CONTENTS

Report compiled for Music Network by Christopher Kinder, September 2000

1 INTRODUCTION

The following evaluation reports on a pilot project run by Music Network as part of the development of a national music education programme. Three primary schools and three post-primary schools were selected from two different localities in South Dublin to participate in the pilot. In introducing the programme, Music Network explains that they have set out to test a hypothetical model focusing on using live music in the classroom situation (at both primary and secondary levels) in such a way as to add value to overall educational provision.

> *A series of recent developments have succeeded in generating a fresh sense of urgency into the music education scene in Ireland. These have included the recent introductions of new curricula at both Junior Certificate/Leaving Certificate and at primary levels, with new emphases being placed on inclusion and participation in music education. There has in the past been a perceived inconsistency and inadequacy in provision for music within the formal education system on a national level.*
>
> *Music Network, the national music development organisation, sees these recent changes as key indicators that the time is ripe for the input of fresh ideas and approaches. Music Network feels that now is an appropriate time to explore the role that a professional arts/music organisation can play in the schools based education system. More specifically, a music education programme is being developed which will involve measuring what value the specialist expertise of professional musicians can add to the formal education system.*

Music Education Outline Document, Music Network, April 2000

Before the pilot projects took place, two teams of musicians received specialist training in the Continuing Professional Development initiative run by Music Network. Each team consisted of a facilitator, a key musician and a supporting musician. Both teams were assigned three schools, with each school receiving a series of 6 weekly visits. A central theme for the visits was developed by the facilitator and the classroom teacher, who was invited to take part in parallel training courses held for teachers at a separate time. This forms part of the main focus of Music Network's approach, that of testing a model of collaborative work between classroom teachers and professional musicians.

A number of key elements informed the pilot projects:
- access to music: projects will adopt a non-specialist, inclusive and highly participative approach to using music in a school setting.
- the use of music as an educational "tool" to unlock children's creativity.
- the recognition of two key sets of professionals working in collaboration: musicians and teachers.
- the recognition that there is a need to develop and explore the interface between these two sets of professionals.
- the use of six-week modules as a frame-work structure for each project.

Further specific aims are outlined below in part 2, both those which refer specifically to the pilot and those overarching aims which refer to the whole initiative. Part 3 describes the evaluation "tools" of observation, interview and survey. A description of a typical school visit and a sample of responses presented as "snapshots" are included in Part 4. This is of value to the reader as it presents an overall picture of the success of the project in terms of what actually happened in the schools as perceived by all partners.

The information now gathered is referred back to the original set of specific aims in order to establish how closely the pilot has come to some if not all of the stated objectives. (Parts 5 and 6) The role of an independent evaluation process is to compare these two sets of information (feedback/results and aims/objectives) to see how closely they match.

Where appropriate, this report also recommends ways by which the programme may be adapted, refined or adjusted. Such recommendations are made throughout parts 5 and 6 of the report within the context of the aim to which they refer, and are collected in an overall summary of the findings and recommendations in Part 7.

2 AIMS OF SOUTH DUBLIN EDUCATION PROJECT *

Behaviourial

1. To have a positive experience of music.
2. To unlock children's creativity using music as an "educational tool".
3. To add value to overall educational provision by presenting live music in the classroom situation.
4. To influence the level of inclusion and participation by students (in line with curricular requirements).
5. To base the 6 week module on a common conceptual core, based on a definite time frame and structure.

School Liaison and Project Structure

6. To establish links with school Principals and classroom teachers.
7. To link teachers with local arts / cultural initiatives.
8. To establish a project structure and time frame.
9. To evaluate the use of a 6-week module as a framework.
10. To refine the model for a two-year period in the same schools and in a new batch of schools.

Professional Development

11. To establish the role of key musician and set up a facilitator for each project.
12. To mentor facilitators with regard to design and delivery.
13. To develop the interface between two key sets of professionals; teachers and musicians.
14. To encourage participating teachers to "shadow" the facilitator from the start with a gradual exchange of role by the 6th session.
15. To establish opportunities for professional development of both sets of professionals; teachers and musicians.
16. To offer training to these presenters, to receive feedback from them prior to the pilot project.

Overarching

1. To introduce a series of key concepts and explore the hypothesis along a number of complimentary parameters.
2. To create a sustainable, practical and developmental means of working with schools through partnership.
3. To redress the "perceived inconsistencies and inadequacy in provision for music within the formal education system".
4. To explore the role that a professional music organisation can adopt within the formal education system.
5. To influence the main providers of music education that adequate, structured provision is needed.

*Source: Music Education Outline Documents, Music Network, February, April 2000

3 METHODS OF EVALUATION

Within the relevant terms of this independent evaluation, the following partners were identified: children, classroom teachers (primary), co-ordinating teachers (secondary), facilitators, key musicians, principals. The following evaluation modes were utilised - interview, questionnaire, observation, survey.

	Observation	*Questionnaire*	*Interview*	*Survey*
Children	✓	✗	✗	✓
Teachers	✗	✓	✓	✗
Musicians	✓	✓	✓	✗
Principal	✗	✓	✓	✗

Student survey   Appendix A
Musician Questionnaire   Appendix B
Teacher/Principal Questionnaire   Appendix C

3.1 Children

All children in both pilots, primary and post-primary, were asked to complete a questionnaire / survey form. (see Appendix A). This questionnaire was similar for both groups, the post-primary version including some extra questions, and was distributed during the final session. Children were given 5-10 minutes to complete the questions, with some guidance given by musicians and classroom teachers in some observed instances.

While the questionnaires were originally intended as a form of internal feedback within the pilot projects, their responses provide valuable anecdotal information about children's responses.

3.2 Teachers

Survey

Teachers in both pilots, Primary and Post Primary, were invited to complete a guided-response questionnaire aimed at revealing a general response under several headings: organisation, benefit to students and school, relevance to school and Department programmes (see Appendix C). The questionnaire was either distributed at the school or posted to the individual teachers. In both cases, a stamped addressed envelope was supplied to encourage the completion of the questionnaire and to facilitate its return.

The questionnaire was designed to generate feedback using two forms of evaluation: a 5-point scale of agreement with a statement, and comments on that statement. Responses were generally positive although comments on the whole were brief. There was a high level of response from Primary Teachers but very low from Post-Primary Teachers.

