

Music as Therapy International

Annual Report 2024



music as therapy
international

Registered Charity No: 1070760

For over 25 years we have been inspiring, guiding and championing caregivers' use of music to strengthen care around the world.

Our trustees

Karina Brown	Dr Hannah Reid
John Ellis	Jane Robbie
Rebecca Huttly	Charlotte Surun OBE

Our team

Alexia Quin OBE - Director
Makeda Mitchell - International programme manager
Elsa Hariades - UK programme coordinator
Richard James - Fundraising manager
Henry O'Brien - Operations officer

Introduction

Stepping out of the spotlight

When creating an annual report each year, it's hard to resist the temptation to tell you all about us and it's easy to understand why – Makeda, Richard, Henry, Elsa and I (together with a collective of valiant volunteers, freelance friends and project partners) have worked really hard and we're really proud of everything we've achieved in 2024.

We've built new relationships and harnessed existing partnerships; contemporised our governance in preparation for conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in 2025, we've expanded the ways we bring music inspiration and training to caregivers with the launch of Music Helps (UK) and delivered our first piece of work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo... I could go on!

But arguably, the bit that matters is not about us at all. Music as Therapy International may be the name on the front of this report, but any real difference our work makes is down to the hundreds of caregivers around the world who take their experiences of working with us and go on to use music to make everyday care better for the people who rely on them.

Over the course of this report, you'll hear from caregivers in their own words about how music is transforming their experience of caregiving and the ways they believe it makes a difference for the people they care for. And you'll see how everything they tell us aligns with our new Theory of Change, the framework we use to explain the impact we hope our work has (overleaf).

Alexia Quin OBE, Director

Our Theory of Change

Our focus

Supporting caregivers to use music can strengthen the care they provide and improve the lives of people in vulnerable situations.



Our approach

Inspiration

We make the most of any opportunity to inspire caregivers to find out more about what music might offer them and those in their care.

Introductory Training

We work in partnership with care settings and caregivers around the world to tailor and deliver training activities to introduce music into care.

Sustainability

We offer a range of tailored activities to support and encourage our Partners as they work to embed music into the care they provide.

Capacity Strengthening

We assist our established Partners to develop networks, share their skills with others and strengthen local capacity.

The difference we see

1 Experience

Caregivers are equipped to use music

Insight gained into the ways music can improve lives

Wider music participation

Caregivers feel confident

Caregivers feel supported

2 Explore

Caregivers and people in vulnerable situations get to know each other better

Caregivers champion the use of music to improve lives

Caregivers are committed to using music

Meaningful experiences of music

Pride in care work

3 Embed

Music strengthens wider care provision

Caregivers advocate for the role of music within care

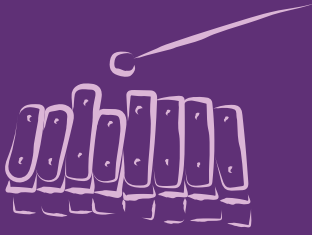
Fulfilment from caregiving

Caregivers are motivated to extend their use of music

People in vulnerable situations thrive



1



Experience

The aim of our activities is to give caregivers the tools, experience and confidence to use music and give them real insight into the ways it can improve lives.

