**Focus Group Interview**

**Date: 26/06/2022**

**Signature of researcher: JL**

**Participants: Grade 10B Focus Group**

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

Participant 1: To **have fun** and **forget about the worries outside of choir**.

Participant 2: I **enjoy music** a lot and it helps me **escape all my issues and further negativity that comes from school** whether it is getting bad marks or having to deal with annoying people. **Music is a wonderful way of going to my own place.** It is like home to me and I have known **our conductor for a very long time. He is a really cool person who likes to have fun and he is truly brilliant**. I thought surrounding myself with people like that would be good for me. It is also **fun to be on stage with the choir**. **You get to go to various** **places** and you get to **create music together with other** people and if we do that well, it sounds amazing.

Participant 3: I like the choir because I **enjoy performing**.

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

Participant 1: A really wonderful experience and moment in the choir is not getting picked to go on the tour, but **having these rehearsals and watching other people get shouted at for misbehaving is really funny**. It just **brings life to the choir**. **Performing at Fig Tree Farm was amazing** because it showed how hard we work. The amount of money we made that day proved the fact that we are really good and the **people enjoyed it**. It shows that the **music we make is nice for other people and the hard work always pays off**.

Participant 2: For me, the **best part is yet to come of us going on an international tour**. That is going to be the best part.

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

Participant 1: You **gain new skills**. Just knowing that **you are learning and gaining new skills**.

Participant 2: I feel that the **performances really get you hyped up**.

Participant 3: You **gain really good skills**. Every day is a new experience and a chance to **improve your sight reading** or **working with other people in a voice group, blending**, is really fun.

Participant 1: It also helps you with other skills such as **patience, and focus**, you get to work with other people.

Participant 4: The **friendships and bonds you create with the people in the choir** is really nice.

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

Participant 1: A huge disadvantage that I find is **time**. I know we always say that we do not have enough time, **but we get busy with other work, sports, and sleeping**. **Time is a very big factor and not just for music but for everything at school.** It is hard to find the time when everyone is comfortable to come in and work to their best ability. **You have to sacrifice time to do music**. It is really **not easy**.

Participant 2: I do not know if **the teachers are being unreasonable or if the choir is taking up too much time, but it is really tiring, and we also have school on top of that**. Sometimes choir would only end at 22:00 and then we have to be at school the next day where we have to wake up at 06:00, so we only have an hour to settle down with around about **five hours of sleep**. **At school the next day, the teachers would unpack more work and expect us to do everything so sometimes it does get tiring**.

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: Yes, 100%.

Participant 1: I can even make an example right now, **the person sitting next to me now said that I had poor social skills. I would not have communicated or situated myself around other people that aren’t exactly the same as me**. For example, I would say Matrics, some grade 12’s I would never have situated myself with them. Being in this choir has not only shown me what kind of person they are, but has brought me **closer to those people to build deeper and better connections**, and now I am really comfortable with them. Being in the choir definitely helps with that factor.

Participant 2: **The repertoire that we sing is quite diverse**. That certainly helps in a way because **the choir caters to everyone.** It is not just English songs, the choir caters to everyone and that really helps.

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

Participant 1: **Performing**.

Participant 2: The **feeling you get once you are on stage**.

Participant 3: **The adrenaline**.

Participant 4: **To create a performance that is so good that it mesmerizes** everyone in the audience and they just can’t get the fact that we are too good.

Participant 5: Even though you are in a choir, over time **you do get happier** and certain levels to rise without you even knowing. It is something that you gradually start **enjoying.** I remember that at the beginning of this year it almost felt like everything was just a drag, but now it has started to become more enjoyable.

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

Participant 1: Yes. I think **in this choir we have a very good brotherhood**. You got **grade eights talking to Matrics and outside of choir**, you would never see that. Usually, they are too scared, usually, they struggle to learn their names and are very scared that they mess it up in front of them. When in the choir, I would not say that we are all on the same level, **but we acknowledge each other to a point where there is no negativity and more mutual goals that we would like to achieve as a group**. Because of that, I think the brotherhood in the choir is much stronger compared to the rest of the school.

Participant 2: I feel like **the brotherhood in the choir is different from the brotherhood outside of the choir**. Outside, there is more like a hierarchy, so, within the choir, it is more relaxed than outside at school, but a certain few people caused tension and have tried to bring the hierarchy into the choir which I don’t think is a good idea. Some people have different opinions than others and some might be scared to bring their opinions to everyone else even though it might help everyone else in a positive way, but some people try to bring tension and hierarchy into the choir.

Participant 3: I think **the brotherhood could be strong**, it is just sometimes some **people would put their personal needs over the actual choir’s needs**, like what could make the choir better? But sometimes, they would put their personal needs over that.

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: **Most of my friends outside of the choir support me**.

Participant 2: At first, when you tell them about the choir, they are not exactly with you. But **once they have experienced one of the performances and they see how good we are, their eyes open**.

Participant 3: **Some people would tell us that we do not deserve our scholarship** but afterward, **they come to watch our concerts and then they start to respect us**. It is all kind of changing because **the choir is gaining respect in our school**.

Participant 4: Personally, **my friends do not really care**. They would usually tell me to enjoy it but I know that whatever happens in a choir does not really affect them.

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

Participant 1: **The adrenaline** from **performing on a stage**.

Participant 2: Especially that but on an **international level and stage**. It just shows how much you can **achieve** and how good you have become.

Participant 3: I **enjoy the singing** itself. I **enjoy the music they give us** and the exploring of new things in my voice like knowing the different sounds.

Participant 4: It is that **hype and adrenaline boost** when you **sing on stage**, especially on an **international level**. It is really an amazing way of **escaping everyone** and **being in your own zone and your own place**. Personally, once I start singing I know that I am in my zone now and that **I am comfortable**, **relaxed, and stress-free**. It is like I am 100% and that nobody can stop me and **that really drives me**.