It should be noted that there was an important difference between the primary and the post-primary teacher groups. At primary level, the programme involved two classroom teachers in all of the 3 schools. These 6 teachers were the regular classroom teachers, they knew their pupils very well towards the end of the school year, and had been closely involved with the visits from the outset. They formed a

discrete sample from which valuable feedback could be gained. It was straightforward to contact them, they were enthused about the programme and were willing to support it, and there was less pressure on them with 4 weeks of the school remaining.

At post-primary level, the selected schools, by definition, did not have a classroom teacher, but rather a co-ordinating teacher. In all three cases, this teacher was associated with the students in a pastoral role only and did not have the opportunity to revisit the content of the music programme with the same group between visits by the musicians. These teachers were not music specialists, and were not directly connected with the regular music teachers in the school. Although they acted solely in this co-ordinating role, a view was nevertheless sought from them using the same response questionnaire as that used for the primary teachers.

In the interest of gaining an insight into the possible effect of this music project on other music teaching in the school, feedback was sought from music specialists within the school as well. Music specialists were present in the two post-primary schools and a response was received from one of those two.

<u>Interview</u>
In every school visited, interviews were held with the teachers. These took place prior to the issuing of questionnaires, serving both to gain the teachers' confidence before asking them to fill out a questionnaire and also to gauge a general reaction to the project through anecdotal observation.

3.3 Principals

The same questionnaire as that used by teachers (Appendix C) was distributed to Principals of both Primary and Post-primary schools. The same interview strategy was employed for Principals also, with a greater availability of time from Primary Principals resulting in a better response.

3.4 Musicians

Each team of musicians was invited to offer feedback through a response questionnaire (Appendix B) and through interview. The same general headings were used for both teams - location, school environment, musician's role etc., in an effort to invite broad comments of value to an evaluation process. Supplementary questions were included to direct their responses, but general comments were invited also. All musicians were also asked to suggest ways as to how to improve this model in the future.

The primary team of 3 musicians supplied detailed responses to each heading group, while two responses were received from the secondary team.

The interview process took the form of a round table discussion with each team, both times at the conclusion of a school session. Other opportunities also arose at various times when it was possible to get views of various parts of the project which then fed into the general feedback loop.

3.5 Summary

In summary, all partners were given the opportunity to contribute feedback comments through interview and questionnaire. A higher response rate from teachers and

principals involved in the primary project can in part be explained by the timetabling considerations and the organisational structure of the project. The response rate from the musicians involved in the primary schools was higher than that of the secondary team.

4. A 'SNAPSHOT' OF RESPONSES

While a detailed analysis of the responses together with general observation forms the main part of this evaluation report (Part 5), a discursive survey of the responses to these various evaluation modes, presented in 4.2 below, is revealing. Also of interest is a brief description of the type of activity and environment present in the schools, the age of the children and size of the groups involved.

4.1 A typical school visit

A school visit lasted between 90 and 120 minutes and consisted of full participation and involvement of musicians and children. The working space consisted in primary schools of a classroom with desks stacked to the sides allowing for a large circle of chairs to form a cohesive group. In secondary schools the same formation was used, with dedicated spaces being made available for the visit. This seating arrangement, in keeping with models of good practice, allowed for total participation and opportunities for all children to have access to the activity. No one could feel excluded because of the seating arrangement and all students had a direct contact with the musicians.

The musicians worked from a central location, sometimes as a group of three seated together as part of the circle, sometimes distributed amongst the children. When required by the activity, the musicians moved freely around the large group, leading from various positions. Where it was possible to set up smaller groups, the musicians were able to direct their attention to the needs of the various groups when necessary.

The working environment arranged in this way also allowed for controlled distribution and collection of instruments. A typical session may start with a rhythmic activity, referring to previous work or introducing new ideas, leading on to a development of the theme taken for that particular workshop. There was invariably an atmosphere of creativity, with students having every opportunity to engage in the activity selected at any one time.

The groups visited in primary school were either 3rd or 4th class (age 9-11), each group consisting of between 40 and 70 children, split into two classes. The musicians would be required therefore to divide their time between the two groups, usually 50-60 minutes per group. The six-week series of visits concluded with a performance by the children of their work to an audience composed of other classes in the school and members of the school staff. The musicians who visited the primary schools were specialists on clarinet, guitar and double bass.

In post-primary schools, the groups consisted of between 10 and 25 children from a variety of levels within the school. The musicians were able to develop a strong sense of trust with the students and establish a meaningful rapport with the different groups. While there was no final performance with any of the three groups at this level, a significant sense of continuity and progression was achieved by reference to a central focus throughout. The musicians who visited the post-primary schools were specialists on uilleann pipes, tin whistle and percussion.

4.2 Teachers and Principals

Primary

In the case of the Primary schools, interviews with school principals and teachers revealed an overwhelming support for the school visits. Backed up by questionnaire, they felt the visits:

had little if any impact on timetable issues:
> *"The opportunity of taking part in this course was not to be missed, so re-arranging a timetable should never be a problem."*

> *"Primary school curriculum is flexible as subjects are not rigidly timetabled like secondary school."*

> *"The benefits we derived far outweighed any difficulties arising from re-arranging other aspects of the curriculum on afternoon's when the musicians visited."*

were of benefit to the students
> *"For my students this was all very new to them. They enjoyed taking part and looked forward to each new lesson."*

> *"It covered areas in music that might not otherwise be done, such as percussion and composition"*

> *"The children really enjoyed it. They composed music, listened to music. They are no longer intimidated by the subject and are more confident and able"*

> *"The children got an opportunity to compose to a standard which could only be achieved with some professional help."*

fitted in with the school curriculum.
> *"It meant for me that music was covered very well for the 6 weeks of the course. There was no excuse for slipping or missing a lesson"*

> *"The programme fitted in with themes that I would be teaching in other subjects; for example, nature, celebrations, foreign countries."*

> *"We wrote the lyrics as part of the English lesson and used class readers and pupils interests as the theme for the song"*

> *"It helped the teachers broaden the scope of the music programme and to give the children more scope for musical expression"*

<u>Post-Primary</u>
In the case of the post-primary schools, the responses were more varied. Backed up by questionnaire, principals and teachers felt

the visits had some impact on timetable issues:
> *"Minor adjustments needed to be made, but these were well worthwhile"*

> *"It is not possible to have a teacher present at the sessions, but there are no worries about insurance, indemnity, etc"*

