

Interviewee: Participant 1

Interviewer: Nathalie Roué

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List of acronyms: JVS=Participant 1 (Interviewee) and NR=Interviewer

[Begin transcript 00:06:06]

NR: So what is your view of a community music programme?

JVS: I believe that, well, a community music programme must have a good support system; first of all, a good structure. So I think, you know, with regards to Western music, how can I say, structure where one has all the basic elements. I think that is important to have that in place.

So obviously a person working in a community development project, I think it is important that the person is trained, you know, musically trained and trained to follow a system or, you know, follow some sort of goal or some sort of idea that they have, because I think with community music projects usually what happens is; people are there, you know, to just try something out and I think usually if you do not have a plan or you do not have some sort of goal that you work towards and I think it is difficult to start somewhere.

So I think it is important to, ja, to have someone that is trained and to have someone that has the passion for community music development, because it is true that one must have, how can I say, a passion and some sort of idea behind what it means to somebody from a disadvantaged community or someone that does not always have the opportunity, you know, like in the upper class or systems that always work.

I think it is important that one has an understanding of uplifting somebody through a system gradually is important. You know that positivity and the work ethic and the heart that goes into that is important as well. You cannot go to a community music project already wanting to see the results immediately. I think it is a process; something that is always, you know, how can I say; you are always going to have some challenge.

NR: Okay, so what do you think is the role of music education within a broader community? What do you think what are the benefits of a music programme to the community?

JVS: Well, first of all, it does give someone the skill to be able to play an instrument. That is obviously you know the skill to play an instrument, one; the skill to be able to read music and also compare, you know, together with that there is also the oral training, you know the learning about different elements of music, learning different music genres. There are so many things that really benefit a child. I think the most important thing is; a child is able to understand or learn the rules within the system without feeling pressured, you know because music I think naturally brings out qualities in a person. So ...[intervenes]

NR: And qualities; like what qualities do you think, Jaco?

JVS: Well, qualities, such as self-confidence. You know that is one thing, especially with a student that usually struggles with self-confidence. I would say music education definitely helps that. Self-confidence, you know how can I say, the skill of listening you know musically, rhythmically, actually progressing, you know and also the ability to sing or the ability to explore or the actual creativity within a person is also exaggerated. So that is something that naturally happens with music lessons and with a constant structure.

And also in conclusion, it also uplifts the greater community, because you have an event where you have concerts or we have people coming together and it is a general feeling of positivity and of a community being connected through music. So it is important to have events, you know, because obviously during Covid, something that was very difficult.

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. It brings people together and there is a sense of community growth and also there is a sense of, you know how can I say, purpose behind ...[intervenes]

NR: Okay.

JVS: Ja, music influence.

NR: Okay. Jaco, can you maybe just tell me your background? How did you get involved with the Mamelodi Project and what is your role and then do you work in similar projects like that, like Mamelodi?

JVS: All right, so first of all, how I got involved was Dr Lynette Pruneau approached me. I was actually... She was the Head of Music at that time. That was 2010. 2010 she approached me at Affies, because I was working. I was actually filling in for somebody and she said that: 'we need a brass instrument teacher'. But this is the background of Mamelodi. You know you have to be able to understand the challenges at Mamelodi and you know you have to often go into Mamelodi into the community and teach the kids there. And I said I do not have a problem with that. So I would actually be happy to do it.

And then the following year, 2011, I got the post, the full-time post to be involved at the project, but at the time you know we taught at Affies. Obviously you know the background there. So then I started, how can I say, developing some brass kids, brass instrument students. I started, how can I say, developing a couple of students and then that, you know that developed as I went. In a few years I had a couple of students playing at a decent level and there was a small group of kids that I actually had involved in a group, in an ensemble; and that also really benefitted the students.

Then in 2015 I decided to move on to St John's College. I got an offer there which I felt at the time I could not resist, because I was able to work in a different environment that I did not know. So it was a challenge for me. I was still fairly young. So I thought, you know, why not? So, but I think at St John's I did learn a couple of good things. I did learn also about, you know, proper systems and a little bit of a high pace, more high-paced system and also lots of goals and a lot of things, also a very busy school. But in turn I focused on, I tried to realise what is really my role in terms of a teacher, and that is really to be able to have kids do music for the right reasons.

