

Intergenerational Learning – Children Singing Along with Older People – Possibilities and Complications in a Project Context

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Abstract

Culture for Older People is a project funded by Swedish Arts Council. The aim of the project, managed by heads of department's for the preschool, the older care and the culture school, is increased well-being for older people. In this article one of the activities, **Children Singing Along with Older People** is scrutinised in an ongoing evaluation. In this subproject, headed by expert music teachers together with preschool teachers and care home staff, five-year old preschoolers visit care homes for singing along with the residents. The project is poly-motivated; besides improved well-being for older people, also enhanced learning for the children and interprofessional learning for staff. The concept **musicking**, which highlights music as an activity creating community and relations between participators, is used for discussing the meetings between the children and older people. Results are based on observations of activities and interviews with staff. Music is an activity that can be used for enhanced well-being and creating relations as well as learning. Nonetheless there are issues in the project that need to be discussed e. g. children's participation and role, the older's activity or desire for passivity and support for learning among the staff as well among children and older.

Keywords: children, older people, intergenerational, interprofessional, musicking, learning, wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

In this article we explore how five-year old preschoolers and older people at care homes meet and sing together. The article is a result of an ongoing evaluation [1], of the project **Culture for Older People**. The project was created when a municipality was granted funding for the years 2012–2015 from the Swedish Arts Council. Ongoing evaluation means that researchers work together with participants in an interactive process. Ongoing evaluation is used for understanding and learning from complex projects and has been called 'fifth generation evaluation' [1]. The project **Culture for Older People** is managed by the municipal departments of older care, preschool and culture and music in a medium-sized community. The overall target is to strengthen the quality of life for the older by giving them possibilities to take part in cultural activities. The project has a collaborative approach, where the local units are working together towards shared goals. **Culture for the Older People** consists of several subprojects: **Children and Older People Singing Together**, the **Culture Bus**, where older can get free transportation to various cultural activities, **Singalong**, **Music and Jazz Visits** and **Art and Dancing**. In the subprojects, care homes work together with preschools, music teachers, professional artists, dance instructors and volunteers. The activities have received

considerable attention not only locally but also nationally. The main project and the subprojects are backed by ‘sunshine stories’ told and retold to highlight and legitimatise both the project and the anticipated success. The aim of this article is to scrutinise the subproject Children and Older People Singing Together. The image of children and older together in intergenerational meetings seems to mobilise comprehensive positive responses. The studied subproject is perceived and legitimised as a win-win situation where children get a chance to meet older people and older people get visits from the children. Implicitly but not explicitly stated is that children and older people generally enjoy being together and sharing a Swedish musical treasure. A booklet produced for educational purposes by the project management (the heads of the preschool, the older care and the department of culture and music) presents testimonies about joy and happiness among older people, children and staff [2]. Intergenerational music making is supposed to provide entirely positive outcomes. Regardless of their different ages, older people are expected to enjoy performing children’s songs. It is emphasised that music has a healing power. The qualities of music are asserted as a way to reach emotions directly [2].

A three-year ongoing evaluation carried out in cooperation with the project management displays stories about joy and delight in meetings between children and older people. However, children’s participation was neither thoroughly discussed nor contested. No reflections were made about advantages and disadvantages of intergenerational meetings or the significance of music as a tool for health promotion. The children’s presence was primarily described in co-producing terms. The importance of improving older people’s well-being was accentuated. This raised questions about both the older people’s and the preschool children’s presence in the project. What are the benefits for the children and for the older people, respectively, of working intergenerationally? What can be achieved? What does interdepartmental collaboration with music activities mean to the staff involved? The two professional groups rarely work together – meetings between preschool and older care hardly ever occur. Following a brief presentation of the interactive research methods and material is a summary of the subproject Children and Older People Singing Together, as well as short reviews of research on music learning and cultural activities together with theoretical considerations. The resulting analysis concerns three aspects: an older perspective, a child perspective and a working life perspective.

