Hitting the Right Notes: Music as a Tool in Community Development in Uganda.

MA in Development & Emergency Practice
Cathal O'Luanaigh

January 2013

‘submitted in partial fulfilment of the MA degree in Development and Emergency Practice, Oxford Brookes University’
Statement of Originality

This thesis is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references.

Signed... Cathal O'Luanaigh (candidate) Date ......24/01/13

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed......Cathal O'Luanaigh (candidate) Date ......24/01/13

Statement of Ethics Review Approval

This dissertation involved human participants. A Form E1BE for each group of participants, showing ethics review approval, has been attached to this dissertation as an appendix. (see hard copy)
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Bosco Segawa and the staff at MLISADA for welcoming me at the MLISADA home and allowing me the opportunity to undertake research and spend time with MLISADA. I have rarely come across such warm and friendly people as the team at the home and the children in their care. I would also like to thank all the participants in this research for their time and contributions.

A further thank you to my dissertation supervisor, Supriya Akerkar for her help and support in the forming of this work.

Many thanks to family and friends who have supported me throughout the course of the Masters and through the course of the dissertation research.

Thanks to the artists featured on the ‘Conscious Youth’ CD and to Milan Metthey for his help on the design work.
Abstract

The following dissertation explores some of the roles that music can play in community development. The research is based on extensive research, in the form of desk-based research and field research with MLISADA, a project using music to reintegrate vulnerable, abused and excluded children and youths back into society in Kampala, Uganda.

The research aims to explore how music can be used as ‘a tactic of the dispossessed’ (Cresswell 1996: 47) in engaging vulnerable/excluded youths in their communities whilst also investigating how music can be used by these excluded individuals to forge ‘spaces of belonging’ in their communities.
Acronyms

ABRSM  Associated British Board of the Royal Schools of Music
AIDS   Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CEPAC  Centre for Performing Arts and Culture
MLISADA Music Life Skills and Destitution Alleviation
MTN    Mobile Telephone Networks (a network provider in Uganda)
NGO    Non-Governmental Organization
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
        (formerly United Nations International Children’s
        Emergency Fund)
TASO   The AIDS Support Organization
Glossary of Terms

Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances:
This term was originally used in the 1980s by UNICEF as they started to focus work on children in armed conflicts, those with disabilities and those at extreme risk from poverty. It is an umbrella term including ‘working children, street children, abused, neglected and abandoned children and children in armed conflict and disaster’ (Blanc 1992: v), all of which are represented within this research.

Resilience:
Resilience is a term referring to the ability to cope in the face of adversity. In the context of this research it refers to ‘the qualities that cushion a vulnerable child from the worst effects of adversity and that may help a child or young person to cope, survive and even thrive in the face of great hurt and disadvantage’ (Bostock, 2004: 17). Resilience should be promoted in order for children to cope with difficult situations. Resilience includes both ‘internal’ and ‘external’ factors. These are known as ‘internal assets’ and ‘external assets’. Internal assets relate to life-skills such as confidence, self-esteem and assertiveness. External assets relate to support networks – family, friends or organizations – and links to services such as healthcare and education.

Vulnerable and Excluded Youths:
The terms vulnerable and excluded youths are used throughout the research to denote young people who are vulnerable due to their situation as ‘children in especially difficult circumstances’ and as such are excluded from wider society. Exclusion comes in many forms, being excluded from social groups, community decision-making processes and mainstream employment or education. Exclusion in these terms increases vulnerability.

Youth:
According to the Ugandan Constitution the term ‘youth’ refers to a person between the ages of 18-30. This stands in contradiction to UN usage which places
‘youth’ between the ages of 15-24 (UN Youth & Social Policy Division) For the purpose of this study, figures from national Ugandan sources adhere to the Uganda Constitution’s definition. However, in terms of the research undertaken the definition of youth used is of young people between the ages of 15-24. From the research carried out it was evident that adolescents from the age of 14 considered themselves as ‘youth’, that young people of ages 15 and up were referred to as ‘youth’ by their peers and that in many cases ‘youth’ extended as a broader term even referring to children.
**Contents:**

Statement of Originality & Ethics Approval..................................................2
Acknowledgements.........................................................................................3
Abstract..........................................................................................................4
Acronyms.......................................................................................................5
Glossary of Terms...........................................................................................6
List of Figures.................................................................................................9
Preface...........................................................................................................10
Introduction - Structure................................................................................13
Chapter 1: Background Information............................................................15
  Uganda.........................................................................................................15
  Youth in Uganda........................................................................................17
Chapter 2: Literature Review........................................................................19
  Culture.........................................................................................................19
  Music..........................................................................................................22
  Music in the Context of Development.........................................................23
  Individual Benefits....................................................................................25
  Community Benefits..................................................................................28
  Emerging Research Questions....................................................................29
Chapter 3: Research Methodology...............................................................31
  Research Type............................................................................................31
  Data collection............................................................................................32
  Ethics & Safety...........................................................................................33
  Research Limitations................................................................................37
Chapter 4: Primary Research........................................................................39
  MLISADA Early Beginnings.....................................................................39
  MLISADA Growth.....................................................................................43
Chapter 5: Research Findings.......................................................................45
Chapter 6: Conclusions................................................................................55
Bibliography...................................................................................................62

*Appendices*
E1BE Form

‘Conscious Youth’ CD – *submitted with hard-bound & soft-bound copies*
List of Figures:

*Photos taken by the author unless otherwise stated.*

Cover Photo - Child Playing the Trumpet, Mural at MLISADA.

Fig 1. Map of Uganda (Navteq 2010)
Fig 2. Kasubi Tombs (UNESCO *n.d.*)
Fig 3. Kasubi Tombs Fire (UAH 2010)
Fig 4. Uniforms in the Storage Room
Fig 5. Practising
Fig 6. MLISADA Graduates at the 15 Anniversary Event
Fig 7. Bosco Watches Brass Band Practicing
Fig 8. Mural at MLISADA
Preface

Beginning research before it began:

In 2009, shortly after completing an undergraduate degree in Human Geography at the University of Leeds I decided to take some time away from academia in order to put what I learned into practice, or rather to ‘practise’ (in its multiple meanings) what had seemed static on pages of the books I studied. My choice of modules in that final year focused on citizenship and belonging, social issues, particularly regarding questions of social inclusion and exclusion and the forces that drive them and issues related to health in developing country contexts; specifically the HIV & AIDS epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa and responses to it at varying national, regional, household and individual levels.

It was the latter of these subjects that really grasped my attention and I decided to pursue my interest in the subject by volunteering on a 7-month Youth Empowerment Programme with an NGO in Uganda. As part of that programme I lived and worked alongside local community and national volunteers (from Uganda but not from the community) in rural communities delivering Sexual Reproductive Health and Life Skills training to community groups, working within two primary and two secondary schools, with women’s groups and with vulnerable youth.

After having delivered hundreds of sessions to young people it became apparent that some had learned more than others, some were more engaged in sessions than others and that there were still many more young people we were not reaching or engaging for a multitude of reasons. I thought that perhaps by using a different technique and that by trying a different method of delivery we could involve more young people in a more creative and engaging manner. I set up an art and music competition asking any interested participants to compose a song or draw pictures about problems facing the youth in their community. The enthusiasm was huge and the results matched the thought, time and effort young people had put into creating their pieces. One song in particular caught my attention. It centred on the life of a young villager, a friend of the music group,
who engaged in risky sexual behaviour and contracted HIV. The song warns of the dangers of engaging in ‘risky behaviours’ at a young age and talks about the boy’s subsequent struggle with poverty and disease. They called it ‘Information to the Youth’ (see appendix CD track 16).

Within weeks the group had been invited to community centres, school assemblies and nearby villages to give recitals, playing covers of famous songs and their own songs. I remember Magidu, one of the band members saying ‘this is the first time we have been listened to by older members of the community. They don’t listen to us as if we are a waste of time to them, but this has helped us to show them that even us, the young people, are concerned about how others behave and we think and learn.’

It was then that the seeds of this research project were planted. Together with the group we realized that there could be more to music-making than the fun of playing together or the message behind the music. Here was someone saying that through music they had finally been listened to, engaged in their community – if only temporarily – and had started discussions between young people and community elders in which they were not bystanders listening to the opinions of elders but in which they were actively engaged.

I became interested in exploring the potential benefits of music-making programmes with vulnerable and excluded youths. Whilst the research undertaken provides support for arguments made throughout, I felt it important to include a CD of music, which I recorded and sourced in Uganda with vulnerable children, youths, school groups and community groups. The CD was created as part of a project I started called ‘Conscious Youth’. It documents the work of young people, school groups, vulnerable youths, TASO Drama group who use music in a positive manner and is intended as a supplement to the research. In many ways it represents the start of the research journey as both research and the CD developed during my time at Oxford Brookes. Its significance is reflected upon within the conclusions of the dissertation. The CD is used with the consent of artists, however, their rights should be respected and it should not be
reproduced or used for any purpose other than accompanying this dissertation without prior consent.
Introduction – Structure of the Work:

The following dissertation explores the ways in which music can be used in community development, particularly in engaging excluded, vulnerable youths in their communities.

