**Focus Group Interview**

**Date: 25/06/2022**

**Signature of researcher: JL**

**Participants: Grade 8 Focus Group**

1. Explain your initial reasons for wanting to join the Kearsney College Choir.

Participant 1: I **enjoy music and making music** and I really love making music with other people, such as **harmonising** within a group.

Participant 2: I agree, but also when you see things about **Kearsney about the choir, it is such a big part.** I have been in choirs before and this choir specifically is a big deal, it is not something small.

Participant 3: **Going overseas** with your fellow teammates to go and perform for an international jury and perform in Austria at St. David’s Cathedral is really something.

Participant 4: I attended a concert by Kearsney. I remember attending the concert with my sister because she sang in the St. Mary’s choir, I always use to see the Kearsney choir, and **since grade two I always said that I wanted to be a part of this choir.** I just told myself that I want to be a part of this on stage.

1. Describe your most enjoyable experiences since joining the choir.

Participant 1: I enjoy the **friendships in the choir**, we have a good bond and I **enjoy singing with my mates**. Something I do remember is the **Supper Theatre performance**, we performed on the stage for many nights in a row and i**t felt incredible**. We performed for parents and people who wanted to watch us.

Participant 2: For me, it is the **performance at the Fig Tree Farm**, we got to **skip school** which was pretty cool.

Participant 3: I would also say **Fig Tree** as well because there were so many people there and we did not even know half of them and they were **cheering so loud** and it was like the first performance where you could really hear them shouting.

1. What are some of the benefits of singing in a choir for you?

Participant 1: I think **you make a lot more friends**. When I came to Kearsney I was very new and I did not know anybody in the entire school through the choir, I made a lot of mates. **You get to meet a lot of new people that have the same interests as you**, you meet people with the same ideas and sorts as yourself **in terms of music and culture**. **You learn teamwork and working with people and having to be one and not just yourself**.

Participant 2: As he said, **you share the same interests with people around** you and you can **form bonds** that would last.

Participant 3: I would refer that we have to **work together and actually trust each other**. When you sing a certain part, you cannot do it by yourself, but you **have to listen** to the others.

Participant 4: Yes, when you sing different songs **you have to listen and know your parts quite well**.

Participant 5: **Choir allows you to do something you love** and **with the people whom you love** and it is the only time, during choir rehearsals and performances, that is the only time we could also sing because we are not allowed to sing around campus.

1. What are some of the disadvantages of singing in a choir?

Participant 1: You have to **give up your free time** **and holiday time** to come here and work.

Participant 2: **We had exams and we had to give up most of our study time.** For us boarders, we had to give up our prep sessions every Monday, Thursday, and Friday for rehearsals, and it **gave us a bit of a setback in terms of our studies**.

Participant 3: I think I have a friend that is sitting on the beach now and I am here doing choir practice. **You have to sacrifice a bit of time in the holidays to go on tour**. I think we will enjoy the tour which is also on the holiday.

Participant 4: I would say the same thing as the others, you have to **give up a lot of time**. When we have choir rehearsals, all **our other friends are busy playing soccer on the hockey fields, going to the tuck shop to buy stuff, or they would be walking around but we are here singing and busy with rehearsals.**

1. Do you think singing in a choir can bring diverse cultures together, and if so how, and if not, why do you think that is?

Participant 1: I think **you get to understand the cultures more when you sing completely different languages**. Like we started with a German song, a Ukrainian lullaby that we are doing. **It helps you to understand a certain culture better through music and song.** **We also have in the choir other guys who are completely different cultures, everybody is different but you are still united together by the choir, and through the choir, you become one**.

Participant 2: Adding to what he said, you are **in a choir with people who are completely different from you but singing is common to all cultures so that one thing can bring people together** even without that, you would maybe never even talk to them anywhere else.

Participant 3: I would say that it is very nice in the choir. Sometimes **during breaks, you get the chance to interact with people whom you would never have interacted with**. If you just casually walk **around the school, your choir mates make you feel like you are in the same position.**

Participant 4: I feel that it is quite important that we don’t just sing English songs, but it is important to **learn about other cultures as well**. For instance, when we all are on the choir camp, we all sleep together and stuff. **Instead of talking to each other, you can use your voice (through singing) to interact with other people**.

1. Could you explain what you value most of being a choir member of the Kearsney College Choir? Elaborate.

Participant 1: It is t**he diversity that you find in the** choir and t**he kindness you receive from the people in the choir**.

Participant 2: **Everybody is accepted and nobody is left out**. **Everybody loves singing** and that is the one thing that **brings everyone together**.

Participant 3: I would take **the dancing** as an example, I **was struggling with the dancing** and then a couple of **the seniors came to me and assisted me with the moves** and that is what makes me come back. **The seniors treat us fairly**.

Participant 4: I enjoy the fact that you get to **experience different things** and also **interact with other people.**

Participant 5: I think **the bond**, here you get to **connect with other people** and **make friendships** and we have choir practice three days a week, so **seeing each other all the time** and **interacting with people who have the same interests and passion allows you to make lifelong friendships**.

1. Do the members of the Kearsney College Choir share a unique brotherhood (separate from the rest of the school)? Elaborate.

Everybody: Yes.

Participant 1: **Grade eight choir boys get bullied for being in the choir**, but if **a choir member from a higher grade** walks past, th**ey would usually stand up for you** and tells them that they are also in the choir. **The seniors protect you most of the time**.

Participant 2: The bullying thing does not occur that much here at Kearsney. The choir is quite a big part of Kearsney and it is quite **respected throughout the school**.

Participant 3: But there are times where these things happen, everywhere with everything actually. It happens anywhere with a group of people, there is always someone who will discriminate against the group. You cannot really get away from it, but as he said, **we protect each other**.

Participant 4: That is what happened to me. People in my dorm would usually confront me but then I tell them to go and say the same thing to one of the Matrics who are also in the choir, but then they get scared.

1. What do your friends outside of choir think of you participating in the school choir? Do they tease you, or do they support your choice to participate in the choir?

Participant 1: Some of them say that **it is a “girl-sport”** and that **it is not a proper thing**. But it is a lot more than that, **there are some friends that encourage you to carry on** and they are always like happy for you and **they would love to join you**.

Everybody: Yes, **they do support you**.

Participant 2: Like **one of my friends wanted to join the choir** and they came and watched the choir perform on Thursday. **They do enjoy hearing the choir** and **they do respect the choir**.

1. What motivates you to continuously participate in choral singing at Kearsney College?

Participant 1: **Creating new friends** and **carrying a message** over to the audience.

Participant 2: There is just something about coming back here every week, **trying new things**, and **learning new music**.

Participant 3: If we sing a song in German or when we **sing in different languages**.

Participant 4: Especially for someone who actually wants to go into music in the future, you **learn new ways to sing and do things**.

Participant 5: **I enjoy working in the choir** even if it is hard, but as soon as you start to work together, **you feel more proud to achieve something together with other people**.