METHODS

Ongoing evaluation

In spring 2012, researchers from University West, Sweden were invited to take part in the municipal project Culture for the Older People. The method used for this interactive research, an ongoing evaluation [1], comprised involvement in the process in form of participation in project meetings where planning and follow-up were carried out. To monitor the progress and gain knowledge about how the different subprojects were designed and implemented, ethnographic methods such as interviews and observations were used. The project management and representatives from the three departments were interviewed and music meetings were observed. The management contributed with their local knowledge. The researchers assisted the process by adding methodological support and theoretical knowledge of work integrated learning . In spring 2015, undergraduate students contributed with additional data through twenty interviews with staff and observations of preschool children singing together with older people on four occasions. The material so far into the project consists of forty interviews, observational notes from five music meetings, a documentary film and different sorts of written material . The analysis is based on the whole of this material. A bachelor thesis, not included here, contains interviews with the children.

Preschool children visit care homes

In the project Children and Older People Singing Together, 20 five-year old preschool children visit a group of about 20 persons living in a care home. Permission from parents is obtained. The visits take place on ten occasions per semester. Two music teachers, two preschool teachers and some of the care staff participate in the music meetings, each of which last about an hour. The intent is to let the same group of children and older persons meet to get to know each other and sing together. Between these meetings, the music teachers visit the children at their preschool for music lessons.

The project commenced in 2012 and, to date, the children's groups have visited several care homes. When talking about the project, the head of the preschool department is keen to point out the strong link to the national preschool curriculum, which emphasises the importance of practising music and children's ability to arouse emotions and meet other people. These themes recur in many interviews. The children are said to acquire a Swedish song treasure that is at risk of extinction if not used. The intergenerational singing is legitimised as an important means to fulfil the requirements laid down in the national preschool curriculum as the project can develop understandings of society, history and older people's conditions. The intergenerational meetings are seen to provide insight into societal conditions and facilitate intercultural perspectives where different cultures and ages are incorporated. The head of the preschool department emphasises ongoing work to develop preschool learning in accordance with the curriculum. The revised version of the Swedish preschool curriculum stresses the learning aspect, in terms of both increased achievement in mathematics and science, as well as intercultural approaches [3]. Children shall be given possibilities to develop their ability to create, communicate and convey experiences using e.g. singing, music, rhythm and dance, expressions that are both content and method. Furthermore, the preschool experience shall enhance children's empathy and compassion. Another assignment is to create a foundation for approaching other human beings with respect and esteem, regardless of background.

Older care is regulated by national laws and goals rather than a curriculum. The national goals in relation to older people and older care are to create conditions for equity, participation and security and encourage this population to be able to live a good life after working life ends. The Social Services Act [4] states that care for the older shall be aimed at supporting possibilities to live a life characterised by dignity and well-being. Local social welfare committees shall ensure that older people are able to live independently in a safe environment and have an active and meaningful existence in community with others. In addition, the Public Health Agency of Sweden states its support for promoting the health of older people. Thus, there are differences between the preschool curriculum, which stresses learning, and the legal provisions for older care, which underline a good life and do not express anything about music, being creative, skill development or life-long learning. As is clear this project is complex and poly-motivated [5]. The preschool curriculum calls for development and learning. The Social Service Act [4] and Public Health Policy make demands for the life quality and health of older people. The Swedish Arts Council has funded this project in order to achieve the objectives concerning health, well-being and quality of life for older people through participation in cultural activities. The project focuses on the intergenerational and interprofessional meetings between different municipal departments. For the theoretical understanding of these meetings, music as communication and action, i.e. 'musicking' [6,7], as well as gerontological perspectives are used [8]. For an ongoing evaluation of the possibilities to develop older care and poly-motivated local functions, we will discuss interprofessional learning at work following Guile [5].

Muse-ical education and ‘musicking’

Making music together and sharing musical experiences can be understood as a kind of dialogue creating meaning and learning, a process of developing community through learning from each other [9]. Two approaches in work with music and small children can be identified: a traditional approach where children are taught how to sing songs and an investigating approach where children are encouraged to explore and discover music [9]. Children’s musical development is influenced by both family and the preschool, but also to a great extent and increasingly by music around them, e.g. through media. New technology brings additional experiences. Children spontaneously produce sounds and invent melodies, lyrics, rhythms and singing games. Thus, Young [9] claims there are good opportunities for joint development of music activities in preschool in order to utilise and increase children’s experiences of music.