Caregivers are equipped to use music

Insight gained into the ways music can improve lives

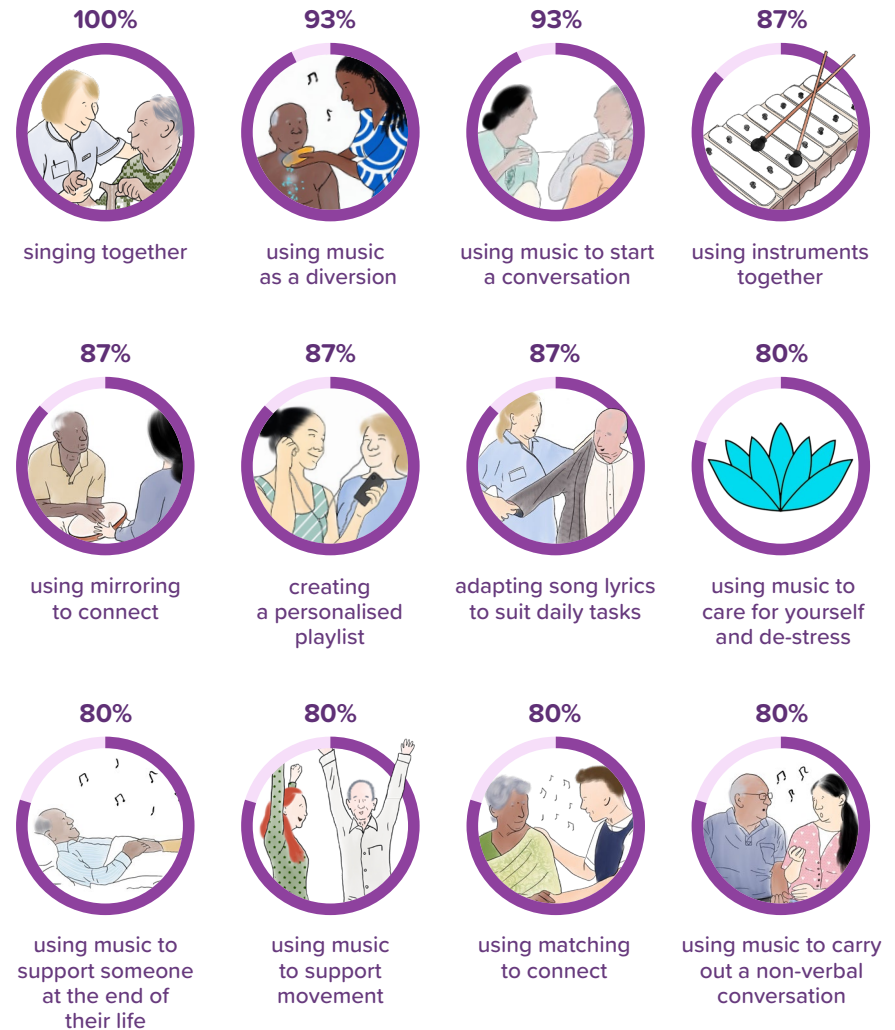
Wider music participation

Caregivers feel confident

Caregivers feel supported

In focus

In 2024 we piloted our online training course for caregivers of people living with dementia: Music Helps (UK). We were heartened to see the extent to which participants completing the course felt confident to use a new musical toolkit to help them manage some of the more difficult symptoms of dementia.



“I felt understood, helped, accompanied and I felt that they were really interested in me, both as a student and as a person.”

Professional caregiver, Romania

We've spent more than
£4,000

on equipping caregivers around the world with musical instruments in 2024



“Before I ran music sessions just putting some songs on and children enjoyed it but didn't have a structure. After, I prepare the music session and I have a routine that children are used to and happy to follow.”

Teacher/
Educator, UK



“Our Friday sessions have given me a renewed confidence and reassurance about that and why we do what we do every day.”

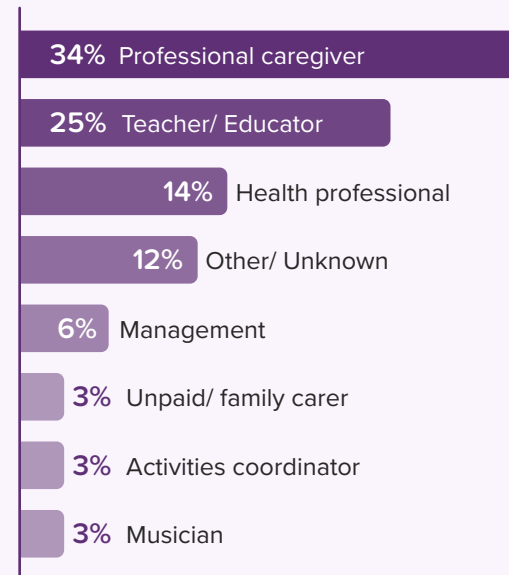
Teacher/ Educator, UK

“I don't know the way how this partnership came, but it gives us a lot of support - in kind, in training, and the material itself. So it is very very important”

Healthcare professional, Ethiopia

This year we've inspired, equipped and supported 574 caregivers

The different care roles our Partners hold around the world



“This training and communication with you helped me a lot at this stage of my life, it gave me hope and motivation, thank you for that.”