The research focuses on a case study based on primary research in Kampala, Uganda. In order to add depth to the research and to draw wider conclusions, evidence from further music projects active within Uganda is included, as is a CD of recordings from these wider projects.

Chapter 1: To familiarize the reader with the research setting and concepts relevant to the research, the dissertation opens with a section on background information about Uganda. Attention is then brought to the situation of young people within Uganda and issues related to their vulnerability.

Chapter 2: The literature review covers topics related to music and culture and introduces some of the ways in which music has been approached in the context of development. It then addresses relevant scientific research on music’s potential benefits to young people. From these, emerging research questions are formed.

Chapter 3: Following the emerging research questions, the methodologies chapter introduces the research methodology used and research limitations.

Chapter 4: The research section includes an introduction to MLISADA – the case study chosen for this research – followed by a research findings chapter. The findings are structured around three research aims questions.

Chapter 5: Research findings are then addressed structured around three research aims drawn from the methodologies section.
Chapter 6: Finally conclusions are made, structured around the emerging research questions from the literature review.
Chapter 1: Background Information.

Uganda – The Pearl of Africa

The Republic of Uganda, often referred to as 'The Pearl of Africa', is situated in East Africa. It is bordered by Kenya to the East, South Sudan to the North, The Democratic Republic of Congo to the West and Rwanda and Tanzania to the South West and South respectively. Uganda North of Lake Victoria and is home to the source of the river Nile.

Fig 1: Map of Uganda (Navteq 2010).

Like many African countries, Uganda is home to many different tribes and ethnic groups. The Ugandan National Cultural Policy names ‘sixty-five indigenous communities’ (Uganda National Cultural Policy 2006: 2) each with its own ‘unique characteristics’. The different ethnic groups are based on tribal delineations which, in the past, were ruled as Kingdoms. Its largest ethnic group, the Baganda, comprise approximately 20% of the entire Ugandan population. Kampala, where the majority of this research was carried out, is the capital of Uganda and home to the Baganda.

In the late 19th Century Uganda was colonized by the British and came under
the title of Protectorate of the British Empire in 1894 (Ndege 2004: 1). Ugandan communities remained largely independent with some preferring a centralized form of power held by chiefs or kings whilst other were decentralized and ruled by councils of elders.

Uganda gained independence in 1962 in what was a fairly peaceful transition from colonial rule. Its post-colonial past, however, was wrought with conflict under both Milton Obote’s and General Idi Amin’s reign. Under Amin ‘up to 400,000 are believed to have been killed’ (BBC News, 2003) and thousands of acts of human rights abuses were committed including the expulsion of all Asians from Uganda. Obote’s subsequent rule was no less brutal with Ugandans still demanding an explanation for the deaths of over 300,000 people (ReliefWeb 2005).

After a coup by Ugandan rebels and aided by the Tanzanian defence forces, Amin’s rule was brought to an end, however, it wasn't until 1986 that peace was restored by Yoweri Museveni. Museveni’s military background and organizational prowess saw a crackdown on militants and set up the National Resistance Councils at local levels to get local participation and support for his government.

Museveni’s National Resistance Movement (NRM) still holds power after 26 years of rule. However, over the past few years Uganda has witnessed political unease as, some argue, Museveni’s rule has become ‘synonymous with widespread corruption, poor infrastructure, rising unemployment and failing services such as healthcare and education’ (Gatsiounis 2011). In the lead-up to the elections of 2011 a new fervour sweeping through the younger generations could be felt. Tired of high rates of unemployment, lack of basic infrastructure and tired of the lack of access to positions of power, young people in Uganda are starting to demand change. This was most widely felt in the run up to the 2011 election where opposition leader Kizza Besigye rallied substantial support calling for change. He was visibly supported by thousands on his ‘Walk to Work’ Campaign, which called for supporters to walk to work in protest of rising oil
prices and transport costs shortly after losing the election which he claims was rigged with unfair vote counting and alleged voter bribery (BBC News 2011; 2011a; Gatsiounis 2011).

Due to the widely felt consequences of endemic corruption in Uganda’s government and public service bodies there is a lack of trust, a growing lack of respect for officials and a fatigue with administrative processes amongst the Uganda population. This lack of trust and a sense of lack of support from government have proved damaging to Ugandan youths’ identity who often feel isolated and disengaged from society at large – a point which is looked at further in this research.

**Young People in Uganda - Current Demographics:**

According to the UN’s Youth and Social Policy Division, there are currently approximately one billion youth living on the planet. These comprise 18% of the planet’s population with a further 20% of children between the ages of 5-14. (UN Youth & Social Policy Division 2012). A vast majority of these youths live in developing countries with over 14% situated in Africa. Such a demographic could be seen as a great opportunity for developing countries which have a high percentage of young people in their workforces. However, poor economic and social infrastructure leaves many of these young people at risk of unemployment, poverty and poor health. The young demographic of sub-Saharan Africa is a difficult issue in terms of creating employment and opportunities for the youth.

Uganda has the youngest population in the world. 77% of its population is under the age of 30 (Daumerie & Madson 2010). Its population almost doubled between 1985 and 2005 from 14.8 million to 28.7million and Daumerie & Madson predict that at current, high fertility rates its population could quadruple by 2045 and that at a medium fertility rate will reach 53.4 million by 2025 *(ibid.: 3)*. Such rises in population numbers leave the young extremely vulnerable. At risk of unemployment, poverty, hunger and vulnerable to the effects of climate
change, young people face extreme challenges. Even the educated find it hard to come by stable employment. The annual 400,000 graduates from tertiary education compete for 90,000 jobs (Odyek 2012) whilst the Uganda Bureau of Statistics cites an unemployment rate of 4% for Ugandans between the ages of 14-64 (ibid.). Daumerie & Madson (2010: 8) cite the deputy prime minister of Uganda’s estimate of 22% unemployment amongst the youth, with figures much higher in urban areas.

Furthermore, their study warns that countries with a population demographic of over 60% under 30 are at increased risk of civil unrest and outbreaks of conflict. They state that ‘a young age structure combined with limited opportunities for youth can enable a sense of hopelessness and disenfranchisement toward political leaders, increasing vulnerability to violent conflict. A number of other factors could contribute to this vulnerability [including] diminishing per capita resources and poverty could drive conflicts to areas rich in natural resources, especially when neighbouring countries also have unresolved security issues’ (ibid.: 6). With recent uprising in Rwanda and Congo spilling into the Western region of Uganda and civil unrest to the North given the recent formation of South Sudan, Uganda finds itself in a difficult position with a population expert stating that if ‘youth are not taken care of from the point of view of education, health and jobs, you have a time bomb in your hand’ (interviewee cited in ibid.).

Limited education and employment opportunities are not the only problem facing the youth in Uganda. UNICEF (2009) estimates that due to HIV & AIDS alone 1.2 million children have been orphaned. When including other factors related to poor health infrastructure, poverty and the effects of the Lord’s Resistance Army’s war in the Northern part of Uganda, this figure rises to 2.7 million (UNICEF 2009). Young orphans lacking adequate support networks are extremely vulnerable to the dangers of street life, substance abuse HIV & AIDS, low self-esteem, lack of education, unemployment and poverty (Kalibala & Elson 2009).
Given the population demographic of Uganda and its implications for Ugandan society it seems timely to focus study on vulnerable youth in an attempt to explore how they might cope with their situation.
Chapter 2: Literature Review.

The following literature review introduces different fields associated with the topic of research. By examining relevant academic and scientific debate surrounding music’s role in society it provides a useful backdrop to the research undertaken whilst also clarifying understandings of key themes used throughout the dissertation. These themes include culture, music in the context of development, youth identity and music as a social tool for community change.

Culture:

‘The word is one of the most complex in the English language, as Raymond Williams (1983: 87) points out, but this has proved little handicap to its spread: it’s everywhere. We cultivate culture, celebrate it, argue and struggle over it; we territorialize it (for example in ‘cultural quarters’), preserve it (‘as heritage’), institutionalize it and administer it (through UNESCO for instance); we even live it as ‘popular’ or ‘everyday’ culture, or just as ‘customs’ or ‘way of life’.” (Middleton in Clayton et al. 2012: introduction)

Culture is a concept that is difficult to define. It encompasses the ways in which a given society ‘preserves, identifies, sustains and expresses itself’. (Uganda National Cultural Policy 2006: 2). At its core, culture is concerned with the behaviours of human societies, their beliefs, artistic practices and institutions. To better understand the concept and in order to better document and preserve culture it has been broken down into ‘tangible heritage’ and ‘intangible heritage’. The former concerns itself with ‘monuments or architecture, arts and crafts, sites, manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic of and historical interest’ whilst the latter denotes practices and concepts which are just as objectively important but more subjective in nature; ‘language, oral traditions, performing arts, music, festive events, rituals, social practices, traditional craftsmanship, knowledge and practices concerning nature’ (ibid., my emphasis).
Both tangible and intangible cultural heritage are important for the preservation, understanding of and promotion of culture. Cultural edifices and sites of cultural significance become symbols of great importance to individuals and societies forming part of their identity. Often these are sites of great historical or religious importance which become engrained in communities’ memories and discourse. An example of such are the Kasubi Tombs, the burial site of Buganda Kings, a ‘spiritual centre for the Baganda where traditional and cultural practices have been preserved’ (UNESCO 2010).

