

Sigiya Ngengoma!

Significance of participation in
the Field Band Foundation of South Africa



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Ngiyabonga

Writing a master thesis has been a rewarding both professionally and personally. It has been an incomparable journey that right from the beginning to the end has been full of challenges, moments of insight and periods of uncertainty. Combining almost a full-time job with writing a master thesis has challenging at times, especially in the final stages of the process.

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Table of contents

Ngiyabonga.....	i
Table of contents	iii
1.0 Introduction.....	1
Research focus.....	3
Context.....	3
Clarifying terms.....	5
Music and musicking.....	5
Participation	6
Health promotion	6
Community music.....	7
Overview of the thesis.....	7
2.0 Methodological considerations.....	8
Qualitative research interview.....	8
Hermeneutics and phenomenology.....	9
Subjective positioning in the research process.....	10
Research plan.....	11
Admission.....	11
Pilot.....	11
Selection of research participants	12
Conducting the interviews.....	12
Challenges and experiences from the field: some ethical considerations	14
Elaborating the data material.....	15
Transcribing data.....	15
Analyzing and interpreting data	16
3.0 Theoretical orientation	18
Ecological perspective.....	19
Social learning theory	19
The band as a community of musical practice	20
Identity	21
Health Promotion	22
Community music in South Africa.....	25

4.0 Significance of participation in the band	26
Social perspectives.....	26
Social relations.....	27
Building social relations through musicking.....	27
Belonging	28
Reframing social rules	31
Peripherality or marginality	33
Performing respect	35
Cultural diversity	36
Gender	38
Cultural identity	41
Musicking as self-care.....	44
Music and feelings	45
Enhance feelings	46
Regulate feelings	47
Musicking as support.....	48
Hopes and dreams.....	49
5.0 Summing up.....	52
Critique and recommendations for future research.....	54
Epilogue.....	56
References.....	57
Articles and books.....	57
Internet references.....	60
Personal communication.....	60

1.0 Introduction



Sigiya Ngegoma! is a phrase in the South African language Zulu, meaning ‘we step with the beat, we dance to the song’.¹ In this thesis the phrase is used to describe the South African music and life skills organisation the Field Band Foundation, where I explore the significance of participation.

The onset of this thesis started in 2006 when I moved to South Africa to work as a music teacher in the Field Band Foundation, an organisation which runs after school projects in socially and economically challenged areas around South Africa. When I got an opportunity to participate in Bands Crossing Borders², an FK³ funded exchange program between the Norwegian Band Federation and the Field Band Foundation, I welcomed the opportunity to live in South Africa working and learning more about South African music and cultures. Throughout a period of twenty months I was fortunate to have the opportunity to share music and cultural knowledge with my students from the Field Band Foundation. I gained knowledge about South African cultures and music, which I could never have read my way into.

The Field Band Foundation is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and was established in 1997 to give young South Africans from economically and socially challenged backgrounds, opportunities to learn life skills and develop themselves through music and dance. Through a

¹ English translation by Xolani Qoma. (Personal communication)

² Bands Crossing Borders; a FK program with the Norwegian Band Federation as primary partner and the Field Band Foundation in South Africa as secondary partner.

³ FK is part of the Norwegian Foreign Aid and arranges reciprocal exchanges of personnel between organisations in Norway and developing countries. The objective of FK is to contribute to lasting improvements in economic, social and political conditions in the world (Fredskorpset [URL]).

positive leisure activity in music and a life skills program the Field Band Foundation aims to address the issues of social difficulty experienced by the participating communities. The Field Band Foundation has identified its role as: *“To create opportunities for the development of life skills in the youth through the medium of music and dance”* (the Field Band Foundation [URL]). This mission statement evoked my interest, as I found it to be closely related to music and health promotion. This is a field where I, as a music therapist, have a professional competence.

Through an impact study (2006), one of the findings was that not everyone recognizes that the Field Band Foundation is a life skills project that can create opportunities beyond the field of music and movement. For some the role of the organisation was merely seen as a ‘stepping stone’ to becoming a better musician. This study resulted in a broader focus on the life skills program, sometimes having the result that children spent a lot of time at the rehearsals talking about topics such as ‘what is respect?’ and ‘what is team-building?’. Observing these rehearsals frustrated me for two reasons. Firstly, the children were bored and wanted to play music, and secondly, I found that the teachers would probably be more successful in teaching both respect and teambuilding through the musical activity. During my stay in South Africa I often thought about the need for more knowledge about how music and participation in a music group can be health promoting, as I had a feeling that life skills (health promotion) and music was seen as two separate activities.

The starting point of the current research project was an interest in investigating how the youth in the Field Band Foundation can gain life skills⁴ through the musical activity in a band. Throughout the process of working with the current project, my focus has slightly changed and I have ended up with the following research focus.

⁴ Life skills refer to a large group of psycho-social and interpersonal skills, which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them lead a healthy and productive life. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions and actions toward others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health (Unicef [URL]).

Research focus

This exploratory study is about community music as part of health promotion in everyday life. Its aim is to investigate how participation in a band can be of significance for South African youth from socially and economically challenged backgrounds. The research question is: **“What aspects seem to be of significance to the youth in the Field Band Foundation when participating in the band?”**

The Field Band Foundation assemblage presents several constraints, as the scope of this project does not allow me to enter every aspect with the same degree of detail. I have chosen to maintain a strong focus on the subjective stories of the musicians, as I believe the participant perspective should be emphasized. The amount of information I got during the fieldwork in 2009 was significant, and left me with no option but to limit myself to no more than two main fields of inquiry, namely *social perspectives* and *musicking as self-care*. It is my aim to discuss these two foci in a way that sets the stage for discussions that range into more general issues about music and health promotion. Generally, playing in a band involves human interaction. When discussing how participation in a band can be health promoting for the musicians, I choose to keep the focus on the human interaction, which happens in or as a result of the activity of music.

Certain aspects limit the value of this study. As indicated earlier I have chosen to focus on the subjective stories of the musicians. Hence, this study cannot be used to draw generalized conclusions about health promoting through participation in a band. This thesis does not aim to evaluate the efficiency of the Field Band Foundation, neither does it focus on educational attitudes, such as curriculum or choice of repertoire.

Context⁵

As previously mentioned this study has been conducted within the Field Band Foundation, a music and life skills organisation working in socially and economically challenged areas in South Africa. I find it necessary to provide a short contextualisation of South Africa and the Field Band Foundation.

⁵ All information about South Africa is gathered from: About South Africa: country guide, overview, information (About South Africa [URL]).

South Africa is a nation of diversity, with more than 47 million inhabitants and a variety of cultures, languages and religious beliefs. The fact that there are eleven official languages and many unofficial ones besides, gives an idea of the complexity. Africans in the majority make up more than 38 million of the total population. The white population⁶ is estimated at 4.3-million, the coloured⁷ population at 4.2 million and the Indian/Asian population at 1.2-million. While almost 80% of South Africa's population is black African⁸, this category is neither culturally nor linguistically homogenous. South Africa is called the Rainbow Nation because of the many cultures living side by side. Segregation has for hundreds of years been a part of the South African history. The colonial history is long and complicated, together with the more recent history of apartheid. South Africa is a changing society where traditional and modern values are negotiated in everyday life. The country has long history of cultural conflicts and traditional South African cultures are male dominated. Post-colonial South Africa is still a quite segregated society, with many cultural conflicts. Women who strive to be respected as equal to men challenge traditional beliefs.

The Field Band Foundation is a multi-cultural organisation, with members from almost all the different cultural groups. The organisation is situated in townships⁹ and rural areas in various regions in South Africa. Presently there are 17 FBF regions, situated all over the country, with a total of more than 4000 members. Each band has up to 125 members in the ages 7-21. Each region has a staff of five teachers¹⁰, who are mostly recruited from within the bands. The

⁶ South Africa's white population descends largely from the colonial immigrants of the late 17th, 18th and 19th centuries - Dutch, German, French Huguenot and British. Linguistically it is divided into Afrikaans- and English-speaking groups (About South Africa [URL]).

⁷ The label "coloured" is a contentious one, but still used for people of mixed race descended from slaves brought in from East and central Africa, the indigenous Khoisan who lived in the Cape at the time, indigenous Africans and whites. The majority speak Afrikaans (About South Africa [URL]).

⁸ Africans include the Nguni people, comprising the Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi; the Sotho- Tswana people, comprising the Southern, Northern and Western Sotho (Tswana); the Tsonga; and the Venda (About South Africa [URL]).