Professional caregiver, Romania

2

Explore



Time and again we see that once caregivers discover how music forges connection between people and reveals their potential, they become increasingly committed to using it.

Caregivers and people in vulnerable situations get to know each other better

Caregivers champion the use of music to improve lives

Caregivers are committed to using music

Meaningful experiences of music

Pride in care work

In focus

Our visit to Ethiopia at the beginning of the year gave us the chance to hear from psychiatric nurse Bula about the difference he sees music makes for the patients in his clinic, where we started a music programme together in 2018.

“ I remember leading the first session. There were some challenges guiding the first patient and attracting him into the session. Those first sessions were difficult, but over time, it became easier.



I am now running sessions with around 30 patients, but sometimes less or more. Group sessions can be very noisy and make patients very active but the level of activeness is an okay amount.

Personally, I think one-to-one sessions are better than big group sessions because it is more interesting, the patients express their feelings more, would tell me more and I connect more with the patient.

I've learned a lot from the music therapist about one-to-one techniques. When I used these methods, a patient began singing a song connected to his personal history. He remembered moments from his past through that song. I asked why he chose it, and he shared his story with me.

On the first days he needed a reward, but now he is not doing that. When you call him, he started to come and participate. He is looking at it now as enjoyment. Even he is asking if there is any music as therapy. He is asking by himself now.

I have aims for him. I know that music as therapy is very good for him... You know people express their feelings by music. When they sing they are free.

Bula Etana, Healthcare professional, Ethiopia

“I was delighted to see the children, like rosebuds, open before my eyes. The final floral painting was worth all the effort.”

Health professional, Romania

“I intend to continue to learn about this field, develop it and follow the work that has had such an amazing impact on me.”

Health professional, Georgia

“Seeing them smile and then seeing them try to use the instruments is such a happy moment and it make us proud.”

Activities coordinator, Ethiopia

“Expectations were high and the results amazing. All I wanted was to find a way to help the children I work with and here I am at the end of the course and at the beginning of a new ‘road’.”

Professional caregiver, Romania

“Music is a bridge to making a huge difference in the lives of those with dementia. Keep singing, playing familiar songs, introducing musical instruments to your clients, you never know what amazing capabilities this provides for them.”