In 2010, the tombs were destroyed in a fire (BBC News 2010). The destruction of this site of great importance to the Buganda Kingdom fuelled mass protests, resulting in the death of three people and a sense that the Buganda traditional leaders had been the victims of a government move in which the tombs were set ablaze to assert the government’s power over the Buganda King (Gettleman 2010). The incident underlines the importance of sites of cultural heritage and the preservation of cultural rights and practices to Ugandan communities. It also sheds light on the growing tensions between the population and the government in place, rift that is especially felt in younger generations. The uncertainty over the initial cause of the fire and lack of official police statements further contributed to mistrust between population and government. The tombs are currently due to be rebuilt, although financial setbacks are expected (Lule 2012).

The protests and rebuilding efforts show the importance of culture towards
identity and communities. In this particular research, it is a form of intangible cultural heritage that is examined; music and musical performance. Music’s role is important as it has the ability to form and forge shared identities and culture, shaping, reshaping and preserving them (Bennett 2000 & 2006; UNGA 2010; Witkin 1998).

Music:

‘No human culture appears to be without music’ (Hallam et al. 2005: 144).

Music plays a vital role in the everyday lives of billions of individuals worldwide. In certain cultures and contexts it occupies a spiritual place often forming part of worship ceremonies, in others, it forms part of everyday, mundane activities (DeNora 2000). Whether for entertainment, religious practice, relaxation or other purposes, music has played multiple vital roles in human culture since its earliest beginnings (Blacking 1995).

Music’s importance in society has been documented from different perspectives. Ethnomusicologists research its development and importance in social practice and rituals (Aubert 2007; Blacking 1995; DeNora 2000; Oosthuizen 2010). Psychologists view through a medical lens and see it as an essential part of child development and a catalyst in brain development (Cross 1999: Foundation for Music Literacy 2003: Nicholson et al. 2003). Social scientists identify its social roles (Panelli 2004; Williams 2006) and specialists and musicians examine the technicalities related to its composition and performance. However, despite acknowledgement as an important part of life for cultural, psychological and social purposes, its potential in development and youth engagement remains largely un-investigated. In preparation for this research, when discussing ideas towards a subject of study with friends, family and academics, the words ‘music’ and ‘development’ instantly conjured up thoughts and reactions alluding to Live Aid and music’s role in fundraising for relief efforts and highlighting various humanitarian causes. This viewpoint is discussed briefly below. However, coupled with research in ethnomusicology,
scientific and medical fields and social studies, the research undertaken is aimed at moving away from this view of music and examining how musical practices and music-making can be of benefit to vulnerable children, young people and their communities.

Music in the Context of Aid & Development:

Commonly associated with large-scale charity fundraisers such as Live Aid, Live 8 and relief concerts after major disasters such as Hope for Haiti (see Voice of America, 2010) music’s role in international development is often reduced to its commercial potential. Whilst big names may attract big crowds and raise funds, attention to the needs of people facing the consequences of natural disasters, on-going poverty and environmental strains is often temporary, funds may be misplaced and on-going support to the causes highlighted by these events is not guaranteed. In relief situations the sudden influx of funds may help initially, and if well managed by the institution to which money is gifted, but too often the ‘one-off’ nature of these events leaves little room for continued, structured and planned programme implementation. Rieff (2005) questions the benefits of this ‘altruistic business’ recognizing that its efforts may have raised up to £70 million and brought humanitarian issues to the forefront of the media’s and foreign policy’s concern, however, with little understanding of the complex nature of realities on the ground he argues that such efforts may have done more harm than good, partly funding a forced resettlement of over 600,000 people by the Ethiopian military which claimed the lives of over 100,000 people (ibid.). The intention of this discussion is not to defend nor attack the efforts of Bob Geldoff and the Live Aid campaign, but merely to recognize that the way in which music is commonly associated with the ‘aid world’ is one which has been subject to a lot of controversy. Given the association between aid and music as a fundraising mechanism, its potential in community development and youth engagement programmes has all often been ignored.

Thorsén’s (2004) contribution to the field of development studies and musicology that lends a welcome break from viewing music in the above terms.
'African music is intricately interwoven with development issues...Music is a dynamic and highly charged force that affects and embraces intellectual property rights, democracy, economic growth, censorship, media, tradition, globalisation and education. The discussions extend over issues of oppression of women, culture and human rights.' (Thorsén 2004: front cover)

Commentators argue that music in Africa tackles a wide range of societal issues driving discussion and dialogue over social, economic and political matters. As a major force for social change (Gibson 1998) and control (Bennet 2000), it holds an immense power ‘to clarify, to educate, to criticize’ (Cutler 1993: 130).

During field research in Uganda it became evident that music was used in each of the manners described by Cutler (1993). TASO Drama group use music and drama as a method through which to educate and sensitize communities, adults and youths, about the dangers of HIV & AIDS (see appendix CD tracks 8-10). With important messages disguised as ‘entertainment’ music lends itself as a strong tool for communication (Barz 2006). Furthermore, ‘in some communities [people] are not literate enough [to follow seminars and take notes]. So, getting the message across without music is sometimes shaky.’ (Rev. Jackson cited in Barz 2006: 216).

Other forms of music are also used to clarify, criticize and educate. Members of the Luga Flow Army use hip-hop as a vehicle through which to educate young people and to criticize the current state of affairs in Uganda (see Luga Flow Army & Cyno MC on appendix CD). Through their music, these youth formed friendship networks and strove to have their voices heard. Cyno MC’s use of music goes further. Diagnosed with a life-threatening heart-condition, he used his own music, coupled with tracks from friends across the hip-hop community, to raise funds for life-saving surgery. In this particular case, ‘music saved [his] life’ (interview with Cyno MC 2012).
Individual Benefits:

The idea that music holds some positive benefit whether aiding expression, creating entertainment or bettering ones health is one that is widely accepted and has been present for some time. This idea and the way in which it has developed, however, differs according to context. In the developing world, music’s role is often linked with cultural heritage and preservation, cultural practice and ritual. In the West, a focus on scientific research into the impacts of music on individuals has seen the development of several forms of clinical arts therapies. Music Therapy, along with other forms of creative arts such as drama and audio-visual arts, have developed along precise, scientifically guided lines. (see Ansdell et al. 2010; Pavlicevic & Ansdell 2004)

There is growing consensus amongst the scientific community that the learning of a musical instrument can enhance children's abilities to learn across a range of subjects. Developments in scientific fields, particularly in clinical practice and in cognitive research have led many to believe that music has a clear function in the development of brain capacity and in brain development. As such, musicologists, scientists and therapists are beginning to combine efforts to understand how music can be used to better cognitive performance, to overcome physical or mental difficulties and disabilities and to integrate scientifically proven forms of music therapy into clinical practice. Based on research published across scientific journals including various issues of Neurological Research and Nature, The Foundation for Universal Music Literacy research body have compiled a summary of literature linking the positive effects of music and music-making on child development (Foundation for Universal Music Literacy: n.d.). Amongst their findings they cite a decade long study involving over 25,000 students conducted by UCLA’s James Catterall which drew a clear relationship between music-making and higher results in standardized SAT tests and improved reading proficiency. The positive relationship between music-making and better performance stood ‘regardless of socio-economic background’ (ibid.). Further research outlined by the foundation includes positive relationships between being able to read musical notation and performance in mathematics
and spatio-temporal reasoning. This conclusion has gained support with increasing study in music and neuroscience ‘strongly supporting’ music’s role in cognitive development and the development, maintenance and strengthening of synapses between brain cells (Weinberger 1998: 38). Wienberger (1998: 38) states that in creating music we engage several systems of the human brain including:

- The sensory and perceptual systems: auditory, visual, tactile, and kinaesthetic;
- The cognitive system: symbolic, linguistic, and reading;
- Planning movements: fine and gross muscle action and coordination;
- Feedback and evaluation of actions;
- The motivational/hedonic (pleasure system); and
- Learning memory

In music-making, each of these systems is exercised. In reading sheet music one needs to decipher the musical notation and symbols whilst performing, listen to what is being performed, correct this accordingly by changing the position of muscles (on the fret-board of a cello or the keys of a piano or trumpet) and be attentive that these changes are happening according to what others around are playing. This means that there is quite a complex system behind the music making process, a system which engages our muscles and brains actively, exercises them and creates room for cognitive development.