Musical activities in preschool can be perceived as challenging and difficult to handle [7]. Preschool teachers generally lack extensive training in working with music. Similarly, expert teachers in music usually lack extensive training in working with small children. Thus preschool teachers may not feel comfortable leading musical activities. Furthermore, Ehrlin and Wallerstedt [10] points to alternative ways of using music in preschool, either as a method for developing e.g. language or intercultural understandings or as content for learning in itself. Music can be given a place in the daily work or can be something scheduled on special occasions. Grahn [11] suggests the concepts ‘muse-ical learning’ and ‘muse-ical play’ to emphasise the linking of musical activities, play and learning. Muse-ical learning means a linguistic playfulness on an oral basis together with an aesthetic and sensory experience. Muse-ical play is created in an atmosphere of trust, confidence and security. The acoustic design of the room and the ability to see and listen to each other are crucial factors for the participants. Music can provide joy and contact at a deeper level. Music could be an everyday activity where children are the subjects and music is both the content and the means for learning. Muse-ical pedagogy refers to preschool teachers’ experience of play as a way of learning. Thus, all preschool teachers could use muse-ical learning, which makes music an everyday activity and not a topic exclusively reserved for music experts. The concept of muse-ical is distinguished from knowledge-oriented music learning. A knowledge-oriented attitude can be about learning songs and providing children with a song treasure, while a muse-ical attitude is not a method but a way of creating community and a sense of belonging. It includes play, experience and experimentation in order to achieve a holistic approach to learning [11].

Muse-ical education has been launched in the Nordic countries by several researchers yet the concept remains uncommon. The term muse-ical is connected with communication, playing, and singing, as well as with verbal and physical learning with all senses. Wassrin [7] emphasises that music is an activity and proposes the verb ‘musicking’, which links the activity to participation. According to Small [6], musicking is important both for children and as a lifelong activity:

To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance. That means not only to perform but also to listen, to provide material for performance /... composing/, to prepare for a performance /...practicing or rehearsing/, or to take part in any activity that can affect the nature of that style of human encounter which is a musical performance [6, p 12].

Small [6] argues that music is not a thing but rather an activity. Those who come together in this activity are participating in musicking. To understand what happens, gestures, positions in the room, looks and facial expressions must be noticed. Such interactions contribute to

achieving intersubjectivity between the participants. Wassrin [7] stresses recognising the options offering varied musicking repertoires providing relational learning.

Music and health

Swedish social policy supports older people in maintaining social networks and a meaningful life. Special attention is given to so-called frail older, i.e. older who have limited opportunities to maintain their lifestyle due to age, illness or disability. In recent years, government actors such as the National Board of Health, the Public Health Agency and the Swedish Arts Council have taken initiatives to improve older's health and social care by supporting their participation in cultural activities. The aims of the initiatives are equal health, empowerment and participation in society as well as equal opportunities to take part in cultural activities. The national goals and visions are applied in the local project Culture for Older People. Older people shall be given opportunities to take part in cultural activities, perceive themselves as involved and experience well-being.

Culture is considered a general health factor. Participation in cultural activities can promote health [12-15] and the positive outcomes can be explained by opportunities for experiences, insight and participation. Positive outcomes have been found over a long time in artistic therapies and cultural activities used in health care [16]. Several research projects have focused on the importance of sensory stimulation through music, dance, art and literature or outdoor activities in combination with traditional care of older people. The experience of flow, or of just having fun, deflects negative thoughts and reduces pain [17]. The experience of flow means to forget about yourself and the time passing, and brings feelings of well-being. Experiencing and practising art and culture affect people's mood and perception of the outside world. May [18] describes creative activities as an opportunity for individuals to experience freedom in relation to reality and at the same time explore possibilities of how to tackle difficult experiences.