⁹ The townships are settlements established during the apartheid to keep non-whites from the city centre. Connotations to townships are traditionally negative; confining violence, crime and poor living conditions. Post-apartheid connotations are more varied, as the township also is a place for cultural activity and creativity.

¹⁰ In Field Band Foundation teachers are referred to as *tutors*. In this thesis I will call them teachers, because in my opinion that term reflects better what they do.

teachers are between the age of 17 and 30 and most of them have no formal education as music teachers.

61.1% of the members' parents are unemployed. 67.2% live with single parents, grandparents, guardians or family and 1.8% live in child headed households. Poverty, crime, drugs, alcohol and negative role models are factors which most of the research participants refer to as challenges within their communities. Still, there are many differences in community factors. The aim of the Field Band Foundation is to work with youth development through music and dance outside of the formal education sector. They want to contribute to moving the country forward decisively towards the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment, enhancing the process of social cohesion, moral regeneration and opening the doors of culture and education to all (the Field Band Foundation [URL]). The field band concept is built on the global youth activity known otherwise as show bands, consisting of brass, marimba and steel drums, marching percussion and dancers. This specific discipline was chosen because of the long historic presence of brass music in South African communities.

Clarifying terms

The following presents a brief explanation of the important terms Music and Musicking, Participation, Health Promotion and Community music, as I understand them in the context of this dissertation.

Music and musicking

Music in this thesis will be seen as active music making in a band. Christopher Small (1998) introduces the term *musicking*. With this term he defined music as an activity, something people do together: "Music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do" (ibid. 1998:2). In this thesis the activity of music take form through participation in the band. When Small defines musicking, he covers all participation in a musical performance:

To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing (ibid. 1998:9).

Participation in the band is here limited to active involvement in the band, defined by membership and commitment, as active musicians or teachers.

Participation

Participation is a core concept of the present thesis. Etienne Wenger (1998) defines participation as “a process of taking part and also to the relations with others that reflect this process” (p.55). Music therapist Brynjulf Stige (2006) offers a more detailed definition of participation:

Participation is a process of communal experience and mutual recognition, where individuals collaborate in a socially and culturally organized structure (a community), create goods indigenous to this structure, develop relationships to the activities, artefacts, agents, arenas, and agendas involved, and negotiate on values they may reproduce and transform the community (p.134).

I have chosen to use the term participation to describe the social and musical experiences in term of membership and active involvement in a band. Participation in this sense is both personal and social. Music therapist Even Ruud (2010) refers to Stiges definition of participation saying that when it comes to understanding the value of music as health promoter, “participation” may be the missing link between culture and health in the complex discussion about the value of cultural activity.

Health promotion

World Health Organization (WHO) in Africa refers to health promotion as:

a comprehensive social and political process, which embraces actions directed at strengthening the skills of individuals, and changing social, environmental and economic conditions so as to influence their impact on public and individual health. (WHO [URL]).

According to WHO, improvements in physical, psychological, cultural, and economical environments together with positive modifications in the lifestyles of individuals can contribute significantly to well-being. In this sense health promotion is primarily a process, which involves the use of a series of strategies that seek to foster conditions that enable populations to be healthy and to make healthy choices. I choose to use the term “health promotion” as referring to health as a subjectively experienced phenomenon, which has to do with our experience of meaning and continuity in life. A broader understanding of health promotion is foundational to this thesis and will therefore be discussed further in the theory chapter.

Community music

Community music is a term used in various contexts and with different meanings. When suggesting that the work of the Field Band Foundation can be defined as community music, I will start with an English definition. Ansdell (2002) refers to Atkinsons definition:

Community Music is a participatory music-making activity in which the community musicians work with a given community to enable them to make music which is inspired by their own interests and ideas. Some Community Music activities seek to address the issues of social difficulty experienced by the participating communities, whilst others pursue music-making for its own sake. (Atkinson 2000, in Ansdell 2002:116)

In the way the Field Band Foundation has formulated their mission statement I will argue that the goals are both educational and health related. Even though the Field Band Foundation is an educational organisation, the growth of community music and community music therapy gives me reasons to discuss this project as a prototypical community music project (see Storsve et.al. 2010).

Overview of the thesis

The chapters following this introduction can briefly be described as follows:

Chapter 2 provides an overview and discussion of the *methodological considerations* that have formed the foundation of my research. This includes critical comments on the methodology and an evaluation of the project as well as a description of how the data was processed and the categories created.

Chapter 3 presents an overview of the *general theoretical orientation*. Aspects of health promotion and social learning theory are presented in order to give theoretical concepts as well as some thoughts on how these concepts has an influence on my research.

Chapter 4 gives a presentation of the *significance of participation in a band* with emphasis on the categories and sub-categories, which arose from the analyses of the data material. Quotes from the research participants are presented along with my interpretation of these and discussed related to relevant theory and research.

Chapter 5 provides a *summing up* where I will go through the main findings.

2.0 Methodological considerations

There are various definitions of research, which all suggest that research leads to the discovery of new things, the reaffirmation of what we already know, or changes in the way that we view what we already know (Wheeler 2005:4). Very roughly speaking, research can be divided into two main categories, qualitative and quantitative, each with their own origins, function and purpose.¹¹ Choice of method should always represent and reflect the phenomenon to be researched. According to Bruschia (2005) qualitative research is an inextricably interpersonal process, where human beings study other human beings and the process of being human. I decided that a qualitative, empirical and explorative approach would suit the present project, as my departure point was an interest in the participant perspective on their experiences from the band. After studying different qualitative methods I found that qualitative interview research would be a suitable approach to the project. Throughout the process of working with the current project the phenomenon of investigation has revealed itself, sometimes leading me in new and surprising directions. This confirms what Bruschia states, when saying that qualitative researchers “begin by focusing on the phenomenon, approaching it in an exploratory way, and then figuring out how the phenomenon will reveal itself in its own way or with the least amount of interference” (Bruschia 2005:129). Along the way my focus has changed somehow, as analysis of my data material and reading literature has revealed new and interesting approaches.

Qualitative research interview

The word interview stems from french *entrevue*, an inter-change of views between two individuals conversing about a theme of mutual interest. The research interview is based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional conversation with the purpose of producing knowledge (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). I find that semi-structured interview suited the project best. I feel this was a valid method for this study as I was interested in finding out how the musicians experienced their participation in the bands. Whilst I had my own idea of the topic, I wanted to increase my own knowledge about the topic and construct an understanding around it. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) use two contrasting metaphors of the interviewer to illustrate the different epistemological conceptions of interviewing. These are miner and traveller. In the miner metaphor the researcher is collecting knowledge, digging

¹¹ See Wheeler (2005:12) for further possible divisions of research.

nuggets of knowledge out of the subject's pure experiences. The miner tends to regard interviews as a site of data collection, separated from the later data analysis. The traveller, on the other hand, constructs knowledge as he/she goes along gaining insight into a new phenomenon. I find that the role of a traveller most suitable to describe my role as a researcher, as I am out seeking new knowledge. At the beginning of my journey I bring my pre-understanding and along the journey I gain new knowledge through the conversations with the research participants. This new knowledge has taken form both in validating my pre-understanding and changing how I view certain parts of the phenomenon of investigation.

Hermeneutics and phenomenology

Qualitative research has been influenced by the philosophies of hermeneutics and phenomenology. Choosing one of the two philosophies as an approach for the present study turned out to be more challenging than I expected. Hermeneutics aim to reveal some kind of meaning and significance in the data. Philosophically, adherents of this tradition believe that there is always an element of personal projection in knowledge acquisition. As we learn about the world, we simultaneously learn about the cognitive structures with which we organize the world (Aigen 1995:292). Interpretation is in this tradition never absolute, but relative. In a research project such as mine, this means that learning involves a constant process of analytic movement between the phenomenon of investigation, my pre-understanding and theory. This analytic movement is referred to as a hermeneutic circle or spiral. According to Stensæth (2008) "hermeneutics is initially a way of relating to interpretation and contextual proportions, such as time, place, pre-understanding, etc." (Stensæth 2008:42). I find contextual proportions to be of great significance in order to understand the phenomenon of investigation. My pre-understanding has guided me in all stages of the project, as well as my knowledge has developed along the way.