> *"The visits were disruptive to the timetable"*

were of benefit to the students

"The students enjoyed and learned"

"Over the course of the visits, a lot of things were introduced"

fitted in with the school curriculum.
"Increase a 'real' awareness of Irish music, instruments and performers"

"The notice was too short to tie the visits into the school curriculum. There was not enough co-ordination with the school"

4.3 Musicians

Primary
In terms of working within a school environment, the Primary team members commented:
"I found the three schools involved most helpful. One school was a little bit cautious at first but still were helpful"

"We were made very welcome in the each of the three schools visited"

"All three schools made us welcome. It would be useful to have a second space available for classes to split up"

Musicians working in the primary classrooms generally found the work stimulating.
"I found it interesting to work with a singer/songwriter and learnt quite a new way of creating pieces, starting with lyrics rather than rhythm or melody"

"The experience was of immense value and I learned to improvise on my instrument and think up song ideas or musical ideas to facilitate lyrics composed by the pupils"

Asked whether the school visits achieved what they set out to do, the musicians commented:
"I felt the project was a success in terms of the enjoyment and participation of the children."

"The projects had a sense of direction with each session building on the previous ones, and the pupils looked forward to each visit"

"The way the children responded at the end of the final performance left me in no doubt that the project was a huge success from a creative music making point of view"

Post-Primary
The Post-Primary team responses were also revealing.

In terms of working within a school environment, these musicians commented:
"Initially in the three schools we were made very welcome."

"Generally speaking we were made very welcome but there was a bit of confusion with the schools about the days we were to visit"

Musicians working in the primary classrooms generally found the work stimulating.
"Playing in the group situation made me more aware of the reaction of the children to what we were playing"

"I noticed how much time was needed to build up a trust with the students for them to act and react to and with us as musicians"

Asked whether the school visits achieved what they set out to do, the musicians commented:

"I think we made great progress in many ways – building a trust with them that allowed them to participate in the activities. There were huge barriers placed on themselves in the beginning. [By the end] they were less afraid of the reactions of each other and instead of being bored, realised they could enjoy it."

"Given the schools we visited which take an open way of dealing with children, the visits were a success"

4.4 Children

<u>Primary</u>

A range of responses was evident from the pupils in primary schools.

"I learned that music is more enjoyable than I thought"
"I loved the song 'I want to go to Chinatown' and clapping and passing it on"
"I enjoyed the bit when we were singing"
"I enjoyed the bit when we were recorded the most"
"We learned that it doesn't take much to write a song"
"I liked Anthony dancing and the Russian song"
"I loved listening to the different instruments"
"I liked the exercises and the music"

<u>Post-Primary</u>

"I learned all about the names of instruments and I enjoyed playing them the most"
"I learned how to play a djembe and how to sing a song in a different language"
"My favourite part was trying out the different music equipment and listening to the leaders playing music"
"I did not enjoy when we were all tired and he play the bodhrán hard"
"I didn't realise that Irish music was so good"
"I enjoyed learning everybody's names while singing"

5. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT BY AIMS

Turning to each of the aims identified in the outline documents of the music project, it is possible to offer a general response to those which apply specifically to this pilot. The comments in this section should always be read in the context that this project was established as a pilot for the whole programme. Many of the aims are aspirational by nature and therefore could not be expected to have been achieved within one 6-week period. Comments relating to the overarching aims of the long-term programme are reserved for Part 6

By adopting this point by point analysis of the stated aims, a degree of cross-over of material has occurred, with similar issues discussed under different headings. This is inevitable in such an exercise and while producing an element of duplication in places, it is hoped that each reference enhances the overall picture by adding different dimensions.

As well as observing how closely each aim has been achieved, the paragraphs below also include some recommendations for changes to the programme.   These recommendations   are R1 indicated by a figure   which refers to a list printed as a summary in Part 7 of   the report.

Behavourial

5.1 A positive experience of music.
In writing about a similar project in Finland which in many ways informs the current programme in Ireland, Sean Gregory emphasises the aim of enjoyment:
> *"The basic aim is to enable children to enjoy music-making and to allow everyone to participate so as to feel that they are contributing in a valuable way".* (Sean Gregory, 1995)

In both Primary and Post-primary situations, this aim was overwhelmingly achieved. Feedback from students in all schools, from teachers and from musicians all record a high level of enjoyment.
> *"I never liked music before but now I like it"*
> *"I learnt that music was more fun than you think"*
> *"It is good to play an instrument and if you make a song, keep it a secret"* (Students)

Of the 181 questionnaires returned from students, all but one registered "Don't know" when asked "Did you enjoy working with the musicians?" 180 replied "Yes"! As a measure of the success of the overall project, level of enjoyment is a valuable indicator.

5.2 Unlocking children's creativity.
It is clear from observation that the children were engaged in a creative process, especially at Primary Schools, led by the facilitator and key musician. The six-week plan drawn up by the facilitator had a range of creative activities for students to engage in as a central thread. Further, the fact that in each school (primary) a final "product" was created (and presented to others) is proof that the children's creativity was tapped. Even more evidence is provided by the children themselves, indicating the different degrees of creativity which occurred:

> *"We learned a new song."*
> *"We learned all the different names of the instruments."*
> *"We learned how to play drums."*
> *"We learned that it doesn't take much to make a song."*
> *"I learned how to compose"*
> *"I learned that you can make music out of anything and you can make a song by a sentence"*   (Students)

According to the lesson plans used for this 6-week series of visits, much use was made of small group work, although at the time of observing for this evaluation the emphasis was on large group work in preparation for the final presentation. It is encouraging to read that small groups are used, as it is clear from research on effective classroom practice that this type of arrangement is highly conducive to creativity being developed.

R4

> *"The bit I enjoyed the most was when we divided into groups and made up songs"*
> (Student)

Careful assignment to groups according to personality and leadership qualities (in collaboration with teachers) and clear parameters within which to explore given themes can lead to highly creative environments, charged with a vital source of feedback at this age group, that of peer review. The resulting collage of sound events when presented to each other, recorded, played back, revised and reviewed, offer many opportunities to further unlock creativity in children.

R5

5.3 Live music
This aim was well achieved by the pilot projects. In all the schools visited, an element of live music took place both in the form of performances by the visiting musicians and in the form of group work with students playing instruments accompanied by the musicians.

