

**Title:** Bi-Communal Musical Dialogues for Peace in the only divided capital of the world - BiComMusic

**Country:** Cyprus

**Institution:** International House

**Project Leader:** Elina Georgiou

**Associated links:** [Facebook Page](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Project Website](#)

### Summary

Through this project, it was possible for the first-time ever to initiate peacebuilding efforts through the use of music between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities in Cyprus.

### Project Description

Cyprus is a unique case in peace operations, with its capital city being the only remaining divided capital in Europe and in the world (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2021). Since the 1974 Turkish invasion, which resulted in the occupation of half the island, Northern Cyprus is still occupied by Turkish Cypriots. The utmost issue in Cyprus today, is that there is no common ground or effort from either group to meet in the middle and make peace. This has resulted in long-standing disappointment for the UN and the people of Cyprus who have lived in constant conflict for almost 40 years.

Using music-oriented strategies has previously been proven to instigate interest in peacebuilding dialogues (Pruitt, 2011). The methodologies adopted included a participatory action research approach, to enable the opinions and voices of all relevant parties to be heard and considered, such as musicians, peacebuilders, young people and community-leaders.

The original activities of the project remained as initially planned and these were:

#### **Activity 1: Bi-Communal Musical Dialogues**

A.1.1: Dialogue Workshops – [Link](#)

A.1.2: Qualitative Data Analysis

A.1.3. Playing for peace/Bi-ComMusic Festival - [Link](#)

#### **Activity 2: The Bi-ComMusic e-Toolkit**

A.2.1: Toolkit Development in English, Greek and Turkish – [EN](#) | [EL](#) | [TR](#) Also on Project's [Website](#)

#### **Activity 3: Dissemination and Exploitation of the action**

A.3.1: Visual ID of the project- [Link](#)

A.3.2: Bi-ComMusic Short film- [Youtube Link](#)

A.3.3: Awareness-raising media campaign- [BiComMusic FB Page](#) | [BiComMusic IG Page](#)

Through our campaign we have reached more than **250,000 people**. [Dissemination Report](#)

A.3.4: Exploitation- [Dissemination Report](#)

Please see below a list of articles that have been released on online mass media sites with a national and international audience of followers:

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/06/27/bi-communal-musical-dialogue-for-peace/>

<https://www.home4cooperation.info/product/bi-communal-musical-dialogues-for-peace/>

<https://www.middlebury.edu/office/projects-for-peace/reading-room/bi-communal-musical-dialogue-peace>

<http://www.newsincyprus.com/news/401640/bi-communal-musical-dialogue-for-peace>

[https://cyprustimes.com/koinonia/1o-dikoinotiko-moysiko-festival-otan-milisan-oi-moysikes-mia-allis-enomenis-kyproy-pics/?fbclid=IwAR2z7jJUCxgCV9EpML-45\\_Aqhvro6AtGg5ijsBJlevuhtognMu4cuHO3jCQ](https://cyprustimes.com/koinonia/1o-dikoinotiko-moysiko-festival-otan-milisan-oi-moysikes-mia-allis-enomenis-kyproy-pics/?fbclid=IwAR2z7jJUCxgCV9EpML-45_Aqhvro6AtGg5ijsBJlevuhtognMu4cuHO3jCQ)

<https://forum.cy/threads/cyprus-times-1st-bi-communal-music-festival-when-the-music-of-another-united-cyprus-spoke-pics.119196/>

<https://www.trendradars.com/channels/article-80654-bi-communal-musical-dialogue-for-peace/>

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Through our Exploitation efforts through online mass media we have reached more than **250,000 people** and more than **50 organisations and institutions**.

To summarise, there are ample opportunities for work to be continued. This has already been established with the creation of an informal network among the musicians and peacebuilders from both of the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities for further joint music events and additional talks for constructive actions towards peacebuilding in Cyprus.

### Reflection

During this project the term 'peace' has gained a novel dimension for me. I now understand that to initiate and continue peace, we need to start from connecting people from the opposing sides, establishing safe spaces for dialogue and identifying solutions for transforming a culture of conflict into a culture of forgiveness and collaboration.

### *Dilemmas, Challenges and Issues that underlie the targeted issue*

- Normalisation' of the division: After the opening of the borders for free movement of the people between the two sides of the island, the existence of this division has become normalised. It is no longer a physical obstacle. However, participants stated that this very situation does not resolve the conflict, but rather tries to 'normalise' it and silence the need for concrete resolution and solid unification of the island.
- Intergenerational transmission: The new generations may have the same perspective as the older generation but simultaneously they have a completely different viewpoint. For example, they did not live and witness the time when Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots lived together in harmony. The new generations is mostly aware and hear the dreadful side of the story since naturally it becomes the most memorable one. Hence, the mentality of new generation in many cases is fixed on what they have been taught. Which brings up Hirsch's question of how the social memory can affect individual experience of the issue before individual experiences shape the social memory? (Hirsch, 1997)

### *How has the project changed, challenged or inspired me?*

Although I have witnessed the conflict on our island since 1974, and have since experienced a long-standing political and civil conflict between the two sides of the island, this project has truly surfaced a fresh perspective on the matter. I am inspired to invest in joint music composition and performances between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities as I now believe that above all conflicts, humanitarian ideals prevail making space for hope, regeneration and reconciliation.

### Personal Statement

*"A human being is born to be peaceful and free. I am optimistic that this problem will be resolved because it and continues to be unnatural. They cannot divide Cyprus everywhere. They can divide it legally, but in our hearts, in our friendships and in our minds, we have a united Cyprus. This is how we are connected."*