It has also been natural for me to find inspiration from phenomenology, as it allows the researcher to examine experience as it is lived (Forinash & Grocke 2005). The phenomenologist does not search for a truth, but rather for meaning and relevance. In my case this mostly means that I search for the experiences described by my research participants. Phenomenology is interested in the phenomenal world, which means that the researcher sets aside all preconceived experiences, as far as possible (Ruud 2005). As a researcher I have tried to sometimes set aside my own pre-understanding in an attempt to grasp the essence of the research participants' experiences. On the other hand I have found it difficult to hold in

abeyance all preconceptions about an experience while undergoing it. I do not find it possible to “bracket off” my own pre-understanding as phenomenology asserts and I also find my pre-understanding to be important in order to get a broader understanding of the phenomenon.

Hermeneutics and phenomenology are closely related. According to Stensæth (2008:45), they unify in two ways; they both confirm a basic perspective perceiving the physical world, and there is an attention directed towards the subjective consciousness in both. In relation to the topic of the present project I realized that elements from hermeneutics as well as from phenomenology could suit my exploration. Still, I find hermeneutics to have influenced my project the most. I will return to hermeneutics later in the chapter, when talking about the process of analyzing and interpreting the data material.

Subjective positioning in the research process

I am acutely aware of my subjective positioning in this thesis and how this has formed a vital part of my methodological perspectives. This research is affected by my pre-understanding, which is related to my background as a teacher in the Field Band Foundation, my music therapist training and my cultural background. “Every study is rooted in the values and beliefs of the researcher and how these are implicated in studying and making discoveries about the phenomenon” (Bruscia 2005:129). As a young Norwegian white woman, I am aware of how this may affect my approach to an understanding of the significance of participation in the band. Stige (2002a) has discussed the role of culture and say that it is not possible to step out of your own culture in an attempt to understand another. “A completely objective account of culture, with a precise balance of outsider and insider perspectives is not attainable” (Stige 2002a:16). In a postcolonial perspective, the focus on the right to talk on behalf of people from a different culture than my own is crucial in a project like this. I have throughout the work with this thesis discussed the project with friends and former students from the Field Band Foundation, in addition to the research participants. All the positive feedback I have received tells me that I am trusted, having enough amount of insight in the culture and the organisation to perform this project in an ethical manner. I feel that being provided with this trust is both a privilege and a huge responsibility.

My profession as a music therapist influences my position as a researcher. In the current project I do not have a role as a therapist, only as a researcher. Still, my competence from the field of music therapy has influenced me in all stages of the current project. During the two

years I worked as a music teacher in the Field Band Foundation, I used a lot of effort trying to help the Field Band Foundation improve the general understanding of the health-promoting aspects of the music activity. Throughout the different stages of the research project, I have read theory from the field of community music and community music therapy in order to relate the findings from this project to relevant theory and research.

Research plan

Admission

At an early stage of the research process I contacted Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) in order to obtain permission to gather and file the data for my research. NSD responded that as long as no names and places were mentioned in the interviews, they saw no need for me to apply for an approval. As all the research participants were above the age of 18 and as they chose to take part in the interview this could be seen as an informed consent. My next stage was to contact the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Field Band Foundation, Retha Cilliers, to get permission to conduct research in her organization. When granting the permission she suggested I contacted the regional coordinators in the regions I wanted to visit, to inform them about my visit. I informed the regional coordinators briefly and then contacted my research participants directly, to ensure their confidentiality.

Pilot

Since the role of a researcher was new to me, I decided to conduct a pilot interview. The pilot had a dual purpose, both serving as an opportunity to rehearse my role as a researcher and a way to see if my interview guide was good enough. I started making an interview guide with research questions and interview questions to help me in the interview situation. This guide included four topics consisting of four to six prepared questions. During the interview I found that I could delete several of my questions, as the research participant answered several of my questions before I had asked them. After conducting the pilot interview I decided to change my interview guide. I ended up with a guide, with a list of topics I wanted to cover, but without having all the questions prepared. This enabled me to follow the participants in the topics that were important to them, instead of what I thought would be important.

Selection of research participants

The selection of research participants was done strategically. All the research participants have been chosen amongst teachers and experienced members in the Field Band Foundation. They are above the age of 18 and have at least five years experience in the Field Band Foundation. Because of the cultural diversity within the organization and South Africa in general, it has been important for me to have a cultural diversity in the selection of research participants. I chose eight participants from five different regions, with various cultural backgrounds. In the analyses I will not distinguish between the different cultural background and regions, in order to ensure the confidentiality of the research participants. Distinguishing between different regions and cultures is not important for the interpretations of meaning. Another aspect, which I found important to take into consideration in selecting research participants, is gender. South African societies are male dominated, and this is also evident in the Field Band Foundation. I wanted an equal amount of male and female participants. In most of my data material gender has not turned out to be important in the interpretation of data, as the difference of meaning is not related to gender. When gender is important in understanding the different views, this will be specified in the presentation of the data material.

Conducting the interviews

The interviews were carried out during a four-week period in June and July 2009. Because of my limited time in South Africa I had some practical considerations to address. I only had time to visit a few regions and I had limited time in some of the regions. The fact that many people knew which regions I visited could cause me problems in securing the confidentiality of the research participants. I solved this challenge by planning my trip so that I could visit a National workshop where almost all the teachers from the organisation were gathered. Because of this I also managed to interview people from regions I did not visit.

Each interview was introduced by a briefing where I gave a short briefing about the project, the purpose of a conversation we were about to have and the purpose of the mini-disc recorder. Since most of the research participants had no former experience with research interviews, I had to make sure that they all understood their rights and the procedure. At the same time I did not want to give them information that could influence the conversation in the interview. Kvale & Brinkmann (2009:16) say that the knowledge produced depends on the social relationship of interviewer and interviewee, which rests on the interviewer's ability to

create a stage where the subject is free to talk about private events recorded for later public use. They further emphasize the delicate balance between the interviewer's concern for pursuing interesting knowledge and ethical respect for the integrity of the interview subject. Any interview is potentially laden with themes that can be for example, emotionally or politically delicate. Before the interview I had to reflect upon how I would handle these types of ethical challenges in the interview situation and in the later stages of the research process. My experiences from the interviews are that due to my prior knowledge of the research participants and the organisation I was able to receive information that I would not have received without these relations. I also believe that my knowledge about each research participant has enabled me to present the information I received in an ethical manner.

There are various ways of conducting semi-structured interviews. According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) the questions will differ depending on the purpose of the interview. "The more spontaneous the interview procedure, the more likely one is to obtain unprompted, lively, and unexpected answers from the interviewees" (ibid. 2009:131). Since I wanted to explore and receive new perspectives, I searched for the unexpected answers. I had a list of five topics, that I wanted to cover in the interviews and had some prepared questions, which I could use if needed. The topics were: 1) musical background, 2) thoughts about growing up in the community, 3) what the band means/ has meant to them, 4) the multi-cultural aspects in the bands, and 5) gender. The loose guide was chosen because I wanted to let the research participants lead the way and speak freely.

My opening question in all interviews was: 'Can you tell me about your musical background?' These types of questions work well as introductory questions since they often end up in rich descriptions (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). My experience was that by this opening question I managed to create an atmosphere where the research participants started talking freely and get comfortable with the situation. In most of the interviews I experienced that the participants often introduced topics on my list before I had introduced them. This enabled me to guarantee that I did not ask leading questions, and instead ask follow-up questions on topics that my participants had introduced. Throughout the eight interviews I had interesting conversations with each individual, listening to their experience about participation in the band. Each of them shared personal stories from their experiences in the band. The loose guide also enabled me to let the participants talk quite freely on topics that

were important to them and I ended up receiving answers to questions I would never thought of asking.

During the planning in advance of my field trip and during my stay in South Africa I learned that I had to adjust the research plans several times. When one interview was cancelled on short notice, my limited time did not allow me to reschedule the interview. Even though the selection of research participants was done strategically, I had a long list of people meeting my criteria and I was able to find another participant. Another challenge I had was finding suitable locations to conduct the interviews. Researchers are often advised to conduct their interviews in locations known to the research participants. I ended up conducting the interviews in classrooms, school halls and coffee shops/ restaurants. Even though this was far from the best surroundings for the interviews I do not think it affected the answers I received.