> *"The students really enjoyed the sessions and participated with great enthusiasm. The informality helped to get more reserved boys to 'have a go' and the experience was beneficial in many ways"*   (Teacher)

> *"It's important not to be too stuck to your instrument - it's more important to let the kids invent, create, play etc. The challenge is for one's playing to blend with the children's music, not to dominate. But certainly to demonstrate one's instrument it's fine to play a bit"*
> (Musician)

In all sessions observed, children were seated in a large circle in order that no-one felt excluded. Depending on the activity, either the facilitator or the key musician would lead from a central position, building on previously learnt skills or introducing new musical ideas towards the central theme. There was a strong emphasis on rhythm which pervaded all activities from the beginning warm-up through revision of earlier work to final products.

> *"The programme broadened the children's horizons in many areas – rhythm, first hand experience of musical instruments, and seeing music being made as opposed to hearing"*

(Teacher)

> *"There was always a 'rhythm atmosphere' in the room. As a musician, I have learnt that it's important to show the beat first then play. It becomes more meaningful for the pupils and it makes coming together much easier and creates more room for fun!"* (Musician)

With professionals of the calibre used, the music provided is of such outstanding quality that there is no question that it adds value to the overall educational provision in the classroom. (One school Principal put forward his own view that the students involved probably had no idea of the quality of music they were being presented with.)

Not withstanding that the aim is to bring live music into the <u>classroom</u>, it may be suggested that something could be gained if "live music" was presented to larger numbers of students in assembly situations. One of the musicians involved in the Post-primary pilot considered that the live music making could in fact be presented differently.

`R1`

> *"I feel it would be valuable to present ourselves at the outset in a concert situation where children could see you 'on stage' in your normal way and this would place a 'value' on the work to follow"*
>   (Musician)

5.4 Inclusion and participation.
Within the model established, this aim was well achieved, although not totally. Inclusion and participation of students can sometimes be perceived to have been achieved through rhythm and clapping games alone, yet these activities do not score highly with students.

`R2`

> *"I would liked to have seen less clapping"*
> *"I didn't enjoy clapping all the time because my hands got sore."*   (Students)

Provision of percussion instruments to a visiting team and easy access to instrument banks within a school would facilitate participation even more. The activities devised for the Primary visits had a strong emphasis on inclusion, with the creation of lyrics for songs obviously well handled by the musicians.

`R3`

Two of the musicians say:
> *"We had to think up musical ideas to facilitate lyrics composed by the pupils faster than ever before"*

> *"The kids seemed to find this (starting with lyrics) a very stimulating way to begin"*
>   (Musicians)

The smaller numbers in the post-primary sessions meant that there were always enough instruments for all to participate, although with this age group it is a more difficult task to develop a climate of inclusion. Despite every effort from the musicians, there were in each of the three groups observed some students who were reluctant to get involved. While this is typically the case for this age group, the changing composition of the groups and resulting new dynamics for each session created extra problems for the musicians.

A teacher observing the sessions commented:

> *"The project was of benefit to the students and they seemed to enjoy most of the sessions, although some students gave more than others"*   (Teacher)

Group work was used successfully at this level and while it has its own challenges, it can be skilfully used as a method of including reluctant students.

R4

5.5 Common conceptual core.

The Primary project adopted a core conceptual theme of "Sounds of the World". From comments made by the facilitator of this project (reported below in 5.16.6), it would seem that the musicians were content to work within a central concept but were also comfortable with an approach which allowed for flexibility and adaptation once the process has begun.

> *"The aims were not entirely clear from the outset but that's usually the way since every class leads you in a different direction, and the intentions have to be flexible."* (Musician)

The Post-primary sessions adopted a more flexible approach from the outset without an apparent conceptual core. This may in fact have affected the overall level of achievement of the aims of this particular pilot.

One of the school teachers observed:

> *"Some individual sessions were good but there was no main focus. With no clear goals set out at the beginning, it took a while to get going"* (Teacher)

One of the musicians explained:

> *"The end product fell far short of the aim of the project, namely for the students to compose a piece of music and record it and/or perform it for the school"* (Musician)

It is clear that careful, thorough planning by consultation with teachers and musicians around a conceptual core common to all sessions has benefits for all.

R7

School Liaison and project structure

5.6 Links with schools
Generally, it appears that good links based on mutual respect were made between the project organisers, principals and classroom teachers.

> *"The introductory meeting was invaluable as the vice-Principal and myself got a thorough briefing on the philosophy of the work."*

> *"Notice was too short to enable the programme to fit in with the school curriculum, and it had a disruptive impact on the timetable"*

> *"The organisation was excellent"*   (Principals)

> *"I felt there was a bit of confusion with the schools about the days we were to visit. Generally speaking we were made very welcome but I felt the schools were unclear as to how the project would unfold"*

> *"There was a feeling coming from the teachers of not being clear as to what was going to happen and how long we were going to be there."*
>   (Musicians)

As mentioned later in Part 6, links with specialist music teachers in post-primary schools would seem to be an important step to take if some of the other over-arching aims of the project are to be achieved.

R10

5.7 Links to local arts / cultural initiatives.
Links had been made with local Arts Community Officers with regard to short-listing schools to be included. Contact between teachers and local Arts/Cultural initiatives has been articulated as an aspiration of the programme and should continue to be encouraged.

R11

5.8 A project structure.
The structure of the project as outlined diagrammatically in the April outline document appears to require no adjustment as a result of the feedback from this pilot, except for the development of the parallel teacher training opportunities (refer 5.15 below). It is recommended that a review of the research in the area of Arts Education for the secondary age group should occur before the next phase of development in order to address some of the issues raised. Within the context of complementing syllabus developments both at primary and especially post-primary levels, a closer link with the Department of Education and Science may be worthwhile developing.

The time frame may need reviewing for post-primary schools. The period March - June may need to be avoided as it is at precisely at this period that post-primary schools are at their busiest and continuity of participation is at most risk.

R12

> *"The programme was not co-ordinated enough with the school to have been of benefit. Early September is a more suitable time"*

> *"Perhaps such a project would be better suited to first term or early second term"*
>   (Teachers)

It would seem probable that future cycles of the programme may not require the same length of time for consultation with potential partners and selected schools,

appointment of key project leaders, training of musicians and facilitators, etc., originally given the period September to February. Time saved in this block may be profitably transferred to the post-primary visits keeping them away from busy examination periods.