Interestingly, Weinberger (1998) argues that music is not, as many argue, a ‘product of culture and social interactions’ but that it is more fundamentally biologically rooted in human being. This is argued on several levels: the first, that as a biological truth musical abilities might be present in other species. Weinberger argues that monkeys can ‘determine the fundamental frequency of a harmonic series’ (1998: 37). The second is the point supported by Hallam et al. 2005’s above quote that music is universal and present in all cultures being used from the earliest age as parents sing to their young. The there is that before infants are exposed to and changed by the influence of cultural practices, beliefs and norms, they respond to music and show musical behaviours in
communication, singing, composing songs, being able to distinguish between different notes and understanding rhythmic structures. The last point Weinberger argues is that the brain itself ‘contains basic musical building blocks that are specialized to process fundamental elements in music’. Parts of the brain are dedicated to recognizing pitch and tone, others recognize rhythmic patterns and melodic structures with the right hemisphere concerned with melody whilst the left processes language (ibid: 38).

Despite the rise in scientific research Dillon (2006) draws attention to the fact that the links between ‘music making and health and resilience have not been researched in ways that are as compelling as the anecdotes we hear about these connections’. However, Dillon acknowledges that a strong correlation between music making, health and resilience exists and urges us to explore this relationship further. Oosthuizen et al. (2007) points out that although music therapy (a discipline in which music making, health and resilience are fundamental) is heavily anchored within the sectors of music, education, psychology and research within the developed world, in developing world contexts, music therapy – in its formal sense – is little understood. Instead, music therapy needs to be ‘re-defined to be to make it relevant to the contexts in which we work’ (Oosthuizen 2007: n.p.). Against a redefinition of music therapy, its potential role in communities one also has to understand the contextual understandings of ‘health’ and ‘illness’.

Although this particular research is not concerned with the clinical setting and thus precise definitions and understandings of the contextual meaning of ‘health’ or ‘illness’ are, on the surface, inessential and not necessarily needed for an understanding of music’s role in community development there is an important point to draw from Oosthuizen et al.’s (2007) analysis. One of the great difficulties in dealing with music in community contexts in a cross-cultural context is that not only are its meanings, rhythms and roles different in different contexts, but the whole understanding of music, its role and what it has to offer society is different too. In the case study represented the use of music is therapy in its broadest sense. Used with ‘children in especially difficult circumstances’ -
ex-child soldiers, disabled children, orphans and street children - it is often the first form of expressive art children encounter. Interestingly, in contrast to TASO’s and the hip-hop communities’ music, the case-study is based on instrumental music and shows how music-making, without lyrical content, can also be used in community contexts.

Community Benefits of Music:

Barz’s (2004) exploration of music in East Africa provides a useful reference to this particular research providing an in-depth understanding of musical practices across East Africa. With a focus dedicated to the use and practice of music in Uganda in both the Busoga and Buganda regions his work stands as a reference point for my own. Barz’s work not only adds value to the fields of music, ethnomusicology and wider social sciences by offering ‘theories, methods and case studies that enable access to the study of East African music traditions’ (Barz 2004: xi) but also allows us to contextualize the ways in which music is used and the ways in which it impacts on the everyday lives of East African communities.

In understanding music in Uganda, one has to look to the linguistic understandings of the word. In many Ugandan languages the closest one comes to the word ‘music’ is ngoma. Ngoma is a term used in many Bantu languages and is often linked with the performance of music. Barz (2004: 4) draws attention to the fact that ngoma is a widely used term for music but is often linked with the practice of drumming and dancing (see CD - track 1). This is partly due to the fact that ‘in traditional African societies, music making is generally organized as a social event’ (Nketia cited in Barz 2004: 5).

Music’s role varies given differing contexts. Its effect upon individuals and communities varies dependent on the position each individual takes towards music. The music-maker experiences something very different to the listener. However, universally, music’s dynamic nature, its ability to involve the music-maker and the listener combined immense impact it can have on our emotions
both our conscious and subconscious shapes individual and collective identities (Williams 2006). Whitely et al. (2004) confirm that ‘research on the role of music in relation to notions of collective identity and community among different diaspora populations has revealed much about the connective properties of music. Music, it has been illustrated, can bond displaced peoples, effectively bridging the geographic distance between them and providing a shared sense of collective identity articulated by a symbolic sense of community.’ (Whiteley et al. 2004: 4).

A number of community projects in Uganda have identified this ability to promote collective identity and use music’s positive potential for conflict mitigation, transformation and resolution. In Northern Uganda, The VOICE Project, uses music and choirs coupled with radio transmissions to call back ex-child soldiers to their homelands (see VOICE Project). Music in these circumstances is credited with bringing about socialization, promoting peace and the teaching and re-learning of ‘knowledge, rules, values, skills and roles according to which [society is] expected to operate’ (Grossman & D’Augelli 2004: 83).

Senator John Logan (1744-1788) described ‘music is the medicine of the mind’. This research asks whether, in light of the projects identified and literature researched, music might have wider benefits, becoming a ‘medicine of society’. It focuses on whether music and music-making could prove ‘a tactic of the dispossessed’ (Cresswell 1996: 47) in coping with vulnerability and exclusion.

**Emerging Research Problem & Research Questions:**

The evidence throughout the literature review points towards several positive benefits of music. There is evidence of successful music projects in conflict and health contexts within Uganda.
Uganda has a huge youth population both vulnerable and often excluded from the society in which they live. Does music have the potential to engage young people in positive change in their communities and create spaces of dialogue between them and the communities they are cut-off from?

This research aims to understand how music and the music-making process can benefit them. It considers:

1) How music can be used to engage vulnerable/excluded youths in community development and community dialogue?

2) How music can be used by excluded/vulnerable youths to create spaces of dialogue and ‘spaces of belonging’ in their communities?

3) What are the key benefits of existing projects for the involved, vulnerable youths?

4) What are the key lessons learned from successful programmes for consideration in future programmes?

Based on extensive research, this piece of work aims to address the above questions supported by academic evidence and field research in Uganda at a project named MLISADA – Music Life Skills and Destitution Alleviation - which uses music with vulnerable street children and orphans. Further interviews were undertaken with vulnerable youths not linked to MLISADA who use music as a means to overcome many of the challenges they face. These and evidence from other local projects using music as a tool for community engagement, outreach and education are used to support the research findings at MLISADA.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Research Type:

The research undertaken is of a qualitative nature. The research uses both primary and secondary data.

The primary research was aimed at:

i) gaining an insight into how music is used in developing contexts in working with vulnerable youths

ii) understanding how the youths themselves feel about the use of music and what it offers/has offered them

iii) investigating what the greatest challenges are in using music as a tool for work with the youth

In addressing these issues and combining the primary findings with analysis and reflection on present literature, the study attempts to answer the emerging research questions set out previously.

Data Collection:

Primary data was collected in Uganda over 4-weeks between June – August 2012. This data was collected through the use of interviews with key informants, time spent at the MLISADA orphanage, participant observation and visits to other projects using music as a vehicle for community change.

Prior to the fieldwork information and interviewees involved in youth music projects were sought through use of online forums and Skype discussions.
The research comprised the following:

1. Extensive literature research using academic journals, academic books, newspapers, online forums. Literature was read and analysed to give both a background to research and a strong basis for arguments made throughout.

2. Interviews with key informants including Musequality, MLISADA, CEPAC Jinja, Dance4Life Uganda and individual professional musicologists.

3. A Field Diary with notes taken daily after visits to MLISADA, interviews with key informants and documenting thoughts along the process.

4. Focus Group Discussions with vulnerable youths involved in music-focused projects.

Semi-Structured Interviews:

Interviews were held with key informants both in Uganda and in the UK. These included staff and young people involved with MLISADA and others involved in youth work, community engagement programmes and NGO officials involved in wider development issues. A total of 10 interviews were conducted at MLISADA, 4 with staff and 6 with children in the programme. Further interviews were conducted with Musequality (1), the Centre for Entertainment, Performing Arts and Culture in Jinja (1), a youth-focused NGO (2) and members of Bayimba Cultural Festival youth advocates team.

The reason for having a selection of informants was to cover a range of opinions. Those working with music and in music projects with young people are usually favourable to the idea of using music in a widespread manner. They are often musicians or music enthusiasts, that makes them perfect for the role of working within such projects, however, they often have an engrained view that music has a lot of potential.
It is sometimes non-musicians and those working in other sectors of development, or using different methods of engagement with the youth, which offer interesting insights into why music should or should not be used.

As part of the interview preparation, I developed a set-question interview, which could be sent to new informants by email when approached online. The questions remained open-ended and were more of an opportunity to spur interest in the research before furthering contact through email and Skype.

For face-to-face interviews, key topics and themes were kept although interviews took “a [more] conversational, fluid form, each interview varying according to the interests, experience and views of the interviewees” (Valentine 1997, p111). Such an approach allowed for interviews to stay on-topic whilst also offering room for personal reflection and experience from interviewees’ prior work.