Music as therapy

Art, dance and music therapy were formally organised in the twentieth century and, although it has been used in health care for a long time the literature shows few strictly controlled research studies. Music treatments have evolved in the last 20 years. They are for example used for brain injuries – music can reach the still healthy sections of an individual's brain if it is precisely the type of music that the individual is accustomed to [12]. Music therapy is about stimulating the healthier part of a person, ignoring obstacles, attracting awareness and response, showing respect and closeness as well as improving quality of life [19]. This approach affirms an older person's right to choose what music to listen to; care staff's choices are irrelevant. Receptive music therapy is about listening. Expressive music therapy involves creating and practising music. Ruud [20] describes music therapy as a way to bring people into a community. Music therapy can affect the body and increase body movements, evoke memories and emotions and provide relief from stress. Societal music therapy is about networking, participation in social contexts and making contacts, i.e. a way to increase one's social capital [20]. Group music therapy can be a way to involve senior citizens in communities, which suggests a combination of music therapy for increased well-being and music as a civil right [20].

Observations/fieldwork

To understand the conditions of the subproject Children and Older People Singing Together, five observations of when older and preschool children meet and sing together were carried out. The following excerpt is from the first visit:

We arrived at the care home shortly before the children and found some comfortable chairs in a small lounge close to the main entrance. On the walls were paintings in various techniques, all with floral motifs. A table in the middle of the room was decorated with autumn and harvest illustrations: beautiful leaves, berries, juice in old-fashioned glass bottles and jam jars. None of the residents passed this place, but staff members and visitors walked by. Just in time for the singalong, we moved to the dining room, where the care staff had arranged for the activity. The dining room was large and some 20 chairs had been placed in a semi-circle where there was also space for wheelchairs and walking frames. On the floor in the middle was a big blanket for the children to sit on. Several residents were already in their chairs. Soon about 20 of them had gathered, supported by the staff. They seemed to be excited about what was about to happen.

The first music teacher, a man with a guitar, appeared. At a distance we could hear the children's arrival, but once the children had taken off their jackets and hung them in an adjoining closet, they cautiously stepped into the dining room and sat down on the floor. Two preschool teachers followed the children and they also sat down on the blanket. At exactly ten o'clock, the second music teacher, a woman, entered the circle and the singing session began.

The female music teacher started with a conversation about film and technology. The children were expected to be familiar with children's films and main characters. The children sat close together on the blanket facing both the residents and the music teachers, who led the activity. The preschool teachers held some of the children in their laps. The female music teacher introduced songs in a dialogue with the children. The children were active and gave spontaneous answers. The songs were well-known children songs, accompanied with movements. At the end of the session, some of the children became restless and the preschool teachers tried to calm them down.

The session was characterised by a mix of old and new songs. The older persons were repeatedly invited to participate in both the singing and the movements. Their engagement was mostly noticed when they were familiar with the lyrics. Some songs offered motor skills training and rhyming practice. Before the children left, they said goodbye to those they seemed to know best.

This observation represents a typical situation, as confirmed by later observations, interviews and narratives. During the first two years, the procedures for the visits were changed. The music teachers, however, remained the same, and after becoming more confident in their professional roles with the, to them, new groups, i.e. young children and older people, the approach has developed. Interviewed music teachers express that they would like to work together with the same group of older people and children over a long period of time and to have the children placed on chairs between the residents instead of on a blanket on the floor. The children also help the residents play on a jumper guitar familiar to the children. The residents can easily play the instrument when it is placed on their laps, and the children help them pluck the strings. These new elements seem to have facilitated more interaction and

communication between the participants, according to the interviewees. One of the music teachers describes the differences:

We introduced something called jumper guitars to play and when we were allowed to continue with the same group, the jumper guitars... the communication and interaction changed a lot (music teacher).

The care staff express that the improved interaction has led to a more confident atmosphere. At the end of the visit, the children usually offer the older some fruit. Eating together is indeed a social phenomenon that makes people come together:

But then I noticed that the children were really relaxed. I could see some residents and children sitting together and they talked to each other, they communicated. Someone put a banana sticker on their nose, and then the children also wanted to have one, so it has become more relaxed (care staff).