Challenges and experiences from the field: some ethical considerations

All research participants in this project are former students of mine. With some I have worked on a daily basis for longer periods of my earlier stay in South Africa, while others I have more peripheral relations to, as I only know them as participants at shorter workshops. Thus, the research participants see me primarily as one of the Norwegian teachers in the Field Band Foundation. This will have influenced their answers somewhat. According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009:34) “subjects may, more or less deliberately, express what they believe the interviewer authority wants to hear”. Due to such cultural aspects and the fact that I knew some of the informants from before, I had to take into consideration the extra risk of ending up with participants saying what they thought I wanted to hear. Reflections concerning cultural factors have been an important part of the project. In a foreign culture, an interviewer needs time to establish familiarity with the new culture and learn some of the many verbal and non-verbal factors that may cause interviewers in a foreign culture to go amiss (ibid. 2009:144). I found that my background from living and working in South Africa had provided me with enough familiarity with the cultures to perform my interviews in an ethical manner.

All the interviews were conducted in English, which is neither the mother tongue of the research participants nor mine. Ryen (2002) points out that language is an important factor in an interview situation, and this becomes an extra challenge when the interviewing takes place in a foreign language. I selected the participants with the criteria of their ability to express themselves in English, but I still had to be aware of the fact that there was a chance of

misunderstanding. Generally speaking I contacted people whom I believed would be able to give me the most valid information and who I expected were capable to communicate this adequately language wise. This means that I left out people where I knew the language barriers could cause problems in the interview situation.

There was a risk that when I asked former students to participate in my research project they would perhaps feel unable to refuse, because of our relationship. Another challenge was that the research participants could end up saying more than they intended, because they trusted me from another setting. Last but not least I could end up receiving “false” information, because they were trying to please me and give me the information they thought I wanted. On the other hand my pre-knowledge was an advantage in that they trusted me and believed that I would treat their interviews with proper respect, as they knew they could rely on me as a person.

Elaborating the data material

The process of transcribing, analyzing and interpreting the data material seldom proceed chronologically. I started transcribing the interviews immediately after I had conducted them whilst they were still fresh in memory. This means that I had already finished transcribing the first interviews by the time I conducted the last interviews. In this presentation I have for the purpose of a better structure, divided the stages into two headings; ‘Transcribing data’ and ‘Analyzing and interpreting data’, even though analyzing and interpretation started whilst I was conducting the interviews and while I was transcribing.

Transcribing data

To transcribe means to transform. Transcription is an interpretative process and the differences between oral speech and written language give rise to a series of practical and principal issues (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009:177). All interviews were transcribed word for word. I chose a basic way of transcribing, not paying attention to pauses or hesitation due to the fact that English is a second language for both my research participants and myself. It would be hard to interpret which hesitation was because of a sensitive topic and which hesitation was due to the lack of words. When quotes are used in the text, I have chosen to make the quotes easier to read by deleting fill-words as ‘ehm’ and ‘like’. I have also corrected some grammar, as everyday speech grammatical errors are not as evident as in written language. When quotes in the text are interrupted by (...), it marks a cut in the text or a pause

in the conversation. The meaning of a statement is not changed when only parts of a conversation are quoted. As the transcript is an abstraction where the tone of voice, intonation and breathing are lost, I have sometimes found it necessary to go back to the recordings at a later stage of the analyzing process to ensure the validity of my interpretations.

Analyzing and interpreting data

The intention behind analyzing is to find a way of structuring the data in such a way that underlying structures and meaning will become apparent to the researcher. When I started the process of organizing the data material I had eight transcribed interviews. I started by using meaning condensation, whereby I compressed long statements into briefer statements (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). During this process I left out parts of the interviews, which I found not to be helpful for my research. The meaning condensation gave me a thematic overview, which helped me when I started categorizing my data material further.¹² I have chosen to divide the empirical material into several categories and sub-categories in order to give an account of the information made available through fieldwork. The categories are derived from the informants' preoccupation with certain subjects that shed light on the significance of participation in the band. For me, developing categories has been an ad hoc process. The categories have changed several times throughout this process.

According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) analysis means to break up in small pieces or elements. I understand this as a way of managing the data rather than a reduction. I also understand this as a hermeneutic spiral where the whole is broken up into smaller parts, and an understanding of the parts leads to a broader understanding of the whole. As the "spiral" implies, this is a never-ending process, where we can move between the elements and the whole, continually increasing our understanding as we move from one to the other. I have

¹² Here is an example of how each quote was labelled and categorized.

1	2	3	4
E23	Not everybody is good at music and not everybody decides to do music as a way of making a living. Its the discipline of it, the brotherhood, the sense of belonging, the family. I am proud of who I am. I can do this. Its a drive. (...) Its not just the music. The music is just the tool, its the principals the music gives that they actually take along with them. (...)	discipline, brotherhood belonging in the band. Being proud.	Social perspective, Belonging, musicing

Explanation on coding and categorization of quotes: 1=Research participant E, quote number 23, 2=quote, 3=meaning condensation, 4=categorie(s).

chosen a hermeneutical approach to the interpretation of meaning. My theoretical background and the questions I chose to ask the research participants is the backdrop of my understanding of the significance of participation in the bands, and following it characterizes the way I have interpreted the findings.

A common objection against interview analysis is that different interpreters will find different meanings in the text. Hermeneutical and postmodern thoughts allow for a legitimate plurality of interpretation in the sense that a statement does not have only one correct and objective meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). The process of analyzing and presenting the data material consist of making choices. There are many possible ways of analyzing and interpreting this.

The findings and experiences from the field is informed by the theoretical framework, and vice versa. Throughout this thesis I intend to build a bridge between the experience I have made, the information I have received through the interviews, and the theoretical context or framework of the study. On the one hand I have a personal experience and stories to tell, including the stories of the informants, and on the other hand I will read these stories into a broader frame of theories.

3.0 Theoretical orientation



In this study the empirical material constitutes the core of the study; the research participants' voices encountering applicable theory. I ended up choosing sources which I find relevant for the project, relating to how I view myself as a researcher combined with my ideological orientation. The literature has been studied in order to get a "thick description" of the empirical material and bring it together with my own reflections.

Exploring and documenting the present project has been a process including several ethical dilemmas concerning my role as a white, western researcher in a foreign culture. One of the dilemmas concerns relating the findings to relevant theory and research. Most of the research I have found concerning music therapy and community music (including South African studies), is conducted by western researchers. This fact has made me aware of the need to be sensitive to the cultural context of the project throughout the process of reading theory. Stige (2002b) emphasises the importance of sensitivity to context and culture. There is always a risk of overgeneralization and I believe this risk is especially evident when working or conducting research in "foreign" cultures. Stige refers to how we, even today, sometimes see the use of the generic term "African" in relation to one or another quality or description, as if every African person or context is the same. In this thesis I acknowledge the multi-cultural context of the Field Band Foundation. Still, I have chosen not to distinguish between different cultural groups in the thesis, in order to keep the confidentiality of the research participants. Eventually, I believe I have been able to present the cultural diversity in an ethical manner.

Still, I have chosen to relate mainly to western theory. I believe my working experience from the cultural contexts of investigation have provided me with enough knowledge to choose theory in an ethical manner. I have chosen to see the bands from an ecological perspective and using a salutogenic approach to health in order to discuss how participation in a band can

be health promoting for the musicians. Here, significance of participation will be discussed with emphasis on social learning theory.

Ecological perspective

The band is a social arena, where youth who share the same interest in music meet. They learn as they interact with each other musically and socially. Because of this I find an ecological approach to the study of the significance of participation in the bands relevant. Sub-Saharan African cultures adhere to a philosophy called Ubuntu. The principles of Ubuntu emphasises how Africans relate to each other, based on the respect for the self and each other. Desmond Tutu explains the Ubuntu philosophy as:

It is about the essence of being human, it is part of the gift that Africa will give the world. It embraces hospitality, caring about others, being able to go the extra mile for the sake of others. We believe that a person is a person through another person, that my humanity is caught up, bound up, inextricably, with yours¹³ (Desmond Tutu -Archbishop Emeritus).

With the Ubuntu philosophy in mind, I move to Western theory of social learning, which I find is built on some of the same principles.

Social learning theory

A band is an arena for both musical and non-musical learning where the members in addition to musical development can develop social relations, values, identity and life skills. The learning-processes happening in a band is partly a result from teaching, but there are also many learning processes, which happen through the informal relations between the musicians. In this thesis I have chosen to focus on the social learning processes in the band, which happens regardless of teaching. Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) offer a perspective on learning where they see learning as a natural part of human nature, such as eating and sleeping. According to Wenger learning cannot be seen as a separate activity, which happens only in classrooms and other formal training arenas. Etienne Wenger (1998) regards learning as a process of social participation in the communities where we live our everyday life. His theories concerning social learning in *communities of practice*, builds on a theory of *situated learning*, which Wenger has developed together with Jean Lave (1991)

¹³ See <http://www.tutufoundationuk.org/ubuntu.html>

after a studying apprenticeship in West Africa. Lave and Wenger offers a theory, which has a holistic approach to learning. As an aspect of social practice, learning involves the whole person. This theory is not a replacement of other theories of learning, but it is a theory with its own set of assumptions and its own focus. I will now give an introduction to the core concepts of social learning theory in relation to participation in a band.