**Ethics & Safety:**

**Ethical Issues when Working with Children:**

Working with ‘children in difficult circumstances’ and ‘orphans and vulnerable children’ brings with it a range of ethical obligations and ethical issues. Subject to prior abuse and neglect it is essential to approach interviews sensitively. Permission was sought from the director of MLISADA to work with the children at the home. Staff are responsible for the safety of the children as they are the acting parents of the children. My own stance was guided by ‘do no harm’ principles whilst all was done to keep the children feeling safe during interviews.

**Interview Ethics:**

Every interview undertaken was preceded by an explanation of the general research and an agreement of confidentiality. Where interviewees accepted, interviews were recorded for future reference and later transcribed. When they
felt nervous about being recorded, notes were taken.

Interviewees were welcome to stop the interview at any time if they felt threatened, uncomfortable or simply did not feel they could continue with the interview.

Given the sensitive nature of interviews with orphans and vulnerable children, young people who have been abused and whose trust has been misused the first interviewees were approached through staff. Staff members suggested a couple of young people who were interested in the research. They then, in turn, suggested other friends to be interviewed. Some interviewees approached me in order to give their opinions on the matters discussed.

As an interviewer I was conscious of keeping the interview to the topic of how music has helped them and how it may have changed their lives in positive or negative ways. Where youths gave information of about their past they were not probed on how, when, where or any details of how they may have been mistreated. However, many of the youths, now having regained confidence and trust in those around them did open up and talk about their pasts. Being young also helped in talking freely with youth as they felt more comfortable talking with someone closer to their own age rather than a group of adults.

Friends and family were contacted before and after interviews with strangers to ensure that they were up to date about my whereabouts and could confirm that all was well and I was safe.

Gate-Keepers:

Many of the informants were contacted through 'gate-keepers'. 'Gate-keepers' are contact people who offer ‘the power to grant or withhold access to’ potential interviewees key (Burgess cited in Valentine 1997: 115). CEPAC were contacted through an old friend who suggested them as potential interviewees and partners for youth focused work. Bayimba Cultural Festival recently partnered
with an organization I used to work with as their youth-focused work starts to integrate music as a tool for grasping the youth’s attention.

In Uganda, cultural norms dictate many of the formalities in meeting key informants. With people in positions of respect or power, it is best to be introduced formally to those you wish to interview before approaching them with research requests. In this light, MLISADA was approached by first interviewing Musequality, a UK-based charity who fund music projects worldwide. Jeremy Bradshaw, Musequality’s director was interviewed in the UK he then became a gate-keeper towards contacting MLISADA – the Kampala based music charity.

Prior extensive work experience in Uganda was essential in understanding how to approach new informants and how to dictate the shape of the research. Having worked in rural Uganda throughout 2010, I already had an understanding of cultural norms and of approaching important officials for interviews, workshops, event organization and in broaching sensitive subjects. Furthermore, experience as a teacher, facilitator and leader in youth-led programmes informed a lot of the research.

Social Networking & Online Forums:

In addition to contacting specific projects, a number of internet forums and journal forums were used. An initial post on Music Therapy magazine VOICE introducing the research and welcoming ideas, thoughts and professionals’ experiences in Music Therapy and wider youth-centred work brought contact to several very interested professionals working in the United States, Romania and India. Their thoughts and experiences add a wider context of understanding to youth work involving music. Though very different in terms of cultural contexts and realities, many of the lessons learned and experiences are transferable and offer themselves as interesting points of reference adding both to the literature review, research methodologies and wider conclusions we can draw from such work.
Through informants met on the VOICE forum links were made to various facebook groups such as 'Music Therapists Unite!' which brings together mainly American music therapists to share their views and experiences. This group generated interest and further links to interviewees. Although much of their work is based in the United States, many have worked in developing world contexts and their views were useful in understanding the subtleties and technicalities of working with vulnerable youth.

Focus Group Discussions & Observation:

In theory, Focus Group Discussions were to be essential tool in research with MLISADA. Often shy, unused to being interviewed and wary of newcomers, vulnerable youths are better interview in groups where they feel more comfortable and discussion is helped by the presence of friends and other group members.

To facilitate free-flowing discussion members were free to speak in whatever language they felt more comfortable with. The presence of a translator ensured that they were understood and friendship between the Ugandan translator and myself helped to make the youth feel more comfortable around a white, foreigner researcher.

In practice, however, given the nature of daily life at MLISADA, focus group discussions were extremely difficult to organize and manage. After careful consideration it was felt that a better way of eliciting information was through informal dialogue with groups of children who were already playing or chatting together. In this way, the children didn’t feel bound by the necessity to give ‘good’ answers and spoke more freely amongst themselves, with me and the translator.

Observation when not interviewing was also key to understanding the dynamics of the project and reflecting on whether what was being said was played out in
practice.

Field Diary:

As part of my research I kept a journal of key happenings, quotes, ideas and main events which happened throughout my research and stay in Uganda. The journal was written from the time of arrival until departure with daily entries during the time I spent with MLISADA and less frequent entries before and after my stay with MLISADA. The latter were in the form of questions I had, general reflection, whilst the former tended to be associated with facts concerning MLISADA and observations made at the MLISADA home.

Given the amount of children I talked to, the number of events and happenings during my stay, the number of interviews with staff and the huge amount of information to process in such a short space of time, the journal proved to be very useful for remembering some of the smaller, but no less significant details of research.

Research Limitations:

Research was limited by several factors:

Literature:

I was unable to find much peer-reviewed literature which linked the topics of this study. This provides the gap for which to carry out this research however proved difficult in directing the research focus. Much of the relevant literature about music is focused on topics related to the clinical music therapy setting which uses a ‘therapist’ – ‘patient’ approach. Literature in relation to music and youths focused was either scientific in nature related to brain development or heavily focused on hip-hop culture and subcultures.
Timing & Time-Scale of Research:

Though two weeks were spent with MLISADA getting to know the project, staff and children, this still represents a short time spent researching and therefore only offers a glimpse of how music is used in this particular project. The timing of my visit coincided with a 15th Anniversary fundraiser in which I became involved filming and recording. This gave an opportunity to see an MLISADA event and meant that preparations were in full swing, however, it meant that staff and children were extremely busy and therefore interviews and focus group discussions were difficult to organize.

Language:

Although staff and older members of MLISADA speak fluent English, some of the younger members were less confident in speaking English. This proved difficult in running focus group discussions, however the presence of a native Luganda speaker and translator provided a way of communicating when English proved difficult.
Chapter 4: Primary Research:

MLISADA – Introducing the project.

The following section is gives a background to MLISADA and later introduces the organization’s structure, partnerships and funding.

MLISADA – Early Beginnings.

Music Life Skills And Destitution Alleviation (MLISADA) was started in 1996 by 12 year-old Bosco Segawa. At the time, Bosco was a street child living in one of Kampala's largest slums – Katwe - where life is difficult for anyone let alone a young child fending for himself as Bosco had done for many years.

“One day as he was walking in the streets, in Katwe, he had lost his parents, his father first and then he stayed with his mother plus other three sisters. But then the mother went for a certain business, she had gone to procure some stuff in Western Uganda but she didn't come back and then after some weeks they were told that their mother had died in Western Uganda.” (Interview staff member, 2012)

His friend too was orphaned and fending for himself. Bosco recalls trying to earn money ‘collecting water for neighbours, cleaning compounds and doing favours’ for his peers. However, as is often the case, he was often left unpaid, tired and hungry (Interview with Bosco, 2012). Having both lost their households’ main earner, the family carer, with little to no formal education and with nowhere to sleep Bosco and his friend started staying together. They found food through friends and family and what little means they could conjure up but work of any form even within the informal sector of Kampala slums, is hard to come by as a street child. Bosco and his friends often relied on ‘pickpocketing, scavenging for food in garbage, collecting scrap and stealing people’s property’ (Interview with staff member, 2012).

One evening he came across St Peters Primary Brass Band practicing in
Nsambya. Taken by the sight and sounds of children playing instruments and the immense sounds being produced Bosco thought he too would like to join the band. Both as a cry for companionship with fellow children, for direction and leadership within his own life and from the band conductor Bosco remembers approaching the bands’ director and asking to join the band. He was refused time and time again. A street child has no place in a primary school band and Bosco was told that if he were to join the band he would first have to join the primary school. With no funds to do so, Bosco continued to plead with the conductor to allow him to join. In the end, having seen how keen Bosco was to learn, they struck a deal. Bosco would receive classes from the conductor, during school holidays, provided he paid what he could for them and took the task seriously.

Bosco was asked to round up some friends who would each contribute 500 UGX (15p) per week in order to learn the instrument’s names, how they are handled, performed and to pay for tuition. However, his gang of friends weren’t all taken by the idea.

‘For me, I didn’t have interest in starting that new thing. I didn’t have hope that it could work. Me, I was with Bosco and the other friends but I was more interested in getting cheap money like pickpocketing and stuff like that. So I had another group, not Bosco’s, and I went away from their place.’ (Interview with staff member 2012).