5.9 The 6-week module.
The concept of a 6-week structure would appear to have the general agreement of all parties, although the post-primary sessions were not able to conclude with an overall presentation.

The musicians shared the following views:

> *"There was a feeling of needing another couple of sessions to have a proper presentation of what was learnt. Because of this, the "satisfaction factor" was left in limbo."*   R13

> *"In schools such as we visited, much more time is needed to achieve projected results"*
>   (Musicians)

In the primary school context, the musicians expressed the view that more time was needed for each session due to having to work with such large numbers.   R14

> *"I think that one-hour sessions are too short. One hour 20 minutes would be my preferred minimum, or even 2 hours."*   (Musician)

The time allocated for post-primary sessions would seem to be satisfactory.

5.10   Refining the model
Part of the central hypothesis of this project is to test a number of different variables, particularly the exposing of students with varying socio-economic profiles to a variety of music genres. When asked about their music preferences and to indicate what other types of musicians they would like to visit, students in the post-primary pilot generally, although not unanimously, selected pop and rock. Students in the primary schools strongly indicated that they wanted the same group of musicians to return.

It would seem appropriate to recommend that the project continue with the original hypothesis despite the feedback from the children. To have the same team of musicians return to the same group of children or the same classroom teacher would have obvious benefits for this action research in terms of observing longitudinal developments in either children's creativity or teacher confidence or both. By doing so, however, implies that all music groups once set up will remain where they are, which appears to be at variance with the original parameter being tested in the hypothesis of using different genres with children from different socio-economic backgrounds. These two positions appear to be potentially contradictory, and a critical decision will need to be made as to which parameter is considered more important to test.

In other words, while it would be interesting to observe a project with the traditional players in primary schools and the 'classical' players in post-primary (the placements reversed), it would also be interesting to observe how much progress could be made with children and teachers by leaving the musicians in place and building on the relationships already begun.   R15

Maintaining the same facilitator and varying the key musicians may serve both to test the hypothesis of effect of genre as well as maintaining continuity in order to test the long-term aims of the programme.

Professional Development

5.11   The facilitator and key musician
The establishing of a key musician and setting up a facilitator for each group was completed by Music Network personnel in the early planning stages of the programme. Roles were clearly defined in the case of the primary pilot but less so in the post-primary.

5.12   Mentoring the facilitators.
Musicians were visited by a member of the initial training staff during the course of the school visits.

5.13   Developing the interface.
The interface between musicians and primary classroom teachers was certainly developed during the actual sessions with the children in terms of an increase in the understanding of each other's roles. One teacher wrote

> *"We enjoyed the course and the company of our instructors."*(Teacher)

At post-primary level however, it was not possible for this to occur, due to the fact that one of the sets of professionals was not directly engaged in the project, ie teachers. The participating teacher in post-primary schools was not the specialist music teacher and acted only as a co-ordinator and supervisor. This had an influence on the interface between the musicians and the school personnel, as in some cases there was a different person each week and sometimes no-one was present at all. When specialist music teachers are already in position in a school, there is great potential for collaboration, but it is a sensitive area and needs to be developed carefully.

5.14   "Shadowing" the facilitator.
Some progress was made in achieving the cross over of skills or practices implied in this aim. At the end of the six weeks, some teachers still felt however that more training would be required to give them the confidence to exchange roles:

> *"We teachers do not have the experience, skill or knowledge to achieve what the experts did"*

> *"I did not teach any music lesson while they were in my classroom and they were just replacing me"*   (Teachers)

5.15   Opportunities for professional development
Teachers
The primary school situation is well positioned to achieve this aim in the long term, with the parallel teacher training offering a direct interface not only between musicians and classroom teachers, but with all teachers in the school. In the pilot projects, this appears to have worked with only moderate success due to a number of factors, the primary one being time considerations. Teachers were invited to take part in these 3/4 hour sessions in their own time after school hours, and attendance was poor. As the type of activity designed for these sessions required a reasonable sized group, the effectiveness of the session was threatened with small numbers. One teacher commented that while she could

> *"see what (the facilitator) was getting at, it was harder for the others who hadn't seen him work with the children"* (Teacher)

R16

Despite its shortcomings, it would seem that this training model is sound in its rationale and structure and should be further developed. For example, teachers may be invited to enrol for a Music Network Continuing Professional Development <u>module</u> which then requires them to make a commitment to take part in a 10-week professional development course, 6 of which involve school visits from musicians. They would then be required to follow through a number of steps involving them in becoming familiar with current research, comprehensive planning, meaningful review and producing a completed record of the course including sound recordings.

Run by Music Network though Education Centres, such modules would both continue to utilise the expertise of professional musicians and to provide the live music experience to children. Additionally, they would engage the other key set of professionals, primary and post-primary teachers, in a pedagogical challenge of how best to use this unique and dynamic resource in their own situations and how to use the skills of the musicians to influence their own teaching in the longer term.

Key to this approach is the identification by the teachers of specific areas in their individual situations where the musicians can contribute most effectively. The structure of the modules, with its constant review back to a central focus, could unleash potential for dynamic professional growth.

Such an approach would ensure that the greatest value was gained by having professional musicians working in classrooms. Teachers would avail of this resource only on evidence of a high level of commitment. Especially suitable for blocks of curriculum time, this type of approach would be relevant for both primary and post-primary teachers, with those involved with the Leaving Certificate Applied programmme gaining significant benefits. (also see 6.4)

Musicians
Regarding the professional development of musicians, some significant progress appears to have been made in achieving this aim. The training provided by Music Network as part of its Continuing Professional Development initiative was comprehensive and effective. Much of what was discussed at these training sessions was implemented in the course of the in-class visits. (See Part 5.16)

The collaboration which took place in the classroom situation was also a source of Professional Development indicating support for the concept of team presentation.

> *"I learnt quite a new way of creating pieces"*

> *"It was an unusual but very productive combination of players"*

> *"This was my first time working as a team member so I felt when called upon I had to make my contribution count, and quickly!"*

> *"Playing in this group situation made me more aware of the reaction of the children to what we were playing. Holding their attention meant changing tempos and rhythms rapidly and regularly."*

> *"The children found starting with lyrics a very stimulating way to begin, and are better able to get over inhibitions this way than if you start with instruments"* (Musicians)

Such responses are revealing about the learning processes which take place subconsciously during the actual practice of teaching, which is encouraging for the professional development of the musicians but may in fact have a different effect on the professional development of the teachers.

