

Interviewee: Participant 8

Interviewer: Nathalie Roué

Date of Interview: 10/03/2022

Location of Interview: Email

List of acronyms: WH = Participant 8

Appendix A: Semi-structured interview – international El Sistema founders

What is your view of community music programmes?

Prompts: involvement of communities, music teachers, music students

WH: Depending on the nature, scope, goals, and implementation, they are profoundly helpful. In the USA, In Tempo is a great example: <https://intempo.org/home/>

How do you view the role of music education within a broader community? Please explain

WH: Music education contributes towards the health of a community.

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?

WH: As faculty at Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) from 2010 to 2014, my work was featured in the book “Playing for Their Lives: The Global El Sistema Movement for Social Change Through Music” by Eric Booth and Tricia Tunstall: <https://www.amazon.com/Playing-Their-Lives-Sistema-Movement/dp/0393245640>

Tell more about the El Sistema-inspired programme/s you have already implemented and in which country/countries.

WH: The founder of ANIM, Dr. Ahmad Sarmast, might occasionally cite El Sistema as an inspiration, but in reality, his work was more inspired by the need in his country to restore music following its ban by the Taliban from 1996 to 2001. From ANIM’s inauguration in 2010 until its relocation to Portugal in 2021 following the Taliban’s recapture of Kabul.

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.

WH: I have never been to Venezuela. I would be cautious about any effort to connect any large-scale, inspiring effort involving youth and music to El Sistema. While El Sistema certainly is inspiring, its example was not historically necessary in all countries and cultures, even in Latin America. For instance, here in Mexico, Julio Saldaña's implementation of Esperanza Azteca probably owes more to his studies with Mimi Zweig than to the example of El Sistema, although some former El Sistema teachers later joined him:

<https://www.gruposalinas.com/GrupoSalinasHoy/es/2021-03-02/nuevo-modelo-esperanza-azteca>

What have you witnessed at the El Sistema-inspired programme/s regarding how it affected the community? Please describe.

WH: The impact of ANIM and of my own cultural diplomacy organization, Cultures in Harmony, has been broad and deep. The websites of both organizations contain more information about our work:

<https://www.anim-music.org/>

www.culturesinharmony.org

In what ways have your involvement in El Sistema affected your life personally?

WH: Not applicable.

What are your views regarding the establishment of an El Sistema inspired programme at a university in Tshwane, South Africa? Please explain.

W

WH: Any program in South Africa involving youth and music is to be encouraged. My own experience of South Africa as guest concertmaster of the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic in September 2017 and as friend to many prominent South African musicians leads me to believe that many South African models are readily available and more relevant than the Venezuelan one, most prominently: <https://www.buskaid.org.za/>

What are the first steps to be taken when such a community music programme is planned?

WH: Active participation from all stakeholders is essential: government, corporations, community leaders, students, parents, teachers.

What would the financial implications of such a programme be? Please provide details of all the aspects and costs involved.

WH: Relevant costs vary widely from country to country.

What type of facilities will be required to be able to accommodate such a programme?

WH: If the proposed program would be hosted by the university in Tshwane, they probably have adequate facilities. A mixture of small, medium, and large-sized rooms is ideal.

How do you recruit sponsors for an El Sistema-inspired programme?

WH: Many meetings with corporations, foundations, the government, and wealthy individuals will be key.

What human resources would be necessary to be able to implement such a programme at a university in Tshwane, South Africa?

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

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.

WH: The above ideas are all excellent.

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?

WH: Student interest is the most important factor.

How are music lessons organized 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?

WH: At the beginning, weekly private lessons can be less than an hour, but should soon increase to one hour. Small and large group lessons are also important throughout the development. For more detailed ideas about string pedagogy and its proper implementation, I recommend the website www.stringpedagogy.com

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?

WH: A qualified conductor is needed.

Do the learners receive lessons in music theory? If so, how are such lessons organized?

Prompts: Individual or group sessions/ According to age or level of music knowledge?

WH: This would be ideal but not essential.

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

WH: Money.

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?

WH: Financing and careful organizational skills.

What – if any- opportunities are there in an El 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.

WH: Any program that fails to encourage its students' creativity has already failed.

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

WH: This will follow naturally.

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

WH: This is always essential, which is why I am personally leery of efforts to deify El Sistema at the expense of other models. Frankly, Busk Aid is more relevant to South Africa than El Sistema.

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

WH: Look at Busk Aid.

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

WH: Commit.

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!