I think at a school like, you know, like St John's, obviously a lot of schools do like that. St John's is a fantastic school to begin with, but a lot of music schools, it is always to do just music, to do music. You know it is not really for the purpose of really discovering one self's abilities or, how can I say, to nurture something within a student. Obviously you do get that with the students, but with a community music project it is a bit more... you can see the meaning behind music

actually a bit more, because the kids, when they are hooked in terms of playing an instrument, you can really see the progress a lot better, I think, with the music community or the community project, like Mamelodi.

So that is why I decided to go back as Head of Music at the stage and I am Head of Music there. And I felt that, you know I think I want to be in that position, because then I am able to bring the experience that I have got into Mamelodi and hopefully like that, you know, build the music project even further.

NR: Okay, and tell me, Jaco which other projects do you work like that, the similar project?

JVS: So I am teaching at Affies Meisies, which are just brass instruments. Then I have my own project with my wife, Ané, which we have a chamber music project. So that is called Gauteng Music Initiative. We have our own initiative where we try to bring in chamber music into, you know, into our own students' experience basically.

Then I am involved at University of Pretoria teaching the ensemble and then I am also involved here at orchestral conducting, going to teach orchestral conducting first years and second years. Because I am a conductor, I work a lot with orchestras. So I am also the conductor of community music or a community orchestra. It is not a community music orchestra. It is community orchestra, Pretoria Symphony Orchestra. So that is also a lot focused on, you know, the experience of music; what it means to bringing people together, playing together, all those qualities and obviously exploring repertoire as much as possible.

So therefore, ja, orchestral conducting is something that really is a passion, because I really want to help students develop, you know, as conductors and hopefully work in communities with orchestras and ensembles and so on.

NR: Okay ...[intervenes]

JVS: And then I am a freelance horn player. Freelance French horn player, you know, wherever I can play; so most of all the symphony orchestras around Gauteng.

NR: Okay, all right. And then tell me with regards to the Mamelodi Project, what have you witnessed with regards to the [indistinct] [18:42] and the community? What have you witnessed, the fact there is a music school? You know is it positive? Is it like what, in the sense of the

community and even the music students? Do you see a difference? Do they develop? What do you see?

JVS: Well, yes, we definitely see kids develop when they start out. Most of the kids who start there do not have any musical backgrounds. So you know let us say in the beginning of the year we have a bunch of students registering. It is because they want to try it out. They hear about the music project. Because we are based at Mamelodi High School, those students have the advantage of knowing that the music centre is there.

So in general we have kids starting out, let us say end of January. They register. Then they begin with lessons. But within a few weeks, you know, you can really see if that kid is going to develop or that kid usually, not always, but usually students, they do not develop an interest. You know 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. We do not want the students just to come in week-in, week-out not really progressing.

So we do have a handful of students dropping out, because they realise that it is not for them. You know they do not want to do music, because it is a certain discipline that they do not want to do. 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. They are able to have an instrument where they can practise at home, which the centre offers to them. So you know, like that the kids understand the structure of practical lesson, theory, music theory that they have to do.

Then like that 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. And we are trying to create a good environment at the music centre for the students to know that, you know, this is what it is about and then obviously the concerts and the competitions, Unisa Music Foundation. Those things obviously motivate the students to practise, because that is difficult when you do not have concerts, especially in a community music centre. It is difficult for the students to know where they are working towards; you know what goals they have to achieve, what can be done in a music instrument.

So just lastly in terms of the support; the school itself, Mamelodi High School, is... you know the staff there, the principal and all the normal teachers there. They do not really understand you know how we work, because they do not have, how can I say, knowledge about a music school or music lessons, because it is something that does not really happen in a township. You know there are not music centres in townships where they... you know this is what music lessons offer or this is what it is about and this is the curriculum that we follow.

So they actually have very little knowledge and understanding of a music centre and a music school. So they know that we exist, but they do not really support it as much, I would say, and it is just because there is a lack of understanding and there is a lack of knowledge about, you know, music lessons and playing an instrument and coming to concerts and all that kind of stuff. But ja, I would say in general it is ...[intervenes]

NR: Sorry. I just want to ask you. In terms of the students who do stay at the school, you know who are now serious and do take music lessons. Do you see a change in their lives? Can you see them developing personally? You know can you see a change for those ones who actually are serious and do come for music lessons? Do you see a personal change?

