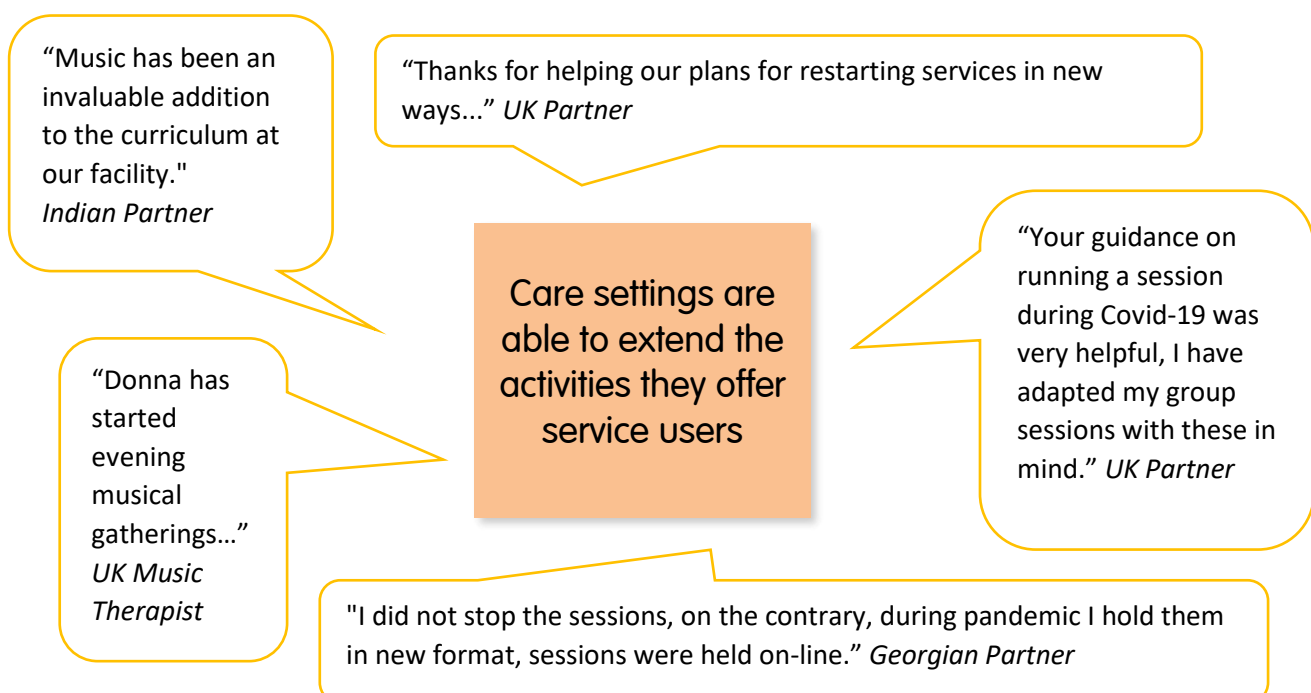


3) Long Term Outcomes: Over time this translates into...

90% of our Partners worldwide told us that **what they learned from Music as Therapy International has changed their practice more widely** than just in music sessions, referring to how they teach, work or provide care.



65% of international Partners, and **93%** of UK Partners, say they are now **regularly using music** with our service users.



*100% of UK Partners and 74% of international Partners told us that music sessions are an **important part of their setting's timetable.***

"Because music is such a necessary thing to members of the community who have mental disabilities, it will never get tiring even if (we) work on it unceasingly."
Ethiopian Partner

Music is
embedded in care
provision

"Since 2001 I have been working through music and I am still discovering new benefits that music bring to the ones I am working with, children with disabilities and other conditions, old people."
Romanian Partner

*This year participants' responses to our International Partner Survey showed them continuing to use music following introductory training from us **as long ago as 1998, and as recently as 2019.** On average, our International Partners have been using music for **seven years.** For a UK Partner, this is **four years.***