At this early stage, there was little direction in Bosco’s ideas. The band would somehow develop, perform where they could, and, hopefully get paid. They still had no instruments of their own, no homes and very little musical ability.

It was not until a Christopher, a German volunteer, staying in Kampala and working with the primary school, came across the band that things started to develop quicker. He was curious as to why a group of street kids were hanging around the school playing instruments during the holidays. He was approached by the boys and they started to talk. The boys wanted money from him to continue their efforts -
'You know when you see a white guy you ask for money, it’s really common.’ (Interview with staff member 2012).

Instead of money, which might be frittered away on alcohol, drugs and gambling, Christopher promised to try to get hold of instruments that the boys could own and learn on. He stayed true to his word and brought instruments.

‘We were very excited! By that time I had come back to join Bosco and he (Christopher) asked us ‘where do you stay? I want to know where you stay because if you go and start living with these instruments I should know that they are in a safe place’. So we were scared. We didn’t have a specific house or location that we stayed in. Some of us had sisters who we asked community members to care for but for us, we could stay anywhere around. Someone was going to tell him this, but Bosco said ‘if you tell him this, he won’t give us those instruments’. [...] So we took him around all the streets and verandas where we stay but we were not telling him that this is where we sleep. We were just taking him around the community. At the end of it he told me that ‘You guys, you said you were taking me to a place where you sleep and I’m seeing that this is Katwe so then we told him we don’t have a specific house but that this is our area of operation.’ (Interview with staff member 2012)

It was then decided that together, in order to assure the safety of both the boys and their new equipment, they would find a room to rent and Christopher would pay the full years rent – enough time to get the boys set up, learning instruments and earning money for the next year.

The band started to rehearse at a school named St Paul’s. They started playing at local events, weddings and although they ‘hadn’t turned professional [they] had interest in learning and trying and had learnt a lot about providing for themselves’ (Interview with Bosco, 2012). At their first Okwandjula – a traditional Ugandan wedding introduction ceremony – they were paid 60,000UGX (£20) and used they money to buy T-Shirts and matching trousers.
The move proved critical in several ways. The band was now taken more seriously due to ‘looking the part’ and received more invitations to perform at events, earning more income and allowing them to invest more in the band. It also gave them an identity, something to belong to. When one lives a life detached from society it is important to have something to belong to. Whilst for these boys this had previously been small gangs involved in crime, they now had marching band uniforms, instruments and, crucially, were earning whilst in uniform.

The uniform’s effect was twofold. It made the boys look more professional, marketable and appealing to the general public and it also instilled them with a sense of belonging, pride and dignity. Coupled, these pushed the group to rehearse harder, become better and in turn earned them more opportunities to gain income.

As the band marched through villages, suburbs of Kampala or straight through the city centre, they drew crowds of people celebrating and marching with them.

It was at this stage that the band saw potential for growth but with their own growth they felt they should help fellow street children;

‘every time we play you can find many children running and even following us for hours until sometimes they ask us ‘we would like to come and join your band’. It is good that they come because they are like us and they need help too.’ (int. 4).
MLISADA – Growth.

Since the mid-nineties MLISADA has grown from the handful of friends they started with close to 200 children now supported by the organization in various ways. Street children, orphans, ex-child soldiers, refugees and disabled children all form part of the MLISADA bands. 70 residents are housed, clothed and fed with the rest attending during the day receiving food, support and clothes. Due to a lack of space and funding, non-residents must return to the streets at night.

MLISADA has a staff of 10 people with a full time social worker working as a link between MLISADA, the local community and local police. The staff members are all ex-MLISADA members and ex-street children. As such, they understand the difficulties faced by those they care for and act as role models, educators and carers to the children. MLISADA members are also given support with school fees. In return the children must join one of the music groups: the brass band, the jazz band, the cultural dancing and music group or the acrobatics team.

As mentioned above, with interest from children every time the band performs, there is a natural tendency towards accumulating members. The policy is that any child in desperate need is welcome at MLISADA as long as they respect the ground rules and contribute to the community. However, the band’s growth is due to several factors.

As events started to become more frequent there was interest from MTN (Uganda’s largest network operator). MTN booked the band for corporate events. Impressed with their work and their story, they would book the band for events at the Ministry of Gender, the day of the African Child or Youth Forum days. MTN’s affiliation with the band worked well both for advertisement of their own brand and to sell their ‘humanistic’ side. At that time MTN set up their MTN Foundation whereby they invested money back into the local community and the less advantaged. MTN provided music lessons for MLISADA members at Kampala Music School – 40 children have now graduated in ABRSM music exams from grades 2 to 5.
One of the band members had a friend working for a tourist company bringing Westerners to Uganda. As a new tour guide, he was unsure of where to bring foreigners and brought a group to visit MLISADA and to enjoy their music. Through these visits the band earned pocket money but more importantly started to make contacts from outside Uganda which proved invaluable.

Impressed by their work and having been wooed by the Ugandan band playing the English national anthem visitors from Cheleston Academy decided to keep contact with MLISADA. They regularly hold fundraising events and have connected the band to local brass bands who donate instruments and hold fundraising concerts of their own. In meeting the school group MLISADA were, at first, effectively increasing their social assets. Through these social assets they gained more financial assets and instruments – tools for further increasing both their social and financial assets. Cheleston Academy’s link with MLISADA is invaluable. Fundraising has bought MLISADA a new building which houses more children. Every year the school send out a group of students and teachers in order to support MLISADA with building works, renovation and music mentorship.
Chapter 5: Research Findings.

‘I think that music will change everything. This is something that everyone needs. Everyone needs entertainment, it’s like food. Even the president I think you’ll see he needs some classical music.’ (MLISADA int. 10)

The research findings are based upon the weeks spent with MLISADA, interviews undertaken with MLISADA staff and children. These findings address the primary research aims outlined in the methodologies section (p31) and are structured by addressing each aim separately.

(i) Gaining an insight into how music is used in developing contexts in working with vulnerable youths.

At MLISADA music is used in a variety of ways. First and foremost, music is used as a means of income to run the project. In this sense it is the lifeline of MLISADA; ‘music is at the heart of our project and our main source of income’ (MLISADA Website; also int.1,2). The brass band, jazz band and cultural dance group need to perform in order to keep a source of income. In these terms music is a financial asset for both the project and the performers.

The first performances such as at the introduction ceremony mentioned in the previous chapter earned the band 60,000UGX. However, now, with larger numbers of children in the bands and associated transport cost the band can earn upwards of 500,000UGX for a given performance. As such, the music provides money to pay for rent of the MLISADA property, can contribute towards food for the children and administrative costs. One staff member who books the band for concerts receives commission for bookings;
For each concert played, performers earn a small amount of money. Every child at MLISADA has an account which is kept in the accounts book. After each concert a percentage of earnings are split between the performers and go directly into their savings. Children can request to withdraw money to spend on items they wish to have as long as they have saved up enough.

A further percentage of money is saved in a communal account which is used to run a loan scheme. Older members of MLISADA are more likely to be involved in the loan scheme. MLISADA forwards them money for school fees, which is paid back within a given amount of time. One of the staff members told me he was using the loan scheme to pay for a Computer Science course at university. In spare time he tutors people in computing and IT technology to repay the loan (int. 3, Staff member).

Concerts provide MLISADA with income but also a chance to be seen. This gives MLISADA a greater chance to be seen and promote their reputation. However, the concerts also create changes in the manner in which street children are viewed by the wider public. MLISADA’s growing reputation as mobile network provider MTN’s official brass band and as the official band for the national football team, the Uganda Cranes, gives these former street children a status within society. At the 15th Anniversary Fundraising event, the audience were surprised to see lawyers, nurses, soldiers and army brass band members amongst the audience had been ex-street children supported by MLISADA. These MLISADA ‘graduates’ stand as role models for the current 200 children supported by the project as they are proof of MLISADA’s ability to deliver what it promises – a chance for street children to succeed. Their presence and stories also create awareness amongst the general population that street children have potential, if they are given a chance to receive support, mentoring and schooling.
Musical performances are also integral to attracting more street children off the streets and into MLISADA’s reach. As this comment suggests, when MLISADA perform in public other street children approach the band members and staff and often follow them back to the orphanage;

‘every time we play you can find many children running and even following us for hours until sometimes they ask us ‘we would like to come and join your band’. It is good that they come because they are like us and they need help too.’ (MLISADA int. 4).

Others too, acknowledged music’s role in attracting more children to the project;

‘The music attracts others to see what is happening here in MLISADA (int 2, staff member).

