

***'Music with No Borders'***

***Poland***

**International Students House, London**

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**Report**

**b. A two-sentence summary of the goals of your project**

The main goal of the project was to share the message about peace-building through music because of how, as a universal language, music can build mutual understanding between people of different cultures, nationalities, ages and professions. By combining the artistic and broader political meaning of music, which is what made 'Music Without Borders' a unique event in Warsaw, we could discuss the importance of making music more accessible and widely practiced in everyday life both as a means of social cohesion and individual artistic freedom.

**c. Did other fund-raising efforts contribute to your project? What were they?**

In my project, I collaborated with Jeunesses Musicales International, which supported the participation of 10 young musicians, as well as 5 speakers. Additionally, SKM Warsaw (railway carrier operating within the Warsaw agglomeration) sponsored the simultaneous translation service and equipment.

**d. How did you come up with the idea for your project?**

The idea of the project grew out of the urge to combine my passion for music and social engagement with current affairs. I am a classically trained musician and cosmopolitan in my international outlook, because I am curious about other parts of the world and have friends spread across the globe. However, as politics is becoming increasingly parochial, I wanted to figure out how I could engage with this. I thought that music could be useful.

**e. Why do you think the issue your project is responding to exists?**

The 'Other', as a key figure is politics, which historically commands suspicion, fear, distrust, or aggression. It is evident today by the rise of nationalist movements across Europe and in other parts of the world, such as India, Australia, Turkey, and the United States of America. In reality, the 'Other' can just as easily beckon curiosity rather than negative emotions, and it mostly has to do with a lack of understanding. The lack of understanding between people of different cultures, nationalities and backgrounds exists because of the lack of a universal language. If music is thought of as a universal language, then music would allow people to get to know the differences between them and appreciate them rather than becoming sources of conflict or boundaries.

**f. Why did you choose your host site to work in?**

The project was organised in the Praga Museum of Warsaw in my home city. The venue is located in the historically multicultural area. Nowadays, it's one of the most diverse districts, facing challenges on the ground while at the same time creating a close community. Above all, the museum space itself suited the needs of the project, providing a conference room, outside stage, catering and other necessary facilities.

**g. What was it like to work in your host site?**

Collaboration with the Praga Museum of Warsaw went well. The venue is well equipped and the staff was very helpful.

**h. Did you feel at any point that the project was not going to work? In what ways?**

I did not have any doubts the project was not going to work. At times, the collaboration with the NGO (JMI) wasn't the easiest, as they weren't always reliable. Overall, I truly believed in the idea of the project which helped me realise all the planned activities, regardless of the obstacles I was facing.

**i. What were the challenges you encountered in communicating with people?**

What was the most problematic were the differences in working habits. While other coordinators and I prioritized the project, dedicated great time and effort, worked on weekdays as well as weekends, regardless of our personal plans, members of the NGO were not as committed. They often took weeks to reply to emails. It meant that decisions could not be made, as they needed the NGO's approval, which slowed down different processes. Additionally, due to my young age, I was often

meeting a patronising attitude and ignorance about my abilities. Otherwise, communication with the speakers and the participants was excellent and I was very happy with them.

**j. How do you define peace?**

Peace, in the most general and abstract sense, is the absence of violence and the presence of understanding. I define peace as requiring both because of the literature on violence. If a crucial part of the definition of violence is the *intention* to cause physical harm, then it is not enough to say that the absence of people causing physical harm to each other is, by definition, peace. If hatred remains in the social fabric, then the possibility of violence remains present once it becomes organised. Hannah Arendt's famous work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, showed that it was not the force of a brutal dictator but the breakdown of relationships among people that led to the horrors she wrote about. And for relationships to be formed, understanding is required.

Understanding facilitates other social goods necessary for the maintenance of peace. A state of overall understanding involves conviviality to diversity and appreciation of differences on various levels (nationality, culture, profession, age, gender). A society which accepts all these factors is able to function well together, collaborate and create a strong bond amongst those who live within it. Therefore, as one of the speakers Alexander Pennington said during 'Music with No Borders' - life without music is a mistake.

**k. How does or will your project contribute to peace? Short-term? Long-term?**

'Music with No Borders' was a beautiful experience for all the participants and organisers - it was a chance for 35 young musicians, 10 speakers and around 50 members of the public to spend time together in discussions, workshops, rehearsals and meals. We all created a strongly connected community, everyone was willing to meet each other, to exchange views and collaborate on various levels. Most of them are also willing to engage in future projects, which I am already planning to organize. My project definitely contributed to peace, creating a safe space for discussion on the role of music as a universal language, knowledge that each person can take with them to their own countries. Participants also had a chance to experience it in a special workshop, which used music instead of spoken language (musicians communicated only with their instruments). Long term however, participants are willing to incorporate what they learned and experienced in their work and their projects. Many of them feel eager to explore the topic of diversity and discuss it further with their peers in their home countries, in their universities, within different communities.

**l. Has your project changed the way you think about the world? How has it changed you?**

The project definitely changed me. Over the last 9 months I've learnt a lot about the existing social issues which need to be solved. I started exploring music as a tool for social change as well. I consider it as a meaningful turn in my career, which may result in reframing my future professional plans and perspectives. On a personal level, the project made me appreciate the support of everyone who contributed to it - I really can call them all my friends. I consider creating such a bond between people another sign of peace existing in the world.

**m. Please provide a 1-2 personal statement sentence, suitable for use as a quotation, addressing how and why this project was valuable and what was the most important thing you learned as a result**

"'Music with No Borders' was a highly valuable, unique project turning everyone's attention to how issues can be solved through musical language. The project made me appreciate the support of everyone who contributed to it - I really can call them all my friends. I consider creating such a bond between people another sign of peace existing in the world." Malgorzata Zwierzchowska