When the dynamic of the musician team constantly changes as they learn from each other and adapt their roles, the teachers are observing this as well. Too much "development" in the form of re-assessment of roles, perceived differences in approach, etc make it uncomfortable for the co-operating teacher to observe, and may present a situation where the teacher is reluctant to want to get involved.

This produces an apparent dilemma between encouraging professional development of the musicians and facilitator, (rapid, on-the-spot decisions and readjustment of roles) and professional development of teachers (static, secure, well-defined roles). Clearly, the role of the facilitator is therefore paramount and needs to be absolutely distinct from the outset, with only minimal cross-over into the role of key musician. R17
It is possible that only then, when the respective roles of the team members are firmly established that teachers will feel inclined to take on some of the responsibilities of the musician.

5.16   Feedback from musicians' training.
The outline document specifically refers to the importance of training as an integral part of the overall programme. New skills learnt, ideas shared and decisions made at such training sessions influence the way the programme develops. Of the many points made at training, six key issues have been identified below, collated from reports compiled at the end of the training.

5.16.1 Involve the whole school.
By involving teachers in the school other than those whose classes were directly involved in the in-class projects, it is hoped to raise awareness about the music project within the school. This did not happen to any great extent, especially in the post-primary schools where school visits were discrete, exclusive events. In the primary schools, there was a greater awareness, due however more to the more intimate nature of the school and to the final performance than to any direct involvement of other R8
teachers. This area of school involvement needs further work.

5.16.2 Musicians and facilitators should be able to edit material on the spot.
There was good evidence of this is both pilot projects.

5.16.3 All members of the team should be aware of their respective roles.
This is clearly an area about which musicians in this kind of education work are concerned. There was evidence of a high level of awareness of the different roles. In the primary team, one of the members was present for only 50% of the visits, which resulted in his leadership role to be necessarily less important than the other member of the team, although is musical contribution was significant. Other members of the

team appeared to have a clear understanding of their respective roles by the end of the six-week period.

> *I was a key musician and was given special responsibility by the chief facilitator to facilitate the pupils to write their own songs. We also consulted to prepare for and evaluate each workshop…Roles were pretty well defined, so I felt we worked well together."*   (Musician)

The roles also appeared to be well defined in the post primary group, in the sense that there seemed to be a facilitator and two ensemble musicians, neither of whom assumed a more dominant role.

Comments from the training session reinforce this point:
> "*It takes time for people to know each other's relative strengths and weaknesses.*"

> "*Personnel have a varying kit-bag of ideas and material which can be drawn on.*"

> "*The children will sense immediately if a team goes into a classroom without being clear about their own individual ideas.*"   (Musicians)

The nature of activities selected and content used will have an impact on how best the different skills can be harnessed into a team approach. Even after 6 weeks (18 sessions) working together, it was clear from observation that this is still an area requiring constant evaluation and redefinition. It was not immediately apparent to an outside observer what in fact was the difference between the role of facilitator and key musician in the primary team, so it is indeed to the musicians' credit that they were able to adapt their own teaching methods to accommodate those of the other team members with no obvious effect on the creative process.

R17

5.16.4 Know when to abandon an exercise.
As a training point, this was well picked up by the facilitators, and was especially apparent in the post primary team. The sessions in the secondary schools were longer (usually a double period lasting 120 minutes) and needed a variety of activities to sustain interest and motivation. With clearly defined roles in this group of musicians, it is possible to sustain an activity for long periods within a particular creative theme. A second team member is able to pick up an idea and allow the leader time to reflect before rejoining the activity and developing it further.

R17

5.16.5 Team members are present as musicians and not as child-care workers.
Comments from the training referred to the ideal role of the teacher as being participatory and not viewing the session as a free class. At the primary level, all teachers remained present during the sessions observed and there is no reason to suggest that this was not the norm throughout. It is possible that other work (administration, correcting, etc.) was completed during some of the sessions. In none of the primary sessions was there any need for the musicians to seek the assistance of a teacher for a disciplinary matter.)

The post-primary situations were intentionally different by design, with non-specialist groups of children selected to take part. From an administrative point, this requires that a Year Head or Pastoral group leader takes responsibility for the session with regard to finding a suitable space, checking that students are present, etc. By definition however, it is unlikely that this school representative will be in a position to

see the same group again between visits, and will be less inclined to participate in the actual sessions themselves. In one school, it was usual that no teacher was present, which was the case at the session observed. At the second school, different teachers were present at different sessions. At the third school, one teacher was present at all sessions, but did not participate at the session observed and was required to leave the area on two occasions for other duties.

This had a significant impact on the dynamic of the groups with which the post-primary team worked. In two of the schools, the nature of the session was directly influenced by the dynamic created by the composition of the group and the absence of a teacher. The attention span of the client group required a special approach from the outset. Added to this was a novel group composition which with this age group invariably leads to extra issues requiring specific management skills. Add to this again the absence of a staff member with these skills and the situation arises which was rightly anticipated in the training session where musical and creative skills are very much subsumed by attempts at discipline. The musicians maintained an atmosphere of trust and musicality throughout.

R8

R10

Musicians' comments from these situations are revealing.
> *"Our playing needed to have a message or a purpose to move the pupils into a place of curiosity where we could work together"*

> *"I noticed how much time was needed to build up a trust with the students for them to act and react to and with us as musicians."*
> (Musicians)

5.16.6 Planning aspects.
A list of planning ideas was decided by discussion at the training sessions (pre-project visit, breaking up the time, establishing a logical order, etc.). This training point appears to have been carefully implemented by both teams, with each showing a flexibility of approach to adapt their plans during the course of the programme of visits depending on consultation and feedback.
> *"As facilitator, I made session by session plans for the workshops which I now feel too restricting. It's probably better to have an overall plan for the 6 session module"*

> *"As key musician, I'm not sure of a separate theme for each workshop is a good idea as I believe the creative process has to be given space to develop"*
> (Musicians)

It would seem appropriate to recommend that a flexible planning strategy be adopted for future projects. One of the stated aims was to anchor the sessions around a "conceptual theme" in order to provide continuity and also to allow cross-curricular aspects (related poetry, literature or art work, related eras of history, related area of geography, etc) to be explored both musically and extra-musically by school-based personnel. For this aspect of the programme to have value, it would seem important to continue to require a detailed plan to inform teachers of any possible change in advance in order that the climate of partnership and mutual respect be allowed to flourish. (see also 5.6)

R17

6. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT BY OVER-ARCHING AIMS

Further to the analysis of specific aims presented in Part 5, this section refers to long-term or over-arching aims identified in the outline documents and discusses how well they have been achieved, where possible, in the pilot projects.