‘when you look at the background of MLISADA it was music which attracted Bosco and other friends off the streets and becoming music instructors, music teachers and administrators. It was music! You know, street children, they are seen as losers. I mean, people don’t have much time to associate with them so easily. But if you use an instrument like for example if you perform at an event organized in Kampala in the centre many children from the streets run to that event to see what is going on...’
and they have been called by the music, by the sound of these instruments and as they see their fellow young ones playing instruments and doing acrobatics they get attracted and in the evening they follow the band up to here. So they come by the interest or the love of the music.’ (MLISADA int. 5)

In bringing more youth to the project MLISADA try to determine each child’s situation. Once a child frequents MLISADA they are approached by the staff’s social worker. The social worker tries to determine whether the child has any family, why they are on the streets and how best to support that child. In some instances children are reunited with family members when the child has expressed a will to find his or her family and the family member in question has the means to care for that child. Often, however, care is left to MLISADA and the children in question are accepted to the project so long as they adhere to the rules and join one of the music groups.

Staff members acknowledged that the music provided a means of attracting children off the streets and away from the dangers of living on the streets and the allure of crime. However, they strongly believed that in learning an instrument and playing in bands where they needed to cooperate with others, children were learning essential skills and values such as respect, teamwork and gaining self-esteem. In a short documentary about MLISADA, David Juritz, the founder of Musequality picks up on each of these points;

‘The music gets the children involved in an activity basically keeping them out of harm’s way giving them something to do, which is a start but more than that, it gives those kids an identity. You know, those kids aren’t wondering who or what they are, those kids actually know that they are musicians […] There’s something about a child actually learning to play an instrument where they learn to rely on themselves. They learn to have long-term goals. It takes a lot of time to learn an instrument, it takes a lot of perseverance and kids that learn to do that actually they’ve got a vision.’ (David Juritz in Musequality 2011)

This directs us towards why music can play such an important role in
decreasing the vulnerability of urban youths. If, as a vulnerable youth, one is integrated into a music-making programme and sets oneself long-term goals and a vision they give themselves an opportunity to achieve something of value. In playing as a group they acquire values, skills and roles crucial to integrating into society. Previously shunned, isolated youths are given a chance to re-integrate into their own communities and to feel like they belong to a group;

‘music is a huge part of African culture and allowing the children the opportunity to be actively involved in that really makes them feel part of something’ (int. volunteer)

For those unacquainted with music-making such a claim may seem far-fetched. After all, how can playing a couple of notes on a trombone or composing a piece of music benefit anyone, other than perhaps being a satisfying experience? For youths who have seldom been congratulated, who have seldom achieved or even set themselves any goals and who are rarely asked to perform as part of a team and work with others around them music can be a way of teaching values such as teamwork, cooperation, understanding and can also be a way in which one can start setting oneself goals and furthermore, achieving those goals.

ii) Understanding how the youths themselves feel about the use of music and what it offers/has offered them.

‘To us, the youth we respect music so much.’ (MLISADA int.3)

For the members of the MLISADA band music helped in several ways.

The theme of music as a way to **earn** was common amongst all of the males interviewed. One child, an ex-child soldier, commented that;

‘If you learn how to play an instrument you’re going to ignore begging, you’re going to stop stealing, you’re going to stop sleeping hungry because you would
have collected money from the performances and you can invest it in buying food, paying for your rent or even keeping some in a bank account.’ (MLISADA int. 7)

Older members used the musical skills they had acquired in order to tutor private pupils and partner projects;

‘I used some of the skills music has given me to help others learning music. If they have money then I can charge them or at least they will offer me some money in return.’ (MLISADA int. 4)

On one of the days spent at MLISADA an older member of the group was practicing for a piano recital. He is an exceptionally gifted musician and told me that by playing classical music or jazz at corporate events he could charge 900,000UGX – over £200 – as there is a growing interest in jazz and classical music from the elite class in Uganda and not many Ugandans play piano.

Interestingly, MLISADA had recently recorded a CD from in order to fundraise, give the children something to be proud of and to showcase their music.

‘If I go to the studio and record some of my music and start selling it I can generate some money. If I use that wisely for business it can help for paying for studies and help my future.’ (MLISADA int. 10)

The feeling of being respected and accepted was raised;

‘many children that we have got from the streets through music, when they were still on the streets they were being ignored, disrespected, mistreated and not welcome. But once we have an event, like for example on this stage at least twice a year we have musical concerts here and the purpose is, one, raise money and also to create awareness in the community of the need of the children on the streets – how we can support them and how they can be accepted back. And on those concerts the ones who are performing are former street kids so they are being accepted back as performers and also as educators so they feel they have a
role and they feel they are now of a great importance in society. And when they go out on events like for example corporate functions we go to at Sheraton, at Serena Hotel or Civil Society communities and the child stands in front of civil servants he feels proud that he is performing for doctors, for lawyers. So, he feels accepted…in a more wonderful way. ‘ (MLISADA int. 6)

There was a strong sense that the children in MLISADA’s bands were extremely proud of their achievements. Many played multiple instruments and enjoyed playing in their free time. One day a visitor to the programme was being shown around. Several members of the brass band were extremely keen for him to play songs together and visibly enjoyed playing together with the newcomer. They joked and laughed about slight mistakes made and were not shy about talking when holding their instruments and showing their talents.

‘I play piano, and I can read music as well. And my brother right now he plays trombone, alto saxophone and guitar too but because of music now I have a lot of friends. Most of the pupils in my school they like me so much because of my talent.’ (int. 9)

The children were aware of the fact that they made friends through their music;

‘I’ve made friends through music. I’ve managed to meet many people. I’ve met people that I couldn’t imagine existed and we respect each other.’ (int. 10.)

‘I met many of my friends through music. I was a person who used to keep quiet, like, every time sitting alone. But right now I can jazz (chat) with everyone, what…like, I’m used now. I can now perform, what. I used to be shy, but now I’m not shy. So it boosted my confidence. (int. 8)

and that being part of the programme was part of the reason they were supported in their education;
'I go to school because of music.' (int. 8)

The two statements by this girl, interviewee 8, show the effect that music can have in increasing self-esteem. Her sense of worth had been greatly increased by having been able to successfully learn several instruments and performing for various occasions.

**Self-esteem** and **confidence** were also boosted by a feeling of being able to express oneself and in doing so, connecting with others;

‘This is something that binds people together. It’s a language that is not spoken, but it has a meaning. People get to understand what you mean when you play an instrument, so it’s a language that’s hard to speak but simple to interpret by everyone.’ (MLISADA int 4.)

One interviewee stated that he knew that the band travelled a lot and the idea of seeing new places and travelling attracted him to the brass band (int. 10). Since joining he had visited many parts of Uganda and enjoyed meeting new people.

When asked how young people were viewed by the community at large, every single interviewee mentioned that at present, the youth are seen as a challenge.

‘Here in Uganda currently youth are unemployed. People think that we are failures. That’s what old people think, that we are failures, that our generation is wasted.’ (int. 10)
‘Parents and carers need to provide for younger people and it’s very difficult and even now elders see young people as rule-breakers, although they have potential’
(int. 2 staff member)

However, despite being seen as such, the young interviewees saw potential,

‘Young people themselves, we feel that it’s not a wasted generation. We are going to make it in life. Though we are unemployed right now I know in time it will change.’ (MLISADA int 10)

iii) Investigating what the greatest challenges are in using music as a tool for work with vulnerable youth

Within MLISADA the main challenges faced were:

- a lack of instruments compared to the number of children at the home. MLISADA had quite a collection of instruments, however, there are many more children than instruments. This doesn’t seem to pose a great challenge at first, however, it does mean that certain children play their instruments more than other. If they practice, they are likely to be picked to perform at events, and this leaves others waiting back at the orphanage, a volunteer working with MLISADA remarked that they ‘felt bad for the kids that weren’t in the bands because they would always just be at home while there peers were off going to fancy hotels, the stadium, or where ever else they may end up’.

- Instruments break and there are limited funds to repair and maintain them.

- There is a lack of music tutors able to spare time for tutoring the children. At the moment there are two main music tutors working with the project. This said, the lack of tutors pushes older members of the band to take responsible roles in helping younger members learn.

- Attendance at practices. Although this was only brushed upon by one staff
member it was clear that there are days when some of the band members do not feel like practicing. This can be difficult to manage for both staff and members of the band who turn up to practice.

- **Funding** was named as the greatest challenge to the project. The fact that there are few *measurable* outputs to the project makes it difficult to secure sustained donor funding. The project relies on donations and fundraising and there are times when money is short. However, MLISADA have managed to create a partnership with The USAID Health Initiative for Private Sector Foundation (HIPS), who provide medical support for members of MLISADA. This helps with medical check-ups and basic treatment. Musequality, a charity in the UK provide donations and access to instruments through their connections with brass bands and community members in the UK.

- From observation it was evident that the **Brass Bands** were heavily *male-dominated*. Females are encouraged to take part in the bands, however, most take part in the cultural dance group. MLISADA addresses the needs of the girls through the ‘Amazing Girls Club’. The group teaches essential life skills to the girls and teaches bead making to make necklaces which are then sold for MLISADA. Alongside practical skills the girls focus on skills such as confidence, assertiveness and self-esteem.