JVS: Yes. No, definitely. 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 as... 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 a few, 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.

Then you can see a little bit of, almost a personality change. It is like kids are able to engage more with you. They are able to open up. You know sometimes kids even tell us that something is wrong, you know, or that they do not feel right or that something is not right at home. So a lot of times kids are coming through difficult backgrounds. So it is difficult for them to open up. So through playing an instrument or singing, they are able to express themselves. And then through that, you know it is like they feel that they belong somewhere or they actually mean something. So ja, we definitely see a big progress.

Just lastly, what we do also see is that drugs; you know like cheap drugs, such as [indistinct] [25:20] is something that, you know, people sell everywhere. You know it is everywhere in the

township. They sell it. It is like on every corner or every... sometimes a spaza shop, whatever. You know these things always are in reach and cheap drugs are a problem obviously with people that are unemployed and youth.

So we do have a couple of adult students, you know like students who are not in school anymore. And usually with those students we can see when kids or students are unemployed, they sort of come to the music centre to see what it is like, because they want to try that out. But usually we do see problems with those kids as well or, you know, young students, but they are not students because they do not study. But it is because they do nothing. You know they just hang around in the township, you know sort of do not know what to do with their lives.

So they come to the music centre actually because they heard about it or they want to try it out or they want to try out an instrument. But in some cases there are those students, you can see that there is definitely, you know, a tendency to use drugs or you can see that there is something difficult going on. And usually, because of the music lessons, it either changes them. They actually come to music every week, because they understand that they actually have something to do, or it is the other way around. They stop immediately after a few weeks, because they are going back to their normal activity of either buying drugs or selling drugs and using it. So it is like that with the adult students. So it is either a massive change or, you know, it is unfortunately that they just go back to using drugs again.

NR: Okay, and then with regards now, if you think of the benefits of what you just said from the Mamelodi School, what are your views then with; should the universities establish like a similar project, like the El Sistema-inspired project? What do you think? What would your views be with regards to this? Do you think it will be, you know, positive for the community or what are your views?

JVS: Ja, look, I think my view is that it would definitely benefit the university in terms of getting the... you know how can I say, reaching out to students who would not have the opportunity to study music. And there are definitely within our project, there are definitely one or two students every now and then which you can say this is a potential music student.

Just for instance, one of our students could not get... he could not study medicine, because he wanted to study medicine and he could not get in. Then he received the bursary from Wits to study music, like a full scholarship. And then he accepted that, because Wits offered him that

scholarship, because obviously they could see that that was a skill on his application. That was a skill that he had. He was definitely on standard. He had won, you know, a music competition and so he did well in terms of music. So they actually offered him a scholarship to study at Wits, which he accepted, which he will start this year. So he changed from wanting to study medicine to go into studying music, because you know the university was actually approaching him to come and study music.

And I think the university will definitely, I think it would be beneficial, because students know that within a community music project they can actually do something after school, you know, because obviously after tertiary level institution, they know that this is obviously where we start here, but we are actually going to go to university hopefully one day or be involved at the university or maybe at the orchestra or ensembles or whatever the university will offer.

I think an integrated system where you have a community centre through the university where 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.

I think there are still very few opportunities, because at Mamelodi we try to motivate students, but the students do not always have or do not always know what it is like to study music or what it is like to have a career in music, because they 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 have much more exposure or they will lend exposure to those students more, because it is a university project. I think those students would actually, it would ...[intervenes]

NR: They will be able to [indistinct] [31:14]. Ja, that you can take the music further and it is not just a music school, but they can actually see how it goes beyond school if you go to the university.

JVS: Yes. And also lastly, in terms of the orchestra, you know the university orchestra. I mean most of those students in the orchestra are students coming from music systems within the city or let us say the best music departments within the city, but not really community music projects. So there are very few students actually from community music projects in the university

orchestras or in, let us say at the Stellenbosch Chamber Music Festival. 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.