The band as a community of musical practice

Taking part in the field band is a collective learning process together with the other members. This leads to a shared enterprise, which Wenger (1998) refers to as a community of practice. In Wengers definition of a community of practice, participation refers...

...not just to local events of engagements in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities do (ibid p.4).

The term *community of practice* refers to the community that acts as a living curriculum for the apprentice. Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. They are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor: members of family, colleagues at work, pupils at school and in my case, a band. The practice of a community is dynamic and involves learning on the part of everyone. Community of practice refers to the process of learning through social relations and can be referred to as the sharing of understanding in a group. As the focus of this thesis is participation in a band I will suggest a term used by Ansdell (2010:42): *community of musical practice*. I find that this term includes the music into Wengers concept of community of practice.

Wenger argues that there are three main characteristics describing community of practice: (i) *mutual engagement*, (ii) *joint enterprise*, (iii) *shared repertoire*. In a community of musical practice, such as the Field Band Foundation, “mutual engagement” consists of the common interest in music, which connects the musicians in interpersonal relationships. Their “joint enterprise” is defined by the activity of music; rehearsals and performances. The “shared repertoire” is the gradual negotiations of the kinds of songs and routines that make up the musical programme for the band.

Wenger says that communities of practice exist because people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with each other. He refers to meaning as “a way of talking about our (changing) ability – individually and collectively – to experience our life and the world as meaningful” (Wenger 1998:5). I find it relevant to place meaning at the centre of the significance of participation in a band. The youth in the Field Band Foundation choose to participate in the band because they find it meaningful. Using this perspective we can say that participation in the band, mainly, is a process by which the musicians can experience their engagement with music as meaningful. Wenger (1998:53) argues that living is a constant process of negotiating meaning. Whether we are talking, thinking, acting, solving problems, playing music or daydreaming, we are concerned with meanings. Even though all routine activities involves negotiation of meaning, the intensity of the process is much higher when we engage in activities that we care about or that gives us a challenge, such as participation in a band. Negotiation of meaning involves the interaction of two constituent processes; participation and reification. Wenger refers to meaning as an experience through participation. According to Wenger participation refers to the process of taking part and also to the relations with others.

Identity

Identity focuses on the person from a social perspective. We often define our sense of identity in terms of nationality, ethnicity, social class, family, gender and historical heritage. Our individuality is part of our identity, but identity is also shaped by the social contexts we engage in. According to Wenger (1998) who we are lies in the way we live day to day, not just what we say or think about ourselves. Nor does identity consist solely of what others think and say about us. Identity is defined socially because it is produced as a lived experience of participation in specific communities. Identity is something we never finish developing, it is always in process. According to Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000:31-32) “there is a need to acknowledge that music can variably *both* construct new identities *and* reflect existing ones”. A band is only one of many arenas in which we develop our identity. The youth in the band will identify themselves as band members, but also as someone’s child, a pupil at school and a friend. “Each participant in a community of practice finds a unique place and gains a unique identity, which is both further integrated and further defined in the course of engagement in practice” (Wenger 1998:75-76). For some, participation in a band has a peripheral influence on their identity, whereas the band can be central to others.

The connection between music and identity has in the past years received an increasing amount of attention in music studies, (including music therapy). Ruud (1997, 1998, 2000) has conducted research concerning music and identity. He has collected many stories reflecting feelings of mastery and achievement. “Music provides opportunities to feel appreciated by the family and the larger community” (Ruud 1998:41). Ruud (2000) argues that involvement in music is a potential resource for obtaining a better quality of life. He uses the term “agency” when referring to aspects relating to achievement, feeling of mastery and competence. Playing in a band provides youth with an opportunity to learn how to play an instrument and perform for an audience. Through these activities Ruud argues that youth experience immediate reward, recognition, and praise which feed the self-esteem and empower the person. These positive experiences lay the ground for achievement and mastery, which according to Ruud are key concepts to the formation of identity. The experience of identity in the band is a way of being in the world.

Health Promotion

Playing in a band is a leisure activity for the members involved. They join the band because they want to play music and not because they want to gain or maintain good health. Still I choose to focus on the health promoting aspects of participation in a band. I believe that for youth growing up in social and economically challenged areas in South Africa participation in a band can be health promoting, even without this being a focus for the musicians. I also find that health promotion can be seen in relation to the life skills program of the Field Band Foundation.

As a theoretical foundation for viewing the band as a health promoting activity I will turn to Israeli medical sociologist Aaron Antonovsky (1987) who is the founder of what he calls “salutogenic research”. He finds that a persons’ health can be described along a continuum, depending on how well he or she is coping with or resisting health threats. He presents three main components; meaningfulness, predictability and conceivability. This is, when we feel life to be meaningful, predictable and manageable (conceivable), we feel coherence and continuity in life. According to Antonovsky this sense of coherence seems to favor resistance to disease. In his search for factors, which can explain why we stay healthy, he finds it probable that our resistance resources determine how we deal with sickness and disease. The common denominator for the resistance resources and the reason why they promote health is

that they make it possible to find meaning in stress factors. Through positive experiences of stress management over time, a strong sense of coherence is created. “Meaningful” is the component, which Antonovsky refers to as most important. In this thesis meaningfulness will be discussed in more depth than the other two factors. Ruud refers to salutogenic thinking as the study of the factors, which may promote the healthy development of a child, despite adverse conditions like poverty, lack of schooling or parental support and so on (Ruud 2010:96). All the conditions mentioned by Ruud is evident in the data material from the present study, in addition to community factors such as high crime rate, alcoholism, drug abuse and high rate of hiv and aids.

From an ecological perspective on health promotion the primary focus is within and between various layers of the socio-cultural community and/or physical environment (Bruscia 1998). Stige (2002a) criticizes Antonovsky’s conception of health as too concerned with the autonomous individual and not taking sufficiently into consideration the dialectics between the individual and collective levels of human existence. He therefore finds this orientation problematic in a culture-centered perspective if it is linked up to a conception of the self-sufficient individual rather than focusing upon human coexistence. I find that by combining Antonovsky’s salutogenic orientation with social learning theory, I will avoid an orientation that is too concerned with the individual.

A challenge in this presentation is that my understanding of health might be different from how South Africans understand the same term and there might also be different understandings between various South African cultures and between traditional and modern perspectives. According to Nzewi (2002) traditional Africa recognizes that “when the environment is sick, diseases become prevalent; and when such diseased material or spiritual environment is rehabilitated, human health becomes secure”. I find it necessary to keep in mind that some of the research participants and certainly many of the members in the Field Band Foundation believes in the spiritual healing powers of music. When studying participation in a music project in South Africa, the cultural context and the role of music is important to reflect upon. The members of the Field Band Foundation grow up in a changing society where traditional African ways of life are under strong influences of Western beliefs. The changing society also influences the music. According to Meki Nzewi (2002) music in traditional Africa is the science of being; the art of living with health. Traditional African music healing and modern music therapy are two different approaches to music and health,

with different methods and beliefs. Mercédès Pavlicevic (2002) believes that even though music therapy is not African in concept or theory, it is able to respond immediately to social needs. She finds that if music therapists manage to practice with flexibility and respect for differences, then music therapy can have a social emphasis and a political role. In the socio-cultural context of South Africa I find that we have to be careful not to import a practice that we feel is good for local needs, but rather try to offer our theory and practice, while at the same time learning from South African cultures.

The current discussion on music and health promotion in a Western perspective does not consider that music has health value of itself (Ruud 2010). Recently there has been a move within the field of musicology from mainly studying music as a work presented in a score, towards studying music in the context of the performance. This approach to music is relevant when focusing on music and health promotion. Small (1998) has had a central voice in this change of focus. He argued that the meaning in musicking is to be found in the various relationships:

The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance (Small 1998:13).