  Beyond these factors, there are other inherent challenges in working through music. Some of the children learn faster than others. The same volunteer mentioned above believed that ‘**being in a band setting where others are excelling while you are struggling can be really tough and might confirm some of their negative self esteem and worth issues**’. This is an extremely important point. Although there are many potential benefits to learning music and playing as part of a group, it must be noted that the same struggles and tensions we face in other parts of our lives are present in the musical setting. Where competition over who is better at playing their instrument starts to develop rivalries can develop.
Chapter 6: Conclusions

The conclusions are structured around the four emerging questions from the literature review (p 30).

1) How can music be used to engage vulnerable/excluded youths in community development and community dialogue?

From the evidence found in the field, music has shown itself to be used in several different ways in engaging excluded groups in community dialogue and development.

Evidence from TASO shows the use of drama and lyrical content to educate communities about dangers of HIV & AIDS. Their community sensitization visits open up debate about the disease in communities. (Barz 2006)

The groups also create strong support networks for the individuals involved creating networks which help affected members rebuild their identities within communities that shun them in the face of stigma surrounding HIV & AIDS (Barz 2006; Ansdell et al. 2010)

The research at MLISADA shows that music can be used with vulnerable youths to restore essential life-skills such as confidence and self-esteem.
MLISADA’s graduate lawyers, doctors, nurses and military soldiers and band members are proof of its potential in taking vulnerable children off the streets and reintegrating them into society.

2) How is music used by excluded/vulnerable youths to create spaces of dialogue and ‘spaces of belonging’ in their communities?

In participating in musical groups, vulnerable and excluded youths become integrated into a group. This in itself offers itself a space in which the youths feel they ‘belong’. The sense of belonging can be promoted by the use of symbols to which they can identify - in this case the MLISADA logo, the band’s uniforms and the instruments themselves. The feeling that one belongs to a project or group creates a sense that you are needed (see Stige 2010: 144-145).

As music is a creative and highly emotive force, it is what one can call an affective process. Massumi writing about young people and their involvement in youth subcultures writes;

’in affect, we are never alone. That’s because affects [are] ways of connection, to others and to other situations. They are our angle of participation in processes larger than ourselves. With intensified affect comes a stronger sense of embeddedness in a larger field of life – a heightened sense of belonging, with other people and to other places’ (Massumi 2002 cited in Halsley and Young 2001, p277)

This sense of belonging and connection to other people and other places is one which is felt at MLISADA. It is one which is also played out elsewhere in the young community of hip-hop musicians, rappers and poets in Kampala. In discussions with musicians across Kampala many felt they were part of a movement; that they belonged to a generation of change guided by their music. The Luga Flow Army used music as a voice to vent the frustrations of the youth with life in Uganda but also as a vehicle for promoting positive messages of unity, education and perseverance to young Ugandans. These youth have made a point
of connecting to global movements and international artists through social networking sites and feel that they belong to a larger community – one which ultimately proved life saving for one of their members.

3) What are the key benefits of existing projects for the involved, vulnerable youths?

Youths involved in the MLISADA project benefit in a number of ways. Research shows that through music making children increase their learning capabilities (Cross 1999; Foundation for Universal Music Literacy: n.d.) and exercise multiple brain systems, strengthening synapses and brain function (Weinberger 1998).

The commitment needed to learn an instrument and play in an ensemble teaches essential life-skills to participants in the project. These include confidence, self-esteem, goal setting and achieving and instil a sense of worth in participants. Alongside these life-skills, performing at events brings vital income to sustain the project and children earn through their performances.

At MLISADA, however, music is not the only benefit. These ‘children in difficult circumstances’ are given a chance to gain an education. Whilst the music-making may teach them values of co-operation and teamwork, these are put into practice at school and it is through gaining an education that many of the children benefit most. MLISADA gives structure to lives where little or none existed before and tries to give outlets to exercise the life-skills learnt through music-making. In fact, the children run their own court. If mistreated, a child brings their complaint or accusation to the court. They must have a witness and state their case at a weekly meeting. The jury are made of older members of the group who then decide on whether the perpetrator should be punished and how. Typical punishments include extra chores such as cooking or cleaning, or alternatively, the children decide on less productive punishments and the guilty party may have to sit in the corner with their hands on their head for hours on end. The court is run by the children themselves and acts as a way of keeping group
dynamics in check, teaching discipline and respect but also practicing talking in front of groups and discussing principles such as respect, communication and discipline.

For the staff at MLISADA and for founder, Bosco, the project was a means to leave the streets, help others in similar situations and to gain a respected place in the community working alongside local community support workers and the police. They may have just as easily found themselves on the wrong side of the law. MLISADA represents a fulltime job to them and they have become role models for vulnerable youths.

For those involved in or joining the project MLISADA provide schooling at a range of local community schools. Whilst ex-street children may face stigma at these schools the strong and on-going collaboration between MLISADA and the schools means that these schools are well used to absorbing ex-street children in their programmes. For some, having learnt instruments at MLISADA brings admiration and the chance to make more friends (interviews 8 and 10).

Membership at MLISADA also brings the benefits of partnerships which MLISADA has. This includes access to healthcare treatments through USAID’s HIPS programme, which without the organization’s help, street children would not access. A partnership with Musequality brings funding and instruments.

4) What are the key lessons learned from successful programmes for consideration in future programmes?

Although the research questions posed at MLISADA, formed prior to fieldwork in Uganda, did not directly address this topic there are lessons to be learned from the strengths and weaknesses of this programme and suggestions towards successful programmes were made by interviewees from local NGOs and CEPAC.
- Understanding the Beneficiaries’ Needs:

At MLISADA the fact that staff have endured similar hardships to those faced by the children creates an environment of understanding and allows staff to understand how to address the problems faced by vulnerable youths. Understanding their needs is key to addressing them.

- Creating a stable and enabling environment:

MLISADA’s strengths lie in its ability to create a more stable environment for vulnerable children. It does so in providing shelter and food for children whilst also providing emotional and social support networks for the youths. These networks are formed by using music-making activities which instil values of cooperation and respect within the brass band ensembles. School time, meal times, practices and activities such as the court or homework time all give a structure to these young people’s lives adding routine and stability to their lives.

- Practising the Life Skills Learnt:

Through learning instruments the young members gain a sense of pride, worth and confidence. These values in turn promote the resilience of vulnerable individuals. As confidence builds, MLISADA connects the street children to education, placing them in local schools. Slowly a process of integration into the community starts as children use their growing life skills to make new friends, set new goals and learn at school.

It is important that programmes exercise the values taught through musical activities outside of the realm of music;

‘Not everyone is influenced by music. People have different things they want to do in life. There are kids here who want to be teachers or doctors and then there are those totally inspired by music.’ (int 10)

In this light it is important to respect the different avenues that a child may
choose to take, to listen to their needs and to respond appropriately.

- Partnerships:

Partnerships with local sponsors and community groups offer vital sources of support and income to projects like MLISADA. International links have provided instruments and funding through Musequality and a wider concern for the continuation of MLISADA’s work which spurs further interest in their work creating awareness and potential growth in support for the project. National partnerships create an awareness of the situation facing vulnerable youths, create networks for helping these youth and can strengthen community cooperation.

Final Conclusions:

Music has shown itself to be a ‘tactic of the dispossessed’ (Cresswell 1996: 47) and tool for community development in several manners.

At MLISADA music is used to teach core values and life skills that help children in especially difficult circumstance to regain confidence and ultimately integrate back into the society they are excluded from. TASO Drama Group use music as a means for educating communities and sensitizing about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Music is thus used as a vehicle for community education in areas where formal education has been insufficient or lacking (Barz 2006).

It is a means through which excluded youths can voice their frustrations and express their feelings about problems and vulnerabilities that they face (see appendix CD tracks 6,7,11,14,16,18). This opens up room for reflection and community dialogue amongst listeners and performers alike.

Though the field research shows that music is used in different ways by different groups many similar feelings of ‘belonging’ exist across groups. All groups talk of a sense of pride and confidence in engaging in music making and
talk of increased confidence and self-esteem through which they aim to engage with their communities.

Further research is needed and recommended in order to explore the benefits that music brings to communities. One could develop tools for measuring the success and impact of programmes, which if positive would provide a stronger base in securing donor support.
Bibliography:


Gibson, C. (1998) "We sing our home, We dance our land": indigenous self-determination and contemporary geopolitics in Australian popular music *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16(2) 163 – 184


Hunt, M (2005), Action Research and Music Therapy: Group Music Therapy with Young Refugees in a School Community, *Voices: A World Forum for MusicTherapy*, 5(2)


IMC (2009), International Music Council & UNESCO, 17th July 2009, UNESCO: Dar Es Salaam


unemployed-youth-a-threat-to-stability-.html

Olson, K (2005) Music for Community Education and Emancipatory Learning, New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 107, pp55-64


United Nations General Assembly (2010) *Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Mr. JeanClaudy Pierre (Haiti), on the basis of informal consultations on draft resolution A/C.2/65/L.9: Culture and development*, UNGA


VOICE Project [online] www.voiceproject.org

