

## **What have we learned from the Pathfinder programmes?**

1. It is clear from all three Pathfinder groups that working in Partnership is complex and challenging; and much has been gained and learned through the processes. Organisations have distinctive and different core purposes and the new working has to be based on a thorough understanding of each other's provision, as well as the benefits to young people of working together.

Establishing secure relationships, based on professional recognition and trust, are fundamental to the new programmes. They also depend on high quality administration and communication practices. All the organisations were already working to capacity when Pathfinder programmes were introduced, but they showed a clear commitment to the development of the Music Manifesto aims. They devised pilot schemes, as well as extensions to existing work. These demonstrate new programmes, new ways of working; and working in new contexts.

2. The partner organisations in the three Pathfinder programmes were at very different stages of development and had different funding timescales. The aims and programmes are distinctly different and cannot be compared; since it would be the equivalent of comparing an apple, an orange and a banana. However, important lessons have been learned which should help in any future work from these or other partnerships.

3. Working in new ways, with new colleagues and in new settings makes complex demands on all involved. From the Pathfinder programmes, there are several different forms of partnership, all of which are distinctive and all of which develop and evolve over time. The most innovative of these are exciting, risk-taking and groundbreaking.

4. Evaluations of the Pathfinder programmes over the last few months show three main types of partnership, the last of which is resulting in some exciting, innovative and sustainable new ways of working, in which partners plan, deliver and learn from each other while working closely together.

### **Cooperation**

5. This is the basic form of partnership, involving mostly the sharing of information as organisations get to know about each other's work. It is important, though, since settings/centres/schools benefit from the shared knowledge among the organisations. Cooperating over dates to avoid conflicting events; acting as an information 'bank' for each other's work; and recommending the best group 'fit' for work; all have enormous benefits for those on the receiving end. Agreements over how the information is sent out to settings/centres/school are

an important aspect of cooperation.

### **Collaboration**

6. In the early stages of Partnership working, as organisations begin to find ways to work together, they often collaborate over events, or local programmes. This involves two organisations jointly planning the nature, content and the targeted groups. It also means that organisations have to understand each other's work, in order to develop the roles needed for successful work in collaboration.

### **Confederation**

7. This is the most complex, but the most exciting and innovative form of Partnership. It is also the form that best fits the government's policies for the development of music education programmes; the aims and principles of the Music Manifesto and the professional development of all professionals involved. It involves the integration of the work of two or more organisations and is using all the local and regional resources available.

8. The most important outcomes of the partnership work can be summarised as:

### **Focus on children and young people**

- The opportunities to expand the range of enriched experiences and outcomes for children and young people are at the heart of successful partnership working.
- It is important for one member of the team, or school/centre based staff, to monitor part of each session, to focus on the process for young people. In new work there is a tendency for adults to focus on their own role, rather than the impact on the qualities of music making for the young people in their care.
- High expectations by all involved are crucial to establishing the quality of what can be done and achieved when working with attentive and enthusiastic young people.
- It is wrong to stereotype young people or schools in terms of their achievements in areas of the curriculum which are subject to national standards in core subjects, or their profile of Special Educational Needs. The cognitive skills and understandings involved in music making are distinctly different and young people need rich and open opportunities to acquire and develop them.
- Where sessions take place in prime curriculum time attention must be paid to access for all young people to the highest quality experiences which are required nationally.

## **Designing programmes and building teams**

- Professional support for the 'front line' practitioners and their continuing professional review and development are crucial. This needs music leaders who have insight and commitment, as well as executive skills.
- Team building needs to include staff from the host venue/centre/school, so as to avoid 'planting' programmes on unprepared colleagues.
- Team leaders and music leaders need high quality music expertise, as well as the qualities and skills required in managing other adults and large groups of young people.
- Team leaders need to demonstrate musical fluency and high educational standards, so that they can lead by example, as well as coordinating the expertise of the rest of the team.
- Someone has to lead! It is not possible to turn up and expect parity in sessions between two, three, or four different practitioners. In busy sessions, someone has to maintain an overview of the direction, content and qualities of the work in hand – and to be decisive in maintaining or changing the focus when necessary.