ANALYSIS

Benefits for older people

Older care is currently a hot topic in the public debate, with a particular focus on the needs for improvement of quality and efficiency. The design of future older care as well as the presumed needs of a growing population of older people rely heavily on beliefs about the social category 'old' and older people's terms, conditions and care. Norberg et al. [21] argue that society is permeated with ageism and that both younger and older people disapprove of old age. Successful aging is closely connected to societal attitudes to aging and older people. There is a need to find ways to improve the care of older people, in order to both reduce costs and increase the life satisfaction in this segment of the population. There is also a need for developing positive attitudes to work in the older care sector. The project Culture for Older People is based on ideas to create new work models that will yield positive outcomes for the care of older people. According to the application for funding submitted to the Swedish Arts Council, the main purpose of the project is to increase well-being among older people. As part of this scheme, the preschool children are mobilised as co-producers. The stated purpose of the subproject Children and Older People Singing Together is to contribute to older people's sense of dignity, self-esteem and joy. There is also an intention, although seldom expressed, to boost the ability of older individuals with various degrees of memory loss and dementia to speak and recall memories. Staff members have shared many accounts of how older people with memory loss and a limited ability to communicate verbally can suddenly start singing songs correctly. The stories told represent appreciation and joy experienced by the older people. These health and wellbeing outcomes can be explained by comprehensive research concerning health effects of music and social interactions [12-15].

Why are older people as a group supposed to like children's presence and children's songs? We interpret the origin of the subproject, based on children's presence as co-producers, as having been launched unproblematised and unreflected. The children were suggested to participate, and when the preschool management and the parents gave their consent, the subproject was established without further consideration. Old people are supposed to enjoy spending time with children, and children are supposed to enjoy meeting old people. Older with memory loss are supposed to remember things from their childhood and enjoy singing old children's songs. This implies that remembering is more important than learning new material. Musical activities and intergenerational singing are expected to contribute to increased well-being

among older people at the same time as children learn about intercultural conditions. The subproject is described by stories told and retold highlighting all the good things – expressions of joy and happiness observed by the staff among both the older and the children – and these stories become evidence of a fulfilled project goal.

Tornstam [8] argues that older people generally feel well and have good contact with friends and family and a rich social life. Nonetheless, older people's participation in projects tends to be experiments designed to promote 'good and normal' ageing. Projects often carry hidden agendas and particular norms and values whereby older people are expected to perform at a certain 'normal' activity level. Activity seems to be an ideal way of life, maybe due to an expected reduction in the need for treatments, i.e. cheaper overall care. Passiveness is not understood as a 'normal' condition. Tornstam [8], though, advocates a reverse paradigm, where independence and unproductiveness are present. He emphasises replacing activity with terms such as rest, relaxation and graceful indolence. Thus, the music sessions are, with or without preschool children, not an essential component of care provision. It is not known to us how the old people perceive vocal activities together with children. The care staff, preschool teachers and music teachers interpret the older's participation as appreciative. Yet, the older are offered a great range of activities, including bingo, pub visits, gymnastics, crosswords, visits to churches and exhibitions, i.e. a lot of activities that are aimed to stimulate. Still, the staff are keen to emphasise that older people, just like Tornstam [8] mentions, sometimes prefer doing nothing:

They want to be left alone just reading or thinking, and that you have to accept! (care staff).

The occasions where children and older people sing together are sometimes likened to a performance or a show. The stories told show that the older look forward to the children's visit. Even if not all of them take an active part in the singing, the care staff emphasise the importance of such meetings. However, they also bring up practical issues. The set time for the meetings is 10am, a stressful time in older care because of the breakfast routine. Most of them eat their meals rather slowly. The care staff would like greater influence over the planning of the events and some staff members suggest that more spontaneous visits are preferred. The children could visit more often but for a shorter time and maybe do something else than sing together with the older e.g. painting and talking or drinking coffee and juice, as children might do with grandmas and grandpas. So even if the project is looked at as something really desired, there are a lot of proposals for how to make it better. But with these proposals, music as communication would be dismissed and musicking as a learning activity not achieved.