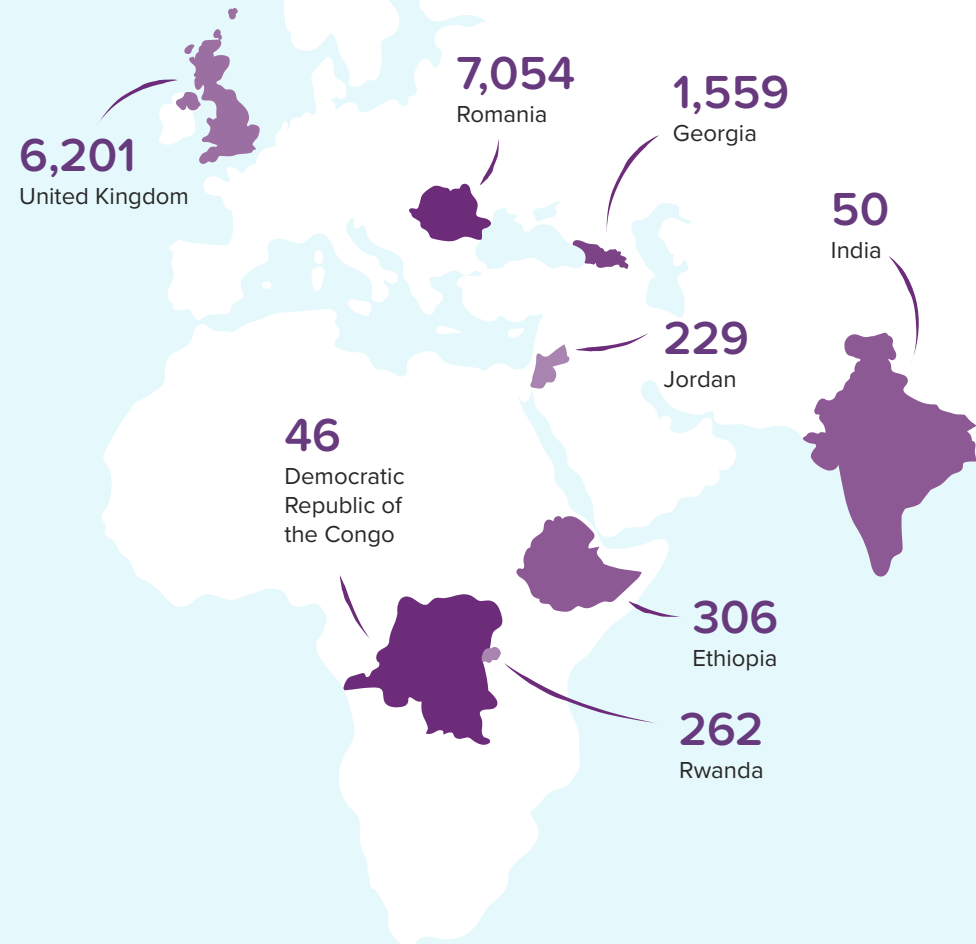
Professional caregiver, UK



This year our activities have created opportunities for

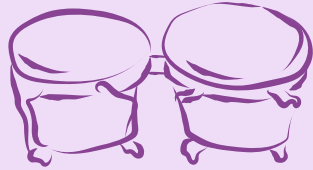
15,707

people in vulnerable situations to access music as part of their care



3

Embed



When commitment to music evolves into a motivation to extend and advocate for its wider use, we start to hear how beneficiaries thrive and caregiving becomes more fulfilling.

Music strengthens wider care provision

Caregivers advocate for the role of music within care

Fulfilment from caregiving

Caregivers are motivated to extend their use of music

People in vulnerable situations thrive

In focus

This year we caught up with Eilidh, who has truly embedded music into the care home she manages since her staff first received training from us eight years ago.

“ Music is not about getting together and having a sing-song; this is about forging a communication between you and the person you’re looking after that enables them to get out of that locked-in state, and enables them to communicate with everyone around them. Doing music in a group, everyone comes together; it’s communal, you share emotional bonding with the other people that are in the group.



I’ve had people that couldn’t hold cutlery starting out with the wee bells and chimes and 3 or 4 months later, they’re actually eating themselves again because they’re getting that stimulation with their hands and that tactile movement is triggering something.

Music is about the emotions that you feel, it’s about expressing yourself, it’s about touch, it’s about texture, just as much as it is about the actual noises that you’re making; there’s just so much more to it.

We’ve got Alexa set up through the whole home that have people’s playlists on them so that if they’re having a bad day, they can have whatever they prefer on. A 10-minute session with somebody can make the difference between a brilliant day and an awful day, so it’s a really good technique to just get folk to open up.

Music has empowered my staff... when you see a member of the care staff learning how to do this and coming out of their own shell and the confidence they’ve developed out of it, it’s worth it just for that, it really is. I’ve seen relatives who’ve been totally cut off from their loved ones for a long time being able to reconnect in a way that we couldn’t give to them any other way.

Eilidh Kerr, Care home manager, UK



“One of the children had a problem making friends. In our sessions he was able to accept others in the group and two of them became good friends.”

Teacher/ Educator, Jordan

“Really enjoyed learning that I am instinctively doing lots right and that caregivers do a skilled job that is demanding but so meaningful”

Professional caregiver, UK

“I love and cherish those moments when people open up and share their feelings. I am honoured to be part of their musical journey on the road of their lives.”

Professional caregiver, Romania

“She is becoming more comfortable with clearly articulating her preferences or choices and can now lead some of the activities without support.”