## **Leading and managing teams**

- Time for planning is essential, to avoid the session-by-session preparation which does not include medium term aims, or an overview of a unit of work.
- Learning from each other and from experiences of colleagues elsewhere is an important way of developing content, pedagogy and team working. There is no need to keep on learning by making mistakes, which can be very negative and disheartening. Most mistakes can be anticipated and avoided with careful planning and attention to the real focus on young people's music making.
- Experienced music leaders need to share their experiences as often as possible, as well as observing each other's styles of working.
- In negotiating and planning programmes with schools and centres, it is important to work in settings which are as typical as possible, so that they have the characteristics and potential of the majority of mainstream or special educational provision. Schools and centres that are working in extremely challenging circumstances need to be approached by experienced teams who can remove any non-musical barriers to the work. This usually takes longer than the pilot timescales can offer. The combination of new teams, new work and very challenging situations is too overwhelming for the majority of short-term pilot programmes and need to be undertaken at a second stage of development, when teams and ways of successfully working together are already established.
- In planning the content of programmes and units of work, teams need to be aware of the difference between 'activities' and 'learning opportunities'.

Again, experienced school and centre-based staff will be helpful in this. It is important to establish what can be achieved by working together, which adds value and distinctiveness to working separately, since joint programmes are often complex and demanding.

### **Staffing and professional development**

9. The Pathfinder programmes have shown that many of the practitioners involved are versatile musicians who can apply their expertise in several different contexts. It is important not to stereotype colleagues according to the musical traditions in which they work, nor the organisation that employs them.

10. The evaluation has found, for example, music service tutors employed as woodwind specialists who are also accomplished keyboard and guitar players. Experienced rock guitarists have also been accomplished vocalists. Experienced gospel singers are familiar with incorporating contemporary popular music repertoire.

11. Teaching styles also need to avoid stereotypes. There are as many informal teaching styles among classically trained musicians as there are didactic styles among experienced rock and jazz musicians. What matters is that the pedagogy should be appropriate to the work in hand. It is probably better to teach directly the chord of G to a young guitarist who wants to use it, rather than let them explore the instrument until they find it. Exploring the instrument belongs to areas of improvising, inventing and being creative with available sound sources – which are equally important – but pedagogy needs to match the needs of young people, as well as their music choices and aspirations.

### **Funding and sustainability**

12. The government funding for pilot programmes has been welcomed, as this encourages organisations and groups to take initiatives beyond the core work in hand. It allows, and expects, experiment and inventiveness, risk taking and a learning culture. These are all the hallmarks of the best aspects of the Pathfinder programmes. Those strands that are most successful become sustainable, because funding is found from other sources – particularly from schools and centres ‘buying back’ further programmes once they have seen the success of the new initiatives. The more complex programmes, though, working across three or more organisations, find it difficult to reach this level of ‘maturity’ in two years. However, there are a range of organisations that can be approached for funding, after initial government streams have been used. This has created strong music leadership, which has both vision in promoting experimental work, but also has the tenacity to ensure that continuity of funding is found.

## **Review and evaluation**

13. There are several forms of internal review and external evaluation that have covered the Pathfinder programmes. These have made a useful 'map' of progress, using a range of different approaches to review and evaluation. The variations in criteria and measures of quality are the main inconsistencies in trying to achieve coherence between internal and external review; as well as in trying to produce national overviews against policies and statutory requirements.

## **Calibration with other national programmes**

14. Several initiatives and policy developments meet where young people are – in schools and centres – and therefore tend to converge on the same providers at the same time. While most of the initiatives and policy developments are welcome, it is important that some method of calibration is achieved, before the resulting provision becomes too disparate and dispersed. Again, nationally agreed aims, whatever the nature and content of the programmes, could be the leading mechanisms to achieve coherence. This would mean that all the separately funded programmes from Early Years to Key Stage 4 would be calibrated into an overall set of expectations at stages and ages – whoever and wherever they are provided.

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