Benefits for Children

All Swedish preschools must base their work on certain national aims, such as supporting and increasing children's ability to learn. The children's participation is legitimised according to the preschool curriculum, e.g. increasing young people's understanding of older people's conditions. An implicit objective could also be to make young people more willing to work in older care in the future. Children's participation is legitimised as conducive to the national aims for preschool education and as co-producers of well-being for the older persons. This means there is no entirely child perspective in this project. The parents have, as mentioned earlier, given their consent for the children to participate in the singing along with the older people, but the children are not questioned in any significant way. After all, older people's well-being is an overall target but anyway the interviews and observations indicate that children are enjoying the visits. Anyhow they have not chosen to participate and maybe they do not

understand the purpose, but the activity may still be acceptable if the children enjoy participating.

A traditional way to work with music with small children is to teach them to sing songs. An alternative approach is to let them discover and explore music [9]. Having older people and children meeting to sing together seems to be closer to the traditional view. The booklet discusses transferring a song treasure [2]. Thus, there is not much space for children to discover and explore music during the activities. The music teachers' conversation with the children is built on a traditional pattern – the teacher asks, the children answer and the teacher evaluates the answer. The activity can be interpreted as routine, as the children are sitting together in a circle and there is little intention to let them act spontaneously or creatively. It is not a music project originating from the children's wishes or desires. Instead, the children become co-producers, helping others to fulfil their intentions, and with the main task of visiting the care homes, which is described as synonymous with meeting another culture:

It is not about children, five years old, performing...the children should be looked at as a part of a whole ... maybe you could understand the older as one part, we (the project management) are also a part, and the children are another, and everyone's equally important. We are of course the leaders but if one part is missing the project will collapse. The idea is to integrate the children, and that has worked out well. It could have been like a performance has the children just sung their songs, but they did not ... It started like that, but we soon noticed the residents' increased interest in taking part in the singing. Some songs ended with elements of movement like: reach out your hand! Yes, those are the lyrics and then the children were supposed to stand up, if they dared to of course, because it was voluntary, and take someone's hand, a resident's. Some dared while others did not /.../ there are several songs in which residents can participate and the lyrics have the form of questions and answers, songs based on movements. The project is very important and we have understood that the preschool teachers, the music teachers and the care professionals are very satisfied. (Head of the preschool department)

The traditional approach used, during the first two years of the project, does not necessarily exclude the participants from discovering and exploring music. Although the content is not negotiated with the older or the children, the music events are actually kind of musicking [6] including children, older persons and staff from three municipal departments. One of the music teachers talk about the project as an exciting challenge, a completely new way to educate. The music teacher names the work model a result of trial and error, of testing different solutions in terms of e.g. finding appropriate songs and the setup of the room. The importance of the song treasure is generally referred to. The children's voices and the older songs seem to evoke memories among the older people. The children learn about older people's conditions today and in the past. These events support the discovery of new ways to understand the environment and develop creative skills. They also support the ability to use various forms of expressions. Yet, a need for caution is expressed as there is a lack of skills and knowledge among staff in older care and music teachers regarding how to work with preschool children. The preschool teachers on the other hand are able to sing with the children but are rarely musically trained or educated in intergenerational activities. If, then, the muse-ical perspective is chosen, the music as play can be emphasised [11].

Work and Organisational Development

It is up to the municipal management now to discuss how Culture for Older People can be implemented in a long-term perspective and to credibly show how the project yields both enhanced well-being for the older and increased quality of older care. The project Children Singing Together with Older People is legitimatised in a short-term perspective by learning and development for children in accordance with the preschool curriculum and increased well-being for older people in accordance with national goals for older care. To move from a project status to a model where preschool children continuously meet older in care homes is a challenge that may involve a revision of contemporary care models. After all the care staff are asking for greater influence over how to cooperate with preschools in their neighbourhood, and the preschool sector may need to change its focus to aesthetics and muse-ical education, a development corresponding to the preschool teachers' education [11].