Teacher/ Educator, UK

“I would let other mothers of children with disabilities know that music is really important for their journey. It helps their children to be motivated and healthy.”

Family carer, Ethiopia

“In addition to the group with which I entered supervision, I also started working at school with other children. They like it a lot and have even started to see results.”

Professional caregiver, Romania

“I hope I will create the umbrella of all the people who use music as therapy in our region, even in the whole of Africa”

Nonprofit manager, Rwanda

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care settings around the world use music with our help



In 2024:

12

Partners whose journey with music started as participants in our training activities are now working with us to upskill others

18

people with lived experience of dementia care helped us ensure Music Helps UK was relevant and reflective of its realities

26

international professionals contributed skills and cultural insight to underpin our activities worldwide

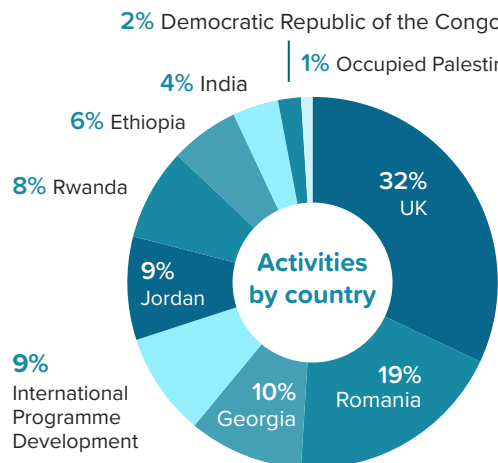
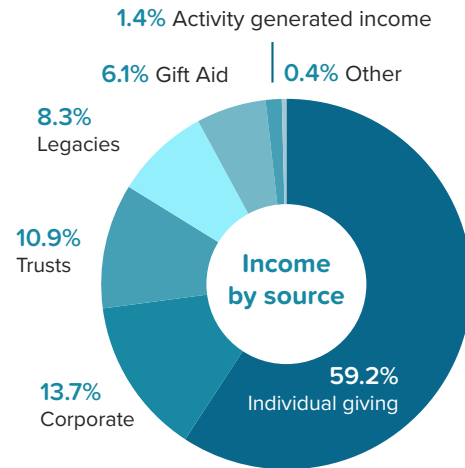
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organisations directly contributed to our activities, increasing our visibility and reducing costs through gifts in kind

2023 Accounts

As is customary for us, this Annual Report reflects on our activities over the past 12 months (2024), but the accounts presented here relate to the previous year (2023).

Income	GBP (£)
Unrestricted income	160,067
Restricted income	18,765
Activity generated income	2,629
Total cash income	181,461



Expenditure	GBP (£)
Charitable activities	142,101
Core Costs	24,925
Fundraising	18,972
Total cash expenditure	185,998
Surplus/Deficit	-4,537

In focus

Reflecting on our finances

Financially, our 2023 total income was our highest ever, enabling us to increase our investment in our activities by over 8%. Over 75% of our funds were invested directly in our activities, with strategic focus, local costs and/or the nature of the activities requested by our partners determining the level of expenditure shown in different countries.

We completed the final phase of depleting the Reserves accumulated when the pandemic limited our activities, evidenced by the small intentional deficit (£4,537, in comparison to the previous year's £18,091).

We retained diversity to our income streams thanks to the commitment of regular donors, the generosity of major donors and strengthened corporate support, alongside grants from Trusts and growth in our Activity Generated Income. We were also heartened to see income from Community Fundraising return after COVID, and touched to receive our first legacy donation since introducing a Gifts in Wills programme in 2019.

A governance note

Alongside our charitable activities, we have been contemporising our governance structure. A new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with the name Music as Therapy International was registered with the Charity Commission in May 2024. This will become operational in January 2025, when it will take on all our current activities, assets and governance responsibilities. The charity's work will continue unaffected, and the CIO will be run by the same core team, under the leadership of our existent Board of Trustees (who will be joined by newly appointed Trustee, Sana Gujral).

Contact us

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