6.1 Exploring key concepts

In the longer term, with more schools and different groups of musicians involved, it is clear that the parameters will become complementary and that the key concepts of professional development for teachers and musicians, access to a musically creative environment and generally influencing the provision of music education in our schools will be achieved. The hypothesis may even in fact be better explored if split into two sets of parameters, one for primary schools and one for post-primary. (see also 5.10)

R20

6.2 Partnership with schools

In this context, it seems appropriate to reinforce the importance of early, thorough and appropriate contact with schools and principals, particularly at post-primary level. This pilot has confirmed that there is a wide difference between primary and post-primary schools in a number of areas, namely administration, timetable, attitude towards visitors, culture of contact hours with students, roles and responsibilities of teaching staff, and so on. (The significant difference between the two client groups in terms of age and openness to new ideas has been mentioned elsewhere but is also relevant to recall here.)

R9

It may be useful that specialist music staff at Post-Primary schools are included at all stages of the intervention. While one of the implied aims is to reach out to a client group which otherwise might not have access to these kinds of experiences (not regular music students), this pilot has revealed that in doing so, other aims may become compromised. The overarching aim of developing a sustainable and replicable model for music education for example, and also the aim to provide continuing professional development for teachers may be threatened by too much emphasis on providing a live music experience to an under-privileged group. The Professional Development of the musicians may also be at risk.

R10

If the aim of improving access to children from all backgrounds is temporarily suppressed in the short-term however, both constituencies (teachers and musicians) would be supported. Musicians will increase their skill base more quickly and with greater confidence without the sense of frustration evident in "difficult" environments which would otherwise prevent this. Teachers will have the opportunity to fill the "gaps" in existing music education provision. New skills learnt will have an effect on syllabus-based music teaching skills which will transfer to other areas of school music. The aim of improving access to children is more likely to be achieved in the long term if these other elements of the project are allowed to become consolidated first.

For a solid and fruitful partnership to be established with post-primary schools, many issues will need to be addressed in order to build a degree of trust which will help create a sustainable and practical means of planning for best results. (see 5.15)

6.3 *Redressing inconsistencies in provision for music.*

It is a requirement for primary schools to include music within a weekly timetable, yet the Music Education Programme documents rightly point out that there is inconsistent provision in schools. A series of highly specialised 6-week modules will go some way to redressing this provision within the classes concerned in this project. The parallel teacher training aims also to enhance this provision by training teachers to an extent whereby skills and confidence level are increased to the benefit of the whole school.

Within the context of the individual classroom, the project achieves the aim, although it would seem that the intervention is limited within the context of the formal education system. If this model is to be sustained and replicated on a larger scale, it may be necessary to adjust the ratio of time spent in schools away from classroom work in favour of greater amount of time with the teachers in training. This would eventually have a greater effect on a greater number of children.

R16

In the post-primary sector, a majority of schools offer music as a subject to Junior Certificate and more than half offer it to Leaving Certificate level. Recent trends suggest that both groups are increasing in number. Music is also becoming more popular in the modular Leaving Certificate Applied programmes on offer in many schools. Inconsistency and inadequacy in provision for music is probably no more pronounced for music than for any other subject on the curriculum. Inconsistency does exist within the Department of Education and Science syllabus options, namely those areas of "improvisation" and "free composing". Due to the relatively specialist nature of secondary education, redressing the inadequacies in these areas is probably more successfully achieved by working within the existing structures rather than outside them. Partnerships with existing music teachers at Post-Primary level, within the context of the existing syllabus headings, may achieve this aim more readily. (see 5.15)

R10

6.4 *The professional music organisation's role.*

A professional music organisation with an education or outreach agenda has much to offer the formal education system. For greatest effect in terms of results for time and resources, it is possible that the teacher training aspect should receive greater emphasis. The stated aim above of exploring the role is clearly being achieved, as evident in the genuine and thorough evaluation, including this report, taking place at each step.

It is possible that one of the outcomes of this pilot is that the role a professional music organisation can adopt within the formal education system may need to refer more closely to existing provision. At post-primary level, this would certainly be more effective as the areas which are under provided at present (namely improvisation and free composition) are those which a professional music organisation can facilitate providing. To link with existing provision (establishing what is already happening, what are the strengths of the existing provision in a school, what kind and level of contribution is most appropriate for each individual school within time available, etc.) and to work alongside the music teacher, may be a better definition of this role.

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Similarly at primary level, it may be possible for the Professional Music Organisation to offer best (most effective) support when existing practice within a classroom is

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R19

identified first. The organisation can then facilitate the placement of an appropriate team of musicians to supplement the work already under way, or facilitate specific training for the particular needs of the school.

In both cases, primary and post-primary, the musicians become supplementary or "extra power" to the journey already begun by the teacher. The teacher should never feel replaced as was registered in the feedback of this pilot, but the progress of the student accelerated by the intervention.

This is an approach which a Professional Music Organisation can positively explore. It requires considerable preparatory work so that participating teachers and musicians fully understand the rationale behind it. The culture of schools is such that temporary "release" from student interaction is often regarded in a positive light. This would need to be vigourously discouraged.

Musicians on the other hand will need to be trained in the skills of identifying existing levels of competency in others and adapting their own style in order that their input is non-intimidating and supportive of what already exists. (see also 5.15)

6.5 To influence the main providers of music education.

It would appear that the rationale behind the central hypothesis is sound, particularly the concept of partnership which is key for this model to have the desired influence.