The relationships happening in music are significant when talking about the music and health promotion. Ruud (2010:57) says “as there are many ways to achieve health, there will be many forms of music and musical activities, which can provide resources to experience health”. He further emphasizes the importance of a contextual understanding of music. “*The music, the person, and the situation work together in a relational or mutual relation where changes in any of these components will change the meaning produced*” (ibid. p. 57). Music therapists Brynjulf Stige and Carolyn Kenny (2002) focus on how music is a mode of human co-existence, and how it enacts relationships on several levels. They argue that making music may connect people; with sounds, movements and words, and it may connect an individual's experience of sensing, feeling, and thinking. Ruud (1998) argues that people are bound together through common musical experiences, because music provides intense experiences of involvement, a heightened feeling of being included, and a deep relationship with others.

As we have seen the social relations developed through music are by music therapists regarded as health promoting.

Community music in South Africa

In South Africa there are several community music projects with social aims. In this thesis I will refer to research conducted in three different projects, which I find relevant to this thesis. Pavlicevic (2010) has conducted research in two community music therapy programs. One of them is YDO (Youth Development Outreach) in Eersterust, where music therapist Carol Lotter runs music groups as part of social rehabilitation for youth who have been in conflict with the law. In another project called Music for Life, music therapists Helen Oosthuizen, Sunelle Fouché and Kerryn Torrance have established music groups in (so-called) underprivileged and previously disadvantaged communities within the Greater Cape Town area. The aim of the projects is the use of active music-making to “keep the children off the street” by providing them with a socially and healthy alternative, a social group that they can belong to and a safe environment where they can build healthy relationships with their peers (Oosthuizen et.al 2007). The aims in this project are quite similar to the aims of the Field Band Foundation. It seems to me that the music therapists have found a way to combine their competence as music therapists with local musical and cultural competence through working in a team together with local community musicians.

The third community music program I will refer to in this thesis is the DIME program, which targets children in conflict with the law. According to Sheila Woodward et.al. (2008) the program aims to empower young offenders by enhancing their capacity and skills, aid them in achieving successful reintegration into the community, and provide them with positive personal, social, and cultural opportunities. This program is different from the Field Band Foundation in that the youth initially have no choice regarding their referral to the program. Evaluation of the program shows that music-making experience becomes self-motivational for the children. They also find strong indications that the program has positive influences on individual, family, and academic life. I will refer to more findings from these programs along with the findings from the present study.

4.0 Significance of participation in the band



The present study addresses the significance of participation in a band for youth from socially and economically challenged areas in South Africa. To explore such a topic, I have interviewed eight musicians and teachers from the South African music and life skills organisation the Field Band Foundation. The procedure of analyzing data from the interviews is previously presented in the methodology chapter. In this chapter I wish to carry out a discussion about the significance of participation in a music group. The chapter is organized into two parts: (1) *Social perspectives* (2) *Musicking as self-care*. These are broad topics and I have had to limit the focus. Therefore, I have chosen to let the categories, which emerged from the data material, to be focus of investigation. The research participants' statements will be discussed and related to theory and relevant research. In both parts of the chapter the data material is structured into main categories, with accompanying sub-categories. These categories will be presented in the beginning of each part. Whilst analyzing the interviews I found that some of the areas overlapped and some material could have appeared in more than one category, as several of the research participants' statements may be understood and discussed within more than one context. To limit it all, I have chosen to place material under only one category in this chapter.

Social perspectives

The band is a time-limited social practice, which meets on a regular basis. The field bands are organized music groups, which have membership and require active commitment. In this community of musical practice, the youth meets other youth who share the same interest of music. Playing in a band is a social process, a form of interaction and an aesthetic practice. Through the aesthetic performance of music the members express themselves through an act of participation. In the band the youth learn as they interact with each other musically and socially. The band is a social context with a shared history and where the musical activity provides structure and meaning to what we do.

The members join the band for different reasons. Some have a genuine interest in music; others join because siblings or friends are attending. In the field bands the members bring their own personality and history into the group. They come from different social, economical and cultural backgrounds and they have different musical strengths and weaknesses. All the research participants are from communities with social challenges and several of them mention negative role models, lack of good role models, and lack of parental support, as some of the challenges growing up in their communities. These are factors, which differ for each individual. In this part of the chapter I will focus on significance of participation in the field bands from a social perspective. In this thesis social perspectives are divided into three categories: (1) *social relations*, (2) *performing respect* and (3) *cultural identity*.

Social relations

Through analyzing the interviews I found that the social relations in the band is important to all the research participants. In various ways they talk about the social relations they have built through participation in the band, using words such as *friendships*, *family*, *sisters*, *brothers* and *brotherhood*. Hence, it seems like the band is an arena where the research participants have found a sense of belonging. Also, it seems as if the musical activity is an important factor in building the social relations. I have divided the category social relations into four sub-categories: (1) *building social relations through musicking*, (2) *belonging*, (3) *reframing social rules* and (4) *peripherality or marginality*.

Building social relations through musicking

An interest in playing music is the reason why most of the research participants joined the field band, and through the activity of music they have learned to know each other better and developed social relations. The activity of music seems to be important to all research participants in terms of the common activity as an introduction to developing social relations. One of the research participants put it this way:

Field band is always about the music, so from the start it was the music. Then as we go along, it was some other things not about music, but them knowing me as a person and me knowing them. That's where we bond, like our bonding, like the most precious one with the field band and other stuff.

According to this research participant the music has been an important factor in building social relations in the band. I find support for this view in all the interviews, either through direct quotes or through my interpretation of how the research participants talk about the music and social relations. As we saw in the theory chapter Wenger (1998) find mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire to be the main characteristics of a community of practice. In the field band the activity of music can be seen as the main ingredient in the process of building social relations in the band.

The communication happening through the music gets an interesting dimension in multi-cultural bands. Due to language barriers and cultural differences the youth often experience challenges when interacting socially. Several of the research participants tell stories about how the music-making has played a role in developing social relations crossing language- and cultural barriers. One of the research participants describes her first experience from playing in the National band, meeting musicians from different cultures:

I didn't know any of them, and just by the music we are in the same group together. So we start communicating because of the music and then we develop something. You develop a friendship, because you always go to that person who maybe knows more, start talking, maybe first it's about the music but later when you have free time you start talking about each other then learning about each other. (...) I think music also makes us understand each other more.

Here we see how the mutual activity of music can serve as a starting point in communication, because of the mutual engagement in the activity of music. The first communication between the musicians is musical, in terms of playing together in the band. Then the first discussions are concerning the music. The experiences this girl refers to is that the mutual engagement in music leads to an interest in getting to know each other as persons. After a while they do not just talk about the music, they start learning about each other and develop friendships.

Belonging

The research participants talk about various social aspects that make the participation in the band meaningful. What became evident to me is that a feeling of *belonging* to the band is what all research participants emphasize in different ways. Belonging is central aspects of the music group as an arena for social development. I asked one of the research participants about

the difference between being an individual musician and playing in a band. In order to explain the differences she makes many references to how the musicians communicate with each other through music:

Playing in the band is like sitting in a group full of people and you discussing something and you laughing and you having fun. That is like sitting in the field band, for instance. You sit with a group of people and you having fun and just talking.

Playing music is here described as a social interaction, where the musicians have discussions through the music. When she says that they are having fun and just talking, I believe she is still referring to the musical communication and not verbal communication. She describes this interaction as having fun together, which is an important emotional aspect of the participation. The musical communication in the band is further explained by this girl, in relation to social skills or what she calls life skills, such as; listening skills, sharing ideas and agreement:

To be playing in a group is actually good, because it gives you time to listen to each other. It is also part of life skills, because you do listen to people around you, and in a way you are communicating, not in a bad way, but in a good way. Because it's like you all share the same idea and you all agree on the idea. So that is how it feels like playing in a group. You agree on the same thing and you share your different parts of what you talking about or what you playing about. So you feel like I'm part of this group, I belong here, they have accepted me and I have accepted them. So we are all one group.

After these descriptions of the social interaction happening through the activity of music, she concludes by saying that this gives her a feeling of belonging to the group through a mutual acceptance. For all the research participants' participation in the field band is closely connected to the fun of playing music or the passion for music.

Each of the research participants has unique stories concerning how they have made friends in the band and the importance of these friendships. Friendships are important for the well-being of individuals. Studies show that we enjoy ourselves the most when we are together with friends. "Because a friendship usually involves common goals and common activities, it is 'naturally' enjoyable" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990:186). One of the research participants says that what kept her in the field band was meeting new friends and the fun of making music

together. Another one grew up playing in a music group outside of the field band. She remembers a group with members from different years in school that all shared the same passion for music.

Because we play in the same band, we've gotten close, so that passion sort of erased the gap, the age difference. And the only thing you hear when you're together is music, stuff, the concerts that we performed and the places we've been to. (...) To us it is all about performing and just loving the fact that people love what we do. And they think it's unique and it's nice.