NR: In that way. So if you think of the financial implications, so if we come back to the Mamelodi School, can you maybe share in terms of financially; you know is it complicated or what would you suggest would you need in a school like that to be able to function properly?

JVS: Well, you have to have a budget or you have to have, you know, obviously an annual budget that caters for infrastructure, actually be able to hire teachers. I would say the best form of starting a community music project is actually to hire people full-time, because what happens with other, like for us. We are full-time, which is great, but the state only offers, they only give us salaries. They actually do not give us anything for infrastructure. They do not give us anything for instruments. They do not give us anything for all that stuff.

The thing is, we cannot generate the funds from the students, because most students are poor. So we cannot actually charge music lesson fees what you normally would charge in a private school or any school system or private lessons. So I would say the university have to be able to offer teachers a salary and know that, 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.

Like for instance, there are a couple of NGOs or non-profit organisations that try to work like that, but the thing is; the people are there on a voluntary basis and then or they get paid a small salary or they get paid whatever. And usually it does not always work, because those people are not really dedicated to the project, because they do not feel valuable. They actually do not get paid properly.

NR: Ja, of course.

JVS: And in turn, usually the best teachers or the best people would not go for those positions, because you know why would you want to go and teach at a project which does not really offer

you something financially? So I think that is where the magnet schools are good, but the department do not give anything more than just salaries.

So the university has to be able to budget for salaries, full-time teachers I would say, and then also infrastructure; and then, you know, purchasing instruments, you know investing. And I think that costs a lot of money, because you have to see that it is an investment that... 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. 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.

NR: So tell me, Jaco, so in terms of facilities, like the infrastructure, but specifically the facilities. Now if the university should then start a project like this, since you are in a project, what would you suggest? What would you need for facilities to be able for a project like that to function properly?

JVS: Well, definitely a good infrastructure, a basic infrastructure 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. So you know I would say any conservatoire or music centre facility or infrastructure is something that you should follow. Like we have a number of teaching rooms for individual teaching, a lot of space for concerts and then also teaching rooms for music theory, but also you know one or two offices where people are able to work; you know, administration.

And then lastly, a big enough storeroom where you can lock up your instruments, you know. That is something that we, I think we in Mamelodi actually had a couple of incidents of theft or break-in, which is a problem you know. So we try to... our storeroom is right in the middle of our centre where no one can see it. No one from outside can actually see where the storeroom is. And there are not any windows. So you cannot see in. But no one has actually broken into our storeroom, because they do not know of that. But where we have things lying around, like a kettle or something stupid like that, or a fan, then usually just people break in and steal that. It is just because it is in the township and there are always opportunists walking around and see what they can find, you know, unfortunately.

But so, ja, I would say... and lastly, it must have good security where you have someone who can monitor, you know, security or who can actually... and that also costs money, you know. You should have a system or security system that protects your music centre, because there are expensive equipment there.

NR: Okay. And Jaco, tell me, in terms of now coming back to the students; do you do anything to recruit students from the community to come to Mamelodi School or is it because of word by mouth? Is it because... do you like give concerts or how do they actually know about the music school? Do you know, about your music school, Mamelodi?

JVS: Yes. I think our system was always like that where kids have always spread the word to friends and so on. But nowadays we find it difficult like that because of, you know, kids usually have afternoon classes and stuff in the afternoons where it is difficult for them to come to music lessons. So we have had to be a bit more creative in terms of recruitment. So what we now do is; we have an open day for Grade 8s. Not an open day; we have a demonstration day where it is like in the first two weeks of school in the beginning of the year we do a demonstration for all the Grade 8 kids at the school, at Mamelodi High School, because we are based there. So we do a demonstration for like 250 students and then we expose them to the instruments where, you know, they are able to see how the instruments sound like. So the demonstration really helps, because then the kids usually storm to us to register.

Then because we are a community music centre, we have to actually reach out to other kids or other schools. So we do have one open day. We call it open day for primary school kids where we actually... We have done this two years ago just before Covid. So we have sent out a letter to schools, neighbouring schools. Let us say four or five primary schools where those kids are then invited to come to our centre. Those teachers then bring the kids to us, you know, and then they come to the centre and we demonstrate to those kids. And we also did a couple of demonstrations and so on to get their interest; you know, like singing and rhythms, clapping and all those kind of things to see what music implies, sort of what you can learn through music. And then we had a bunch of kids like that is staying.