"I never stopped working with Music as Therapy International and this is because I have personally witness how it helped people with disabilities and this changed their lives."
Rwandan Partner

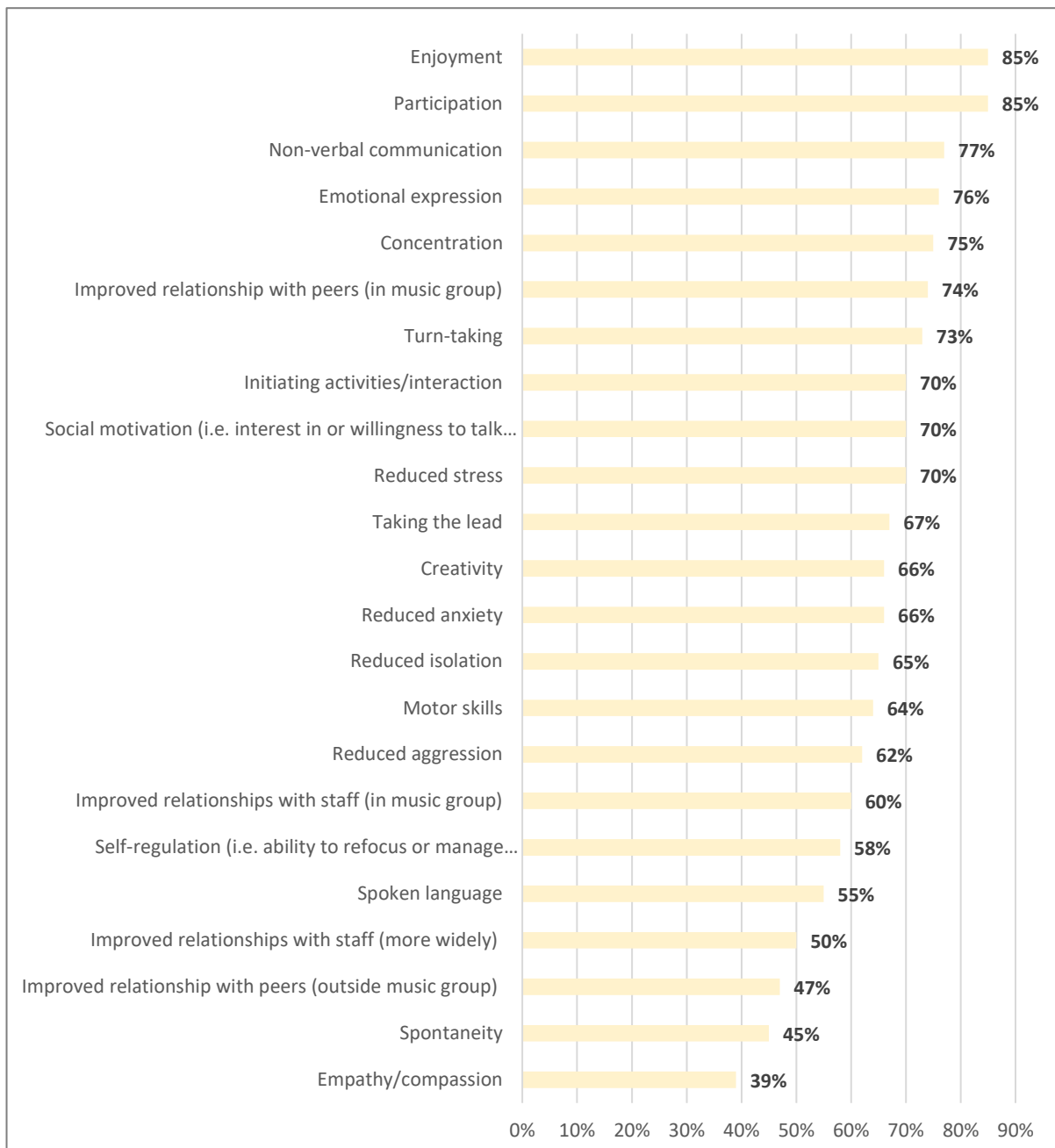
Therapeutic
benefits of music
are available to
service users

"Parents often mention the positive impact of music therapy on their children)."
Georgian Partner

During UK Lockdown, our 1-Min Music Survey respondents told us that music was most beneficial to their service users when it supported their **emotional wellbeing** and help them to communicate (both **92%**), and a further **75%** said it contributed to their **enjoyment**.