One of the research participants refers to his friends in the field band as family members. He says that they meet as strangers, but they develop friendships, and become like brothers and sisters. Another research participant refers to his band mates as his second family. He further explains how the “field band family” is especially important to him, as he has lost both his parents. He says that he prefers spending time with friends from the band, instead of friends from school or the community where he lives. I was interested to find out why he prefers spending time with his band mates. He describes how the communication is different with friends from the band compared to friends from the community. Also, he explains how he feels happier when he spends time with his friends from the band and he refers to the different ways of communicating in the two groups:

I get more happiness when I am with the field band members. (...) I don't have that communication with them [friends in the community], because we'll sit around talk about things that do not even get us to the future. With the field band, we always talk about what we are going to do for the next practice. What are the new stuff, what the artist have produced. So that we can maybe get the music and try to play the music. That's how life is for me.

For this boy the music plays a central role in the friendships also outside the band arena, as the music is a topic they often discuss. This is also my experience from spending time with my students on our spare time. Very often the conversations evolved around songs they wanted to play in the band, formations for the show or other band- and music related topics. Even when some of the research participants refer to how they spend time with their friends from the band, outside of the band context, they tell me that the band and the music is one of the topics they talk about. This research participant talks about how friends in the community sit around not talking about things that will get them to the future. From my experience this is

often one of the challenges in communities with high rate of unemployment. A lot of youth who have finished school (or dropped out) sit at home with no plans for the future. This is also a concern brought up by several of the research participants when talking about challenges in their communities. I believe that having hopes and dreams for the future is part of what Antonovsky (1987) refers to as manageability. This means that if life is difficult today, having hopes and plans for the future can help making life manageable.

As we have seen music and musicking is central reference point for the research participants when talking about belonging in the field band. I find that all the research participants share a passion for music, and because of this shared passion they interact with each other in a way that leads them to develop strong social relations. Ansdell (2010:44) quite simply states: “they belong together because they want to music together”. I find that one of the research participants is summing up the importance of belonging in the band quite well when he talks about why he thinks projects like field band are important in the communities:

It's the discipline of it, the brotherhood, the sense of belonging, the family. I am proud of who I am, I can do this. It's a drive. (...) The music is just the tool, it's the principals that the music gives that they actually take along with them.

Reframing social rules

One of the male participants describes how he was strongly influenced by negative role models, including gangs and drugs, growing up:

I was one of the normal kids around. Would join a gang, or ran around carrying drugs around, things like that. Fought a lot, you know. Didn't care about school things like that. So yeah, that was basically my thought of how life should be because that's the environment I grew up in.

He describes the field band as an arena where he found a more positive environment, and where his ideals started changing:

So I had a different group of friends now who shared the same passion for music and had the same ideals. Cause my ideals started changing. My way of thinking started changing.

Through these two quotes the research participant describes how he started changing. His passion for music led him to an environment where he was introduced to more positive values. He further says that he only realized later in life that his life actually changed because of the music. Other research participants also tell stories of how participation in the band can be a positive change for themselves or their fellow musicians and students.

These findings are supported by Pavlicevic (2010b) who found that the children who come from an environment where being “cool” or “special” for many are related to being a gang member or sniffing glue, can be together in a different way in the music project. According to Pavlicevic “musical action generates friendships based on having fun, on co-operating and on learning, where everyday life fails to provide for these kinds of friendships (Pavlicevic 2010b:234). Stige et.al. (2010) suggests that in the end participation in a music group can result in a new social attitude towards the youth. The surrounding community might start seeing them as youth who can “do music”, rather than youth who will inevitably join the local gangs. According to Woodward et.al. (2008) on-going qualitative research is indicating the value of music-making programs for children in conflict with the law as they provide students a healthy, enjoyable diversion from crime. Through developing their musicianship, children achieve self-realization. Participation in a community music program also enables children to discover (or rediscover) their intense enjoyment of music and a strong sense of self-fulfillment.

I believe the field bands or other music groups can play a role in how the communities look at the youth and how the youth think about themselves. Still, I find it important to not create a picture describing the band as sort of a “life saver”. Talking to members in the field bands I have sometimes heard comments like “field band saved my life” or “I owe field band 80 percent of my life”. One of the research participants in this project finds this type of statements provoking. He thinks many of his fellow members give the organisation too much credit:

It is not field band that keeps us away from crime and from drugs. Field band is a daily hobby. Its you who keep yourself away from that thing (...) Field band is more like bringing dreams alive so people can make decisions for themselves, but not stopping anybody from doing anything wrong.

I find the voice of this research participant to be important, as he talks about the decisions each and everyone makes for themselves. Mia Børjesson¹⁴ uses a metaphor from the movies to describe how youth can take charge of their own life. She talks about how we are born with a “screenplay” written by our surroundings. For many of the youth in the Field Band Foundation this screenplay will include: poverty, poor quality of education and a high crime rate in the community. As children grow up to become youth, Børjesson talks about how they can re-write their own screenplay. I believe many musicians, including the research participant talking about changing values, have managed to “re-write” their screenplay. I also believe that for some of them the participation in a band has played an important part of managing to make the changes in their lives.

Pavlicevic found that the two community music projects in her research provide “possibilities for all participants to break the social rules – or at least reframe them” (Pavlicevic 2010b:241). I believe this is also the case for many of the members in the Field Band Foundation and not only the quoted research participant. On the other hand I find it important to keep in mind that it is difficult for youth to break or reframe the social rules. Even though the data material shows youth who have gained a lot through participation in the band and have plans and hopes for the future, I have met field band members and former members who are not managing to create a better future for themselves. Some end up making the wrong choices in life even though they have been given opportunities to “re-write their screenplay”. Still, I believe participation in the band has created positive memories they can carry with them in difficult times.

Peripherality or marginality

As we have seen, the research participants have developed social relations, found belonging and some have even been able to change their lives in a positive direction, because of their involvement in the field bands. Despite the bands potential for positive development for its members, there is also a possibility that some members leave the group with more negative memories than positive. Many bands build up hierarchies within the group and it is important not to forget that there is always a risk of members having a feeling of not being accepted, or belonging in the band. Normally members who do not find positive social relations in the band will leave the band.

¹⁴ Lecture 09.04.2009 about mental health promotion in Norwegian schools.

One of the research participants tells a story of how she felt she did not belong in the band:

There's a story in my band. I felt like I'm not belonging here. Why am I here? Why? And then I didn't go to the field band for three months. Just staying at home.

As I have only talked to members with long-term commitment the voices of the members not finding a sense of belonging in the band have not been included in the data material. Still, I know from my working experience in the Field Band Foundation that this is a problem in several of the bands. Each year they recruit many new members, but they struggle to keep them.

Even though I have argued that participation in a music group provides a potential for personal and social development, there are many challenges. There is always a risk that the youngest members are given tasks, which are outside of their capacity. A child who does not manage the musical tasks will feel failure and will most likely leave the band. On the other hand the most advanced musicians will get bored if they do not get enough challenges. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), the key to legitimate peripherality is to give newcomers access to all that membership in the community of practice entails. This is both essential and problematic. Wenger (1998) differs between non-participation as peripherality and marginality. The youngest members in the band will experience some degree of non-participation in the band, because of their legitimate peripheral participation. They have not yet been fully included in the bands mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire. This form of non-participation is a part of the learning process. The non-participation becomes problematic when it takes the form of marginality. Sometimes a band member is not included in the social environment to the same degree as the other band members. Sometimes the weakest musicians in the band experience marginality or marginality can be brought in from other communities and kept alive also in the band.

My experience from the field band is that one of the main challenges concerning marginality is related to cultural conflicts and gender inequality. I will discuss this further under the category named performing respect.

Performing respect

Mutual respect is important in building and maintaining social relations with the fellow band members. I believe that respect is not something that can be easily taught to the youth through lectures. Respect is something that we learn through interaction with other human beings. I find support of this opinion in the research of sociologist and amateur musician Richard Sennett who explores how it is possible to keep our self-respect and to respect others in a modern society. Using musical metaphors he refers to respect as an expressive performance. He says that: “treating others with respect doesn’t just happen, even with the best will in the world” (Sennett 2004:207). Music therapist Gary Ansdell (2010) finds that this way of speaking about respect in action seem directly applicable to *Musical Minds*, a community music therapy project in England. After reading Ansdells article about Musical Minds, I find that Sennetts theories are also applicable to the Field Band Foundation. Throughout his book Sennett uses examples from music in order to explain how we perform respect. He says that...:

...ensemble work requires collaboration. Unless the musicians are playing in unison, they have to sort out differences and inequalities, loud against soft parts, or soloists and accompanists working together... This is mutual respect as musicians perform it, a matter of recognizing someone else who is doing something different (ibid.:6).