NR: Okay. And then, so you find that the letters that you sent out to the different neighbouring schools; did that work? So you found that work quite well. So they respond thereto.

JVS: Yes. It did work. Yes, I think there are more ways you can actually do it, but it did actually work, because we are still within education. So we try to do things by the book in a sense. So we did do the letters where parents have to agree on, you know, sending their kids to us. So it was a general letter. But those teachers helped us at the schools to actually generate those letters to the students.

Like that, we found that the kids who came to us were the kids who are really interested in doing music. It was not just kids just running around and just, you know, just trying to see the fun in this. Like that we actually had a couple of kids who were interested in listening to the instruments and interested to see what the music centre is about. So we are going to try it again this year. So we will see what happens.

NR: So now talking about that; like you say, the kids who are interested. The way that you choose the instrument, is that what you then usually do; that you have got people demonstrating on each instrument and then they choose what they want or how does it work? How do they choose the instrument?

JVS: Ja, that is how we did it. You know through the demonstrations we were able to have kids, you know, identify: 'okay, this is what I want to do. This is what I want to try.' In a few cases we had kids who specifically want to do a specific instrument, because they have a piano at home or they have, or their father is a trumpet player or they have got a church band where there is a brass band. 'You know I want to play in a brass band.' So we have a few cases like that, but mostly it is because of the demonstrations that kids were able to say: 'okay, this is what I want to play. You know this is what I want to try.'

We are not able to have a trial where kids are trying things and then choose, because it is just impossible. I do not think we have the infrastructure to do that. You know we cannot handle as many kids with one instrument. It is just... I think it is better, more hygienic actually also with Covid that we just do the demonstrations and then kids choose, but ...[intervenes]

NR: Okay ...[intervenes]

JVS: We do have that where we see a student that is not able to progress on an instrument. We then suggest something else.

NR: Okay, okay. And then tell me, Jaco, the students, do they take the instruments home? Do they still do that? Do you still send them home with an instrument? So what I was asking: do they take still the instruments home to practise?

JVS: Yes. So what we do is; in a case where a student wants to do piano, we ask them first: do you have a piano at home or do you have access to one? So I think it is important obviously that a kid has to have a piano. In very rare cases we borrow a keyboard which we have spare and then we just give it, you know, to them and then obviously the parents, we contact the parents or the guardian or whoever that, you know, they have to really look after the instrument.

But all the cases we have kids hiring the instruments from us. We do not ask a fee, because we cannot. We cannot ask a fee or we do not know. So we do not ask hiring fees at all, but we do have the policy if a student breaks an instrument or we can see that this is a deliberate, you know, mishandling or damage to an instrument, we make a student actually pay a small fee to repair it. And usually the students learn, you know, through that that they have to look after an instrument, but most of the time our students actually look after the instruments. They really do most of the time.

So ja, they hire it from us on an annual basis. At the end of the year we take in the instruments or we monitor them and, you know, we just give it back to them again the following year, but we try to let them keep the instrument as long as possible so that they are able to practise.

NR: Okay. And then tell me, Jaco, so the instruments are all sponsored, hey. So the instruments that you have are sponsored. It is not instruments that you bought actually with the budget that you have.

JVS: They are all sponsored. Some of the instruments were actually purchased from our budget. So that is why I am involved at Affies. Two of us still teach at Affies, because that income that we have actually helps us to buy instruments and service instruments. So we did last year for the first time... well, since 2004 when the project started. Last year was the first time the Department of Education gave us money to buy instruments. So they gave us R40 000 to buy instruments.

NR: That is great.

JVS: And ja, it was a bit of a shocker, because we have never, never had that support from them. So they are trying to make it a thing where they allocate budget to each magnet school to be able to buy, you know, instruments as we need. But we have had many donations from people in Sweden where they are involved in a church community or a community where they are, you know, able to generate funds and generate income and people donating instruments to us. So from time to time we do have people who actually donate instruments now and then to us, you know, because they see the benefit of that.

NR: Tell me, Jaco, the lessons, are they like usual, like 30-minute lessons, hey, individual lessons?

