**Focus Group Interview**

**Date: 26/06/2022**

**Signature of researcher: JL**

**Participants: Grade 11B Focus Group**

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

Participant 1: When I first joined Kearsney I was **drawn in by my family** and my cousins were in the choir, so I thought that it would be pretty cool to be in the choir. Up to now, it has been a very **nice experience** to be involved with the choir and to be honest, I just really wanted to **go on this tour** because I have heard some nice things about going on tour.

Participant 2: Previously, I **sang at Drakies** so I came to Kearsney for the choir because it was the **next best choir** that I wanted to be involved with.

Participant 3: I think all of us **felt some sort of inspiration** to join the choir. When I came to Kearsney for an **open weekend**, the first thing I saw was the choir performing. When we first came in, they **showed my parents and me this insane performance**. It truly amazed me and I wanted to be a part of that it made me realise that if I do end up going to Kearsney that I need to be a part of the choir.

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

Participant 1: The **feeling of going on stage** and **feeling that energy rise**. Whenever we do one **big vocal piece or gumboots you just see everyone going at it 100%.**

Participant 2: When we get to our last song especially, to that **very last notes, and that moment of silence you get just before the crowd goes crazy is really special**.

Participant 3: Personally, I feel like it is **the fun I have with my mates around me** and that has been the most enjoyable up to now. I feel like **the tour is going to be even better** because we will have the chance to experience singing in a huge cathedral and doing that with my friends is going to be fun.

Participant 4: I really **enjoyed the time of working hard with a very good group of people** and even the **satisfaction you get from a performance**. **At Kearsney we have this tradition of singing a song and then we start to jam with it by adding things** that are pretty cool.

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

Participant 1: I think for most of us, we **gained some form of discipline** and it is nice to see **self-improvement** due to the choir. **Musically, for some of us, our voice ranges have increased.**

Participant 2: I feel you **gain a lot of self-confidence** within a group like most of us here can stand up and sing a solo all by ourselves.

Participant 3: I feel the rest would agree that we have learned to **quickly adapt to different circumstances**. **We can adapt to different venue acoustics where we are trained for when we don’t have microphones to really project our sound**.

Participant 4: It has **added something new to all of our school lives**. It is not just academics and sports, hanging out with friends, going back home or boarding house, it has **added music and joy.** The c**hoir really brought happiness to some of us**, when we perform well for our friends and families it makes us happy, but it is hard work to get there.

Participant 1: Just expanding on that point, in the choir which ranges from grade eight to Matric, you have an opportunity to **build new relationships**. If I had to think back to my grade eight year, you would look at these massive Matrics but then we got to know them better because in the choir you are allowed to interact with one another.

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

Participant 1: It is t**ime**. But there are **times when I feel a lot of pressure** and that **the choir can be a bit inconvenient since it interferes a lot with our academics, free time where we should relax**. At this moment, **our peers who are not in the choir are on holiday. On Friday afternoons during school, our peers could go home and relax after a busy week or prepare for the test on the following day but we have to work hard and basically give up our day**. Sometimes, i**t is just pressure**.

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?

Everybody: Definitely.

Participant 1: There are quite a few songs we sing in the choir. **We have an addiction to folklore**, but we have added a Ukrainian lullaby, other Ukrainian songs, Austrian songs, and the national anthem of Austria, which I believe is **very inclusive of other cultures**. **We come from South Africa, and we have an intermixed between Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, and many other cultures**, but you will see us g**oing out of our way to include the cultures of other people instead of focusing on ourselves**.

Participant 2: We also **include a lot of music that is pop, even though it is not something to do with culture, but we see it as an inclusive element of the global culture**.

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

Participant 1: **The experience when you see all of your hard work from all of those rehearsals** that you have **done pays off** **once that light hits your face on stage**. For the people who are in the choir, **you would never walk out of the choir because you want to see an improvement in those results** again and again.

Participant 2: For me, it is about **learning something new**. We get to **learn new songs and playing of instruments and how to match ourselves with the choir.**

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

Participant 1: There is a brotherhood, but I feel like **the brotherhood is much different from outside at school**. **You spend more time with your friends in the choir because you always stand next to each other**. Outside of school, your friends might be living in different dormitories and you won't necessarily connect with them as much as we would do in the choir.

Participant 2: In the choir, **you really develop and build good relationships with friends and that creates a special brotherhood.**

Participant 3: In the very beginning in grade eight when we first joined the choir, our Head Chorister tried his best to create a **family dynamic within the choir** where we all **focused on helping each other** so if we ever got to a point where people were struggling, we would tie up the loose ends and ensured that your friends could be the best they could be. It worked. It made the choir much better than we could possibly have imagined it to be. Having **the brotherhood or family dynamic to something that depends on discipline,** could really **push or make people go the extra mile**.

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: In class at times, **my friends would make fun of me for being in the choir**. That **really bothers me and it becomes quite annoying**.

Participant 2: I think **they do that because they have way too much time on their hands**. It also **depends on what kind of friends you surround yourself with**. **I've got friends outside at school looking out at our performances and they really enjoy the concerts**. They would also **tell me how proud they are of me and the choir for doing so well**.

Participant 1: It just **really annoys me when people make fun of me being in the choir**.

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

Participant 1: I think that some of us **have the talent**.

Participant 2: I feel I want to **have as much fun** as I can now because later in my life, I know that I will be too busy to do stuff like music.

Participant 3: It is the enjoyment of **performing with your friends** on a massive stage where **people would give standing ovations to show how hard you have been working behind the scenes**.

Participant 4: For me, it is **my self-improvement**. There is no other place where you could **learn these types of songs and know their true meaning** behind them, or **increase your vocal range**, or **learn how to adapt to certain situations**.

Participant 2: I just find it fun **having to enjoy the choir**. It is just something different **to be with friends in a choir** and it is something **I do enjoy**.