The care staff is not accustomed to intersectoral cooperation. However they see benefits from children's visits and music activities that tend to stimulate their care recipients. Some preschool teachers like to sing with the children while others prefer the support of music teachers. The music teachers are not used to teaching preschool children, nor are they used to working with older people. For this project to be sustainable, there is a need to consider its poly-motivated character [5]. The managements of the three municipal departments legitimise the project from their own perspectives: preschool curriculum and children's development, older residents' well-being, and culture for older people. The project represents interagency action in a 'placeless organisation' [5, p 343] that is new to all actors. The music meetings occur in a place that is unknown to the children, to the preschool teachers and to the music teachers. To the older persons and the care staff, the place is well known but used in an unfamiliar way. Together, they are creating a new arena for communication and learning. Music meetings between children and older persons are not unusual. The uniqueness of this project is the overall context and the explicit ambitions to relate to the curriculum and the quality of older care. The care staff has suggested cooperation of a more everyday nature. The children could visit to just hang out with the residents. However, that would mean a loss of focus on the music activities. Wassrin [7] suggests a wider conception of music where play, communication and relationships are in focus. This includes the muse-ical pedagogy with a playful, exploratory and improvisational approach to learning, an approach that emphasises the preschool teachers' competence in play rather than in musical performance. Such an approach can be used as a basis for joint development among music school, preschool and older care, where two generations can meet in musicking, together with the professionally active generation between the children and the older persons.

The preschool is required to facilitate children's learning. More rarely is learning understood as relevant for the older. Older care lacks a curriculum and lifelong learning is routinely overlooked. Accepting learning at all ages calls for a shift in perspective, a shift that implies a necessity to discuss whether and, if so, what and when the older want to learn or whether they just want to be left alone. According to the staff, it happens that the older more often spontaneously start to sing in situations unrelated to the musical meetings, and the staff then join in the song:

This weekend, for example, I found myself whistling a tune and suddenly one of the ladies recognised my tune as a song we had sung earlier. She began to sing, and then I had to join in and that triggered other people sitting around a table. They also joined in as they knew the same song. And suddenly there was a singalong and some started to talk about different songs and what kind of music they like (care staff).

Interviewed professionals talked about inspiration and increased confidence in their ability to use singing in their everyday work:

We sing more often than we used to. And the singing is more spontaneous, because the woman, the one who always just closes her eyes and sways like this... she did that once ... and then all of a sudden she starts to sing Baa Baa Black Sheep. Just like that, she got every word right and this is an old woman ... when she talks it's often incomprehensible words. Yet, she sang Baa Baa Black Sheep clear and loud, alright! It's a bit strange, just by talking about the song when no one else was singing... but suddenly it just popped out. It's kind of cool.... (music teacher).

The latter quote shows the music teacher's astonishment when realising that the old lady suddenly masters the text of a children's song. In this case, there is a lack of knowledge about how people with dementia may respond to musical experiences. New understandings seem to be obtained in situations when the preschool and music teachers are prepared for what they may face and understand why older people react in a certain way. The interviewees who had been properly informed by older care staff about for example dementia and how persons with dementia can react seem to have a different understanding of how the music, the children and they themselves contribute to the older's well-being. Increased knowledge of professional conditions and of old people's conditions has led to partly adapted local conditions in older care. But such learning outcomes generally do not happen. Although there have been some opportunities for the different professional groups to learn about each other's work, several interviewees stress the need for more interprofessional interaction.

A question related to participation in various activities is whether one has been an active consumer of culture earlier in life or not. Active consumption of culture is expected to increase a person's interest in cultural activities. But if music is regarded as communication (instead of consumption), this indicates a position offering opportunities to acquire a new language of communication if and when for example former ways of communication fail. Then both listening to and practising music in various forms can lead to increased communication through meetings with and talking to children, as different ways of activating and training one's memory capacities.

DISCUSSION

In today's society, individuals and municipal departments are separated according to functionality and age. Children are referred to specific institutions and frail older to institutions adapted to their needs. Different institutions have their particular orientation. The consequences of such a separation lead to certain knowledge being owned exclusively by staff working in each respective sector. This studied subproject is truly poly-motivated [5], aiming at children's learning and development, older person's health and well-being as well as quality development and staff learning in a middle-sized community. It points to a willingness and desire in the community management to evolve and the different staff categories accept the challenge to contribute to a dissemination of knowledge among professionals and departments. The interview results present a number of solutions for a more sustainable development. The staff highlight their ability to cross boundaries and tear down walls between institutions because they see advantages in working together. Even the community management share this idea, yet there are considerable costs associated with some of the changes, and political decisions are required. The placeless organisation finds a common ground in the music meetings, musicking becomes a way of reciprocal communication.