JVS: Yes. Ja, so we do have one practical lesson of 30 minutes and then one theory lesson of 15 minutes as well. So we do it like this. The student has to have one practical lesson and one theory lesson in a week, because obviously we do not have a theory teacher. In some cases there are theory teachers, but because we are only six teachers, between the six of us we have to cover everything. So you are sort of responsible for your own music theory. So you have in your own timetable you have theory lessons where you have your kids doing theory. But for the more advanced students, you obviously have a bit more time to that student, you know like 45 minutes to an hour lesson where you have to spend that much time with an advanced student.

NR: Okay, okay, that is great. And then tell me then, does the orchestra still exist? Do you have an orchestra at Mamelodi?

JVS: No, no, we do not have an orchestra and I think it is because we do not have a cello teacher. I mean we cannot have just violins, you know, or... It is difficult to actually have an orchestra at the school and it is basically to do with; one is Covid. You know that definitely does... that actually did hurt us in terms of our student... you know how can I say? A lot of our students dropped out during Covid, because they did not have online lessons.

So what we have had before Covid is that we have had small groups; you know small groups. Our more advanced students we had involved playing in small groups and small ensembles. And we think that small group playing, you know like trios, quartets. Small ensembles are actually better in a sense, because they are able to play more intensely. Like I think with an

orchestra it is great to have an orchestra, but it is always a big logistical thing having an orchestra there.

We would rather work with our more advanced students in small groups, you know, and then with the ones that are obviously still in the beginning there is no ensemble. But we are trying to now have our students more often do group lessons or more often do, you know, like an opportunity where they can quickly do a duet or a trio.

So we are actually trying to have a chamber music concert where we have the rule where our students should just play ensembles. There are not any solo items allowed. So we are going to have one concert this year where we have just ensemble participation. So that obviously is a lot of trouble, but we are trying to have our students, you know, work in groups more often. So that is what we do. We do not really have an orchestra.

NR: Okay ...[intervenes]

JVS: But there is; just lastly, sorry. The Department of Education, because we are part of the Department of Education, they obviously fund us in terms of our salaries and we are their project. We are still, you know, connected to them. They have started a youth orchestra. They call it Gauteng Schools' Youth Symphony Orchestra. They have started that orchestra where they want the magnet school kids to come to the orchestra and play in the orchestra. So that is a new, relatively new thing. The students are then able to come to the orchestra. They participate for free and then they, you know, play in the orchestra like that. So that is what they actually want to do permanently.

NR: Okay. So have they started with that yet, Jaco? Do you know who is involved?

JVS: Yes.

NR: Who is involved at the Gauteng? Who started that?

JVS: Ja, I am conducting that, but it is Hannes Venter, the head of all the magnet schools. It is actually part of Sport and Recreation, Department of Sport and Recreation, because I think the funds come from them. They have started the orchestra and then I am involved in obviously conducting the orchestra, working with the orchestra, but also recruiting players.

NR: That is actually interesting, Jaco. I just want to know; like where do you practise? Where is the facility and how do you recruit students? Like how do they know about this? How do you get people to come to the orchestra?

JVS: So what we have now is; well, what we have had. We have sent out communication to schools through, because the department works like that. They send out a memo. So the memo says: 'this is what we have got. We have got a new youth orchestra. These are the requirements, minimum requirements. These are the instruments that are involved in a standard orchestral setup. Then these are the repertoire that should be played at auditions.'

So, then that general information gets filtered to all the schools, to all the magnet schools, but we have also had communication through a magnet school, a WhatsApp group where we generated that information throughout the magnet school group, because all those head of departments are on the WhatsApp group. So they are... it is the responsibility of the Head of Department actually of each music centre or music school to have a meeting with their staff to say: look, this is a youth orchestra. This is what they are and, you know, these are potentially the students that can audition for it. And then we rehearse every second, we rehearse every second Friday at Pro Arte Alphen Park.

NR: And then ...[intervenes]

JVS: And the reason is...

NR: Sorry, I just want to know the transport. Who pays for the transport, all the students who are interested?