> *"The basic aim is [   ] to allow everyone to participate so as to feel that they are contributing in a valuable way."*   (Sean Gregory)

With this in mind, the project developers may well be advised to strengthen links already made with the Department of Education and Science, especially in light of refining the role of the programme in providing Continuing Professional Development for teachers. The link already established with the In-career Development Unit could be broadened to include the nationwide Education Centre network

7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 *General findings of visits to primary schools:*
- Variety of high quality live music experiences
- Flexible timetable.
- Committed and co-operative staff.
- Working with a unified group.
- Classroom teacher present throughout.
- Satisfies the syllabus requirements.
- Uses relevant thematic material.
- Generally well defined roles amongst the team members.
- Musically satisfying for the musicians, being able to learn from each other.
- Uses a flexible work plan.
- High level of involvement of the pupils, the "experience".

7.2 *General findings of visits to post-primary schools:*
- Variety of high quality live music experiences.
- High energy sessions placing demands on musicians.
- Different school personnel attending sessions.
- Very good degree of trust leading to curiosity developed with students.
- Role of musician team members not clearly defined.
- Changing composition of group from week to week.
- Lack of central conceptual core to the sessions.
- No involvement of specialist music school staff.
- Uses a flexible work plan.

7.3 *Summary of recommendations.*
Content / Procedure
1. Musicians in post-primary schools suggest an opening concert may help build trust with the client group. A final large performance should be used with caution, as it can act as a symbol of closure. Pupils and teachers may be reluctant to try anything similar on later occasions, which goes against the overall objective.
2. Less emphasis on rhythm warm-ups. Children's feedback suggests that this part of the visits was not popular.
3. Provide percussion instruments. Schools should have their own instruments to remove the perception that they associated only with the experts and to encourage use between visits.
4. Group work. When managed well (with teacher's input), groups can enhance creativity and encourage inclusion and access.
5. Recording equipment. Immediate feedback is valued by all. Use many small performances of pupils' work.
6. Content of post-primary experiences. Different styles, genres, tasks, activities need to be explored for this age group.
7. Conceptual core. A thread or theme is effective but flexibility is desirable at the same time

8. Greater background work before the visit. Greater attempts could be made to link in with what is already being done by teachers to encourage professional development.

Rationale / Structure

9. Secondary school principals. Careful planning needs to occur with post-primary schools.
10. Link in with school post-primary music specialists or work with a group of teachers from different schools interested in the Composing elective at Leaving Certificate.
11. Link with local arts centres. Continue to explore possibilities whereby expertise form local community groups and arts centres may be used.

12. The project cycle may need to be adjusted to fit with the academic cycle of the school. Planning in May/June and September, school visits in Oct - Dec..
13. A longer cycle may be more appropriate for some post-primary schools where attendance is an issue.
14. With larger groups (30+) at primary, longer sessions may be needed and appropriate working spaces (large and small) made available. Timing is vital to success - avoid early start (rush hour and students often late), and end of day (concentration diminishes).
15. The programme should continue to explore the most effective way to redress imbalance of educational provision, including the testing of different genres with different age groups.
16. Training for teachers. Greater emphasis is needed on the different professional development models already outlined.
17. Roles of visiting musicians need to be well defined before visits in order that teachers have confidence about expectations on themselves.
18. The composition of the post-primary group needs to be kept as stable as possible. Real achievement of meeting objectives is only possible with continuity and commitment.
19. Specialist training to suit the school's needs may be required for the visiting musicians if professional development for teachers is to succeed.
20. The overall hypothesis may need to be revised into two with a separate list of aims at each level. Perhaps involve music graduates undergoing teacher training, as in the Finnish model, in the post-primary schools.

7.4 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the pilot projects in South Dublin have been extremely successful in meeting the aspirational objectives of the total programme. In terms of offering a variety of live music experiences to children within a structured learning environment, the school visits were of the highest quality. The professionalism of both the visiting musicians and the supporting agency which established and supported the project was of the highest level.

The dedication level of the musicians in their response to training and in the way they implemented and carried through their series of visits was highly professional. This is a resource which has been rightly identified to have enormous potential in contributing to the needs of music educators, at both primary and post-primary levels. The integrity of Music Network's approach is evident throughout all stages of the

project, most significantly in the recognition that, when appropriate conditions are created, both sets of professionals have opportunities to learn from each other. This is most evident in the provision of professional development training for the musicians and the teacher training sessions offered to school teachers.

On an important level, the pilot projects have served the programme development well by identifying areas of strength and areas where further modification may be considered. It has become evident that it is possible to differentiate between primary and secondary level more clearly and still remain true to the original objectives, especially those attaining to continuing professional development.

At primary level, the response from all partners reveals an outstanding level of support for the school visits. Children are energised, teachers and principals convinced, musicians challenged by a spontaneously creative environment. Little adjustment needs to be made to the structure of the school visits. The organisational arrangements were satisfactory to all parties, although the provision of larger working spaces has been identified by musicians as one area where an improvement could be made. Access to a number of smaller areas would also help to facilitate the important aspect of group work.

While it may not be possible or desirable for the same group of musicians to return to the same schools for further projects, some form of continuity may need to be considered if the teacher training aspect of the programme is to enjoy more success. This pilot project revealed that the "shadowing" of the facilitator by the classroom teacher with the aim of an eventual cross-over of roles will require more time either by extending the number of visits in one project from 6 to 10 or more, or by repeat visits.

For both primary and post-primary teachers, the benefits of this kind of "intervention" to their own professional development are enormous and perhaps not fully realised. A more tailored approach to the school visits may indeed unlock more of the potential that this programme contains. Teachers who enrol for a series of visits from musicians may need to do so on the understanding that they commit themselves to a professional development course of which the visits are a major, but not the only part. (see 5.15)

At post-primary level, some consideration may need to be given to the organisation of the visits within the school structure. Undoubtedly, there were exciting, high-energy sessions taking place within the secondary schools, with skilled musicians first gaining the trust of the pupils and then transporting them to new levels of creativity and involvement. Inclusion of existing music specialist teachers would ensure that this would be even more beneficial to the students, as the same group of students would become involved throughout the visits. The teachers' own skill level and pedagogical practice would also be enhanced in the long term.

In conclusion, the South Dublin pilot projects have confirmed that substantial benefits can be gained when two sets of key professionals work together. They have shown that live music in the classroom has a valuable and valid contribution to make to a child's school experience. Teachers agree that the contribution such visits make to the general curriculum is significant. Musicians find the experience energising. The

overall programme has set itself high aims, its rationale has been thoroughly researched and it is informed by best practice in other countries. With continuing feedback and refinement, it has the potential to develop into a truly effective and sustainable model, well-positioned to influence the level of music provision within the formal education system.