Our Partners worldwide identified 23 ways in which music benefits their service users, across all client groups. The chart below (Fig. 5) presents the frequency with which these benefits were identified:

Figure 5:



"The music as therapy sessions, musical activities and working with music inspired my career."

Romanian Partner

"[I have] delight and satisfaction from such wonderful work with music. It touches and invigorates hearts and souls."

Romanian Partner

"It is so joyful to see the [service users'] anxious and downcast faces relax when they hear music... Music gifts life to me and the session participants."

Ethiopian Partner

Job satisfaction increased

"I am very pleased that I was able to change and leave a beautiful impact on this child's life." *Palestinian Partner*

82% of international Partners and 93% of UK Practitioners, say that music sessions are an important part of their work

"Thank you for this opportunity to get to know myself and to shape myself even better through this COURSE!" *Romanian Partner*

"This has been an amazing professional and personal experience."

Romanian Partner

Opportunities for professional development

"Financial assistance has been a great help to us in attending the training without any hurdles."

Rwandan Partner

"For me, music therapy was like a nice little pebble that I didn't understand for a long time and that became very important in my life. I now know that the pebble is actually a talisman that helps not only others but also gives me personal development. That's why maybe we've been together for so long. Thank you for helping me find this talisman."

Romanian Partners

"The participants wished there would be more training for those who came to this training to further reinforce what they had learned." *Rwandan Partner*

Future Impact Measurement: achieving our strategic goal

Through all our contact with our Partners in 2020, we were reminded of the close and lasting relationships we have with our Partners worldwide. This clearly maximises on the potential for our Introductory Training Projects to have a sustainable impact for all the vulnerable children and adults with whom our Partners work. Our exploration of Theory of Change, whose impact categories we used to structure this report, has enabled us to identify and evidence really exciting commonalities in our Partners' achievements and milestones worldwide. This leaves us confident that we have a stronger working model to collect future impact.

Going into 2021, we will:

- Continue to pilot our **Theory of Change** as a tool to monitor and evaluate impact and re-assess this model again in September 2021. Subject to ongoing revisions to reflect learning along the way, the Theory of Change will then be fully revised as part of our next Strategic Review (2023).
- We will continue to use our Theory of Change to inform **the design of common evaluation tools for use across different countries** (e.g. questionnaires, feedback forms, report requests etc.) and look for patterns within the evidence to inform our understanding of our Partners' professional development, including local and international trends or differences.
- Look for opportunities to collate **thematic qualitative evidence** to tell the stories of the impact we achieve, together with our Partners.
- Find meaningful ways to **share with contributing Partners** relevant findings from our International Partner Survey, future project evaluations, our wider learning and impact data.
- Continue to track our **Partners' engagement**, using mechanisms like our traffic light system and Partner Log, as well as Mailchimp analytics, to inform our understanding of our Partners' professional development, including local and international trends or differences.
- Pro-actively seek to reach partners whose "red" status alerts us to their disengagement from our support.
- Continue to **align UK and international** data collection, where helpful, enabling us to be able to report both separately and multi-nationally.

These new measures will ensure that our impact collection remains an ongoing, adaptive learning process. This means that we may further refine our impact collection – for example, adapting the outcomes in the Theory of Change as, in 2021, we return to something closer to 'normal life.' Together, the above should help us to view our impact as long-term and sustainable. Most importantly, however, it should champion the achievements of the people behind the numbers, ensuring the significance of our shared impact is not lost to numbers of increasing size!



Debbie offering a meaningful experience of music to a care home resident during the Introductory Training Project at Moss Park (March 2020)