JVS: Look, where kids can be transported by their parents, obviously that would be the best, because we just say: okay, these are our rehearsal dates. These are the times. So you have to get there on your own. But we do have cases where kids need transport. Then the Department of Education sends out an official. It is like an official that works for the Department of Education. Those people then just transport the kids to the venue. We have had a few; like one coming from Soweto, the other one coming from the East Rand, the other one coming from Krugersdorp where, you know, those kids requested transport. They say: 'look, I need transport coming to rehearsals'. Then the department organise that with, you know, themselves.

NR: Dit is eintlik, maar dit is baie interessant hierdie, Jaco. Dit is eintlik ook [onduidelik] [58:04] gebaseer op orkes ook, jy weet. So dit is baie interessant dat die ...[tussenbei]

JVS: Presies.

NR: Ja, dat die GDE eintlik ook nou meer orkes-gebaseer wil wees. So dit is baie interessant. Ek het nie geweet nie. So dit is regtig baie interessant.

JVS: Ja. Weet jy, hulle het dit onlangs begin, maar dit is baie moeilik, want jy weet, die probleem is; die departement, hulle begin dit, maar jy weet, hulle *run* dit *actually* glad nie of hulle doen, maar baie min. Daar is *actually* glad nie iemand wat agter administrasie sit nie. So dit is die ander probleem is dat ek neem baie van die admin *actually* oor en ek het nie *actually* altyd tyd vir dit nie. So maybe just have to say in English that management ...[intervenes]

NR: [Indistinct] [58:52].

JVS: Ja. Management or administration is so important in terms of, you know, administrating an orchestra like this, you know where, a youth orchestra setup where you need someone to permanently sit behind the administration, booking venues, booking rehearsals, booking concerts or whatever. Obviously what you have at UPSO where you have an orchestra manager, you know, that is permanently appointed. So that is something that the GDE does not have. The GDE needs to do that within the system.

NR: Yes, of course. Okay. So basically, Jaco, so just before we can go; should the university then decide to implement an El Sistema-inspired project like this, what suggestions would you give to them? Like where should they start, since you [indistinct] [59:55]? Like what is the first step to make a school successful like that?

JVS: Well, I think you have to see the long-term benefits. I think, you know, seeing the results immediately are not going to be possible. I think the long-term benefit; you have to have that structure of: okay, what is the long-term benefit of a project like this and what would it benefit us? I think obviously it would benefit the university in terms of getting the right type of students to come and study music, because obviously you want to reach as many students as possible. You want to influence as many students as possible through your community programme. So I would say you have to start at a community. You have to start at a community...

NR: Jaco, just hold on two seconds. Sorry, Jaco.

JVS: Okay, so I would say you start at a community where there is a demand, you know. I mean there are so many places, but obviously there are lots of townships, but there are also township projects. I would say you must have a community where you have... you can see the benefit of this. So somewhere in a community where there is a lack of development in terms of a music centre.

I would say right in a township does not always make sense because of the crime aspect. I mean obviously and also the lack of understanding or the lack of participation sometimes. It is difficult to really get students to come to a music centre at a township. So I would say somewhere just next to a township or something that has a mixed, you know a mixed community somewhere, you know, that has the potential and enough infrastructure actually to be able to have something like this. Ja, I would say that that would be the best.

NR: Okay and you would think that will actually be good for the University of Pretoria, for example, that it sounds like a good opportunity for them to be able to start a project like that.

JVS: Ja. Ja, I would say identify or build an infrastructure, first of all. Then secondly, appoint people or appoint staff or lecturers or whoever, but professionals. Obviously music teachers and performers; you know people who are obviously skilled, but also have a passion or want to be involved. I would say that those people should also be semi-involved at the university where there is a structure where they start here, but they want to move to the university with those students eventually. And then thirdly, you know, enough budget to buy instruments or to, you know, buy books or sheet music and then there must be a centre manager or an HOD or somebody who actually runs the centre and goes to meetings with the university, you know, to have the same goals or to create the same ideas and so on.

NR: Ja, so basically someone that runs the background that is in the background that makes it run smoothly.

JVS: Yes. Ja, definitely. I mean someone who has the drive and the vision to see the purpose of a music development programme.

NR: Okay, that is perfect. Thank you so much, Jaco.

JVS: So small steps.

[End Transcript 01:04:22]