Music in Older Care

There seems to be a big difference between learning and remembering when it comes to old people in older care. Remembering seems to be given priority, while learning is not discussed. Older persons with memory loss remembering old children's songs is considered a success, but there is to our knowledge no discussion supporting old people's learning of new things. Do old people like to stick to old things? Are they not supposed to learn? Research on music and learning is essentially about children's musicianship and children's learning. We would like to, referring to Tornstam [8], suggest the possibility to apply research on music-making and learning on the welfare of older people. With the support of Ruud [20], music and joint singing may provide a bridge between generations. It may also contribute to children's learning, as well as older people's increased memory capacities, well-being and lifelong learning. Such interaction might also be interpreted as something creating contact between people, thus supporting participation in a social context. It could also be interpreted as a type of civil right action for senior citizens [22]. But what also needs to be discussed is the right of older people to be free to choose whether to be active or inactive, i.e. to question accepted norms of what an older person 'should' do. We can, though, find activity to be an excellent way to combat ageism if knowledge of terms and conditions are discussed, reflected and collectively shared.

Music in Preschool

The preschool is regulated by a national curriculum that establishes the children's right to learn, develop and express themselves. In the project, even professional groups are expected to learn methods from each other, methods that have proved to be successful in the subprojects. Our results show how older care staff try to maintain the positive outcome by arranging singing events or 'dancing sessions' using scarves. They have also discussed inviting nearby preschools. Such examples show that there is a commitment among staff for further work with music and cooperation with preschools. However, at present, there is no intention of having the professionals from the different municipal departments meet and share experiences. There is now an ongoing discussion in the municipality about taking advantage of the knowledge generated by the project and launching an interactive education across department boundaries. Small [6] advocates musicking as a way to involve all participants in a musical community. In this project, that could mean to regard children and older persons as well as the different staff categories as communicating partners making different kinds of actions and experiences and thus all of them are learning. The preschool staff stress the curriculum and the care staff stress the older people's well-being. Those, with an overview, are the music teachers. They express their learning in terms of changes they have made: they have changed the settings, i.e. the placement of chairs and how children and the older care residents are placed. They have also added new instruments. Further, they have changed how they support the dialogue and the interaction. Altogether, this can be understood as an approach for increased interaction, a discovered learning for participants and for the staff.

CONCLUSIONS

Our conclusions emerge as a series of issues to discuss – what kinds of norms and values decide what is right or wrong, what is desirable or not, who is supposed to learn and teach and who is supposed to be an actor? There are ethical considerations to make, is it 'normal' and 'natural' to sing old children's songs regardless of age? What does it mean to use trial-and-error methods in preschools or older care? Which types of competence and knowledge are necessary to contribute to a well-functioning and high quality standard of care? Even if the main project as well as the subprojects are successful, the norms and values making this success possible need to be discussed. Otherwise there is no foundation for sustainability. These questions highlight the poly-motivated character of the project. It is justified both by the

children's learning and the well-being of older people. Is it possible to combine these goals in the same project?

Furthermore, a project is a temporary phenomenon – developing preschool and older care is an ongoing challenge. The staff who participated in the project have shown a great commitment and desire to contribute. Very few of them have been assigned time beyond their normal working hours to participate in the project. To make the project an everyday activity, the involved staff must be given opportunities and time to work together to develop sustainable practices. Otherwise there is a risk that the activities cease or deteriorate in quality. We suggest an ongoing discussion about the older people's and children's requests so that each group does not become a tool in an 'adult decision'. Frail older people and preschoolers are weak groups with little ability to speak for themselves, and their participation in projects must be based on voluntarism, science and support. Some essential issues to be discussed are that the activity must be based on both science and proven experience and voluntary participation ensured. The poly-motivated base for the project is enabling and encouraging staff to meet, to exchange experiences and to discuss and plan further intergenerational development. It presupposes the staff are given opportunities for both interprofessional learning to be familiar with each other's work and ongoing intergenerational meetings. Musicking could be a useful way of working together.

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