In this chapter I will show how the activity of music is an arena where the musicians perform respect in the Field Band Foundation. One of the research participants says that he has learned to respect through the music:

I learned a lot through the music. One of the skills I have learned is to respect. I take it as a skill to respect one person and to work as a group. Listen to other people, what they are saying, their feelings and their opinions. And even like disagree where necessary. I think music is one of the greatest things to happen for us as youngsters, because we get to share ideas, which are part of the skills you have to communicate. How you communicate with a person. Being polite and smooth. Don't be rough, so I think respect goes a long way for us as youngsters.

Respect is a broad term, which could have included several aspects. I have limited this category to include two sub-categories: (1) *cultural diversity* and (2) *gender equality*. In the

interviews cultural diversity and gender equality in the field bands was two of the topics I wanted get the insider perspective on. In several of the interviews I found that the research participants brought up the topics before I had asked any questions. I take this as a sign that this topic concerns the research participants profoundly.

In the Field Band Foundation negotiation surrounding ethnicity, race and gender happen continuously within the different regions in the organisation. The activity of music is a social mediator, which connects members all over the country. Through activities on a regional and a national level there is a focus on valuing the diversity whilst creating something together. The Field Band Foundation sees this interaction as important in building understanding and respect for other cultures and gender equality, as a part of building a nation (the Field Band Foundation [URL]). There are constantly musical and cultural negotiations between diversity and unity within the organisation on different levels.

Cultural diversity

In post-apartheid there are still many challenges concerning respecting the cultural diversity. Racial conflicts between white, coloured and black ethnic groups is still evident in everyday life. Also various black African cultural groups have a long history of cultural conflicts, which are still evident in many communities.¹⁵ The cultural challenges in the Field Band Foundation reflect the rest of the South African society. On a regional level most of the bands have different degrees of cultural mixture in the bands. Some bands are situated in quite segregated communities where most of the members come from the same cultural groups while other regions have more mixture of various cultural groups. A few regions have a history of having members from both black African and Coloured cultures in the same band. Through activities on a national level, musicians from different cultural backgrounds come together and share ideas and values through the activity of music and dance.

Six of the research participants have long experience from activities on a national level. They all tell stories of verbal fighting based on cultural and regional differences. I find that they all share the same understanding of the background of the cultural challenges in the organisation:

¹⁵ For more information about the history of South Africa see: About South Africa [URL].

We were too segregated at first, one it was by region, and no one wants to talk about it. It was Coloured people and black people in the field band and on top of that it was Xhosa people and Zulu people and Tswana people. On top of that it was region.¹⁶

All but one research participant say that at some point they started to put the differences aside and work together as a team. They have various opinions on how far they have come in the process of gaining a broad cultural respect, but the majority have an optimistic attitude. What becomes evident in the interviews is that the interaction through music has been of high relevance in the process of gaining a broader cultural respect. They have learned about each other music traditions. Learning about each other's culture seems to be an important factor in broadening the cultural respect. The band has served as an arena for interaction across cultural barriers:

There's a lot that we didn't know about each other. And through this interaction via the field band, I think it has opened our eyes to a lot more than just us. (...) The combination of all these cultures comes up with something tremendous, its unique. You will not find it anywhere, because doing things the way we do, it's a combination of all these cultures and in a way it says a lot about who we are, where we come from (...) As the field band people are embracing, in terms of creativity and music.

I find that this research participant is talking about that they come up with something tremendous, something unique she is referring to the music they play together, combining music from different cultures. Another research participant who says that she used to have an "attitude" against other cultures, explains how participation in the national band and the music they perform together has been part of changing this attitude:

Because they came in and when we were doing something they mix us. We are not staying there as the Zulus, Xhosas, Coloureds or Tswanas. We mix and then maybe some of them teach you a line in Tswana and you feel proud. Or they teach us a song in Tswana, teach us a song in Afrikaans, a song in Zulu, in all the languages. So it's changing, cause we exchanging culture.

¹⁶ Coloured-, Zulu-, Xhosa-, and Tswana people is referring to various cultural groups. See page 4 for more information about the various South African cultural groups.

It seems like the research participants agree that they exchange culture through playing music from all the various cultures. They believe there has been a positive development concerning respecting each other's cultures and they agree that the activity of music has played a vital role, as they have learned about each other's music traditions and the mix of different cultures playing in the same band. Even though they agree there has been a positive development, they have different opinions on where they are today in the process of gaining equality and respect amongst the different cultures. There are still cultural conflicts within the bands, but the amount of cultural conflicts seems to have decreased.

Gender

In the Field Band Foundation the membership statistics show that there is almost an equal number of male and female members in the organisation. When taking a closer look, we will see that in many bands there is a clear distinction in which sections the boys dominate and which is dominated by girls. On a general basis we can say that girls dominate the dance section, and often also the Pit section, but here the boys are represented to a higher degree than in dance. The boys mostly dominate brass, but most of the bands have girls represented in this section. The percussion is male dominated, but some of the bands have been able to recruit and keep girls in the percussion section. This unequal amount of males and females in the various sections is not something that is typical for only South African bands. Also when looking at Norwegian brass bands and wind bands we can see a tendency of that some instruments are dominated by males and other instruments are dominated by females.

In the Field Band Foundation this unequal division of gender becomes problematic when looking at who get selected for the National band and who get appointed as teachers. Even in the female dominated sections of the bands; there are a high number of male teachers. Through my observations from working with the bands I have found that the main reason for the low number of female teachers and female participants at National workshops is that many teachers give more attention to boys than to girls in the band. This result in that the male members reach a higher level of musical competence than the girls and are more qualified to go to national workshops and become teachers. When it comes to gender equality in the bands some of the female research participants have struggled to earn respect as musicians and leaders, because of their gender. One of the girls explains how the bands are male dominated, especially in brass- and percussion. She describes that some teachers gives more attention and challenges to the boys, than the girls:

They don't give you challenges. Cause I like challenges. (...) They gonna go like: "No, she's a girl, she cannot play it. Maybe, its to high for her". In my point of view it's not difficult for me. You don't have to decide for me. Those things they were like hurting me.

All the girls agree that it is often challenging to be a girl in the male dominated bands. Still, one female research participant gives one of her male teachers a lot of credit for pushing her forward as a musician and a leader. Hence, it is important not to over generalise. Also, teachers are not the only ones responsible for gender differences in the bands. It seems like the boys in the band can be dominating in the sections, regardless of the teacher's attitude.

The challenges in the Field Band Foundation can be seen as a reflection of society in general, as traditional African societies are male dominated. Both male and female research participants bring up the historical aspect of a male dominated society. It might not come as a surprise that the female participants have more to say about the topic than the males. The female participants have strong opinions on the subject, both related to the band and to the society in general. An opinion that is shared by the female participants is that there is still a long way to go in South Africa, even though there is a process:

Gender equality, we're struggling, because now it's difficult. Even though South Africa is developing in some ways more than the other African countries, we still have a gender problem. We still believe that guys are supposed to be doing this and girls are suppose to be doing that.

One of the male participants has some reflections upon gender equality. He states that he thinks of girls as equal to himself, but at the same time he believes there is still a tendency of treating a female as someone who know less:

At this time I think we are equal. Not that I am going away from my culture. In terms of some having more powers than the other, that is not part of culture. (...) Although there are people that think ladies are far behind us. (...) You always rate girls as which I think sometimes is not good. We always take girls as people that cant do anything.

Even though the female research participants do not find that they are always treated as equal in the bands, they are optimistic about the future. Gender equality is not something that can be gained over night. It is a long process, which has to be dealt with on a regular basis. It seems like some of the female research participants have managed to earn respect from the boys in the bands through working hard on their musical skills. Earning respect as a good musician is often more difficult for the girls, but it is definitely not impossible. One of the male participants believes that many will be amazed when they see girls in the field band perform:

Being in the field band is hard work. Marching, not like in the orchestra, you have to sit down, wind band sit down and only play. You have to sweat in the field band. Seeing girls sweat and doing what they were taught, I think it will amaze many.

The way I understand this research participant, peoples' opinion on what girls can or cannot be doing can be changed through musical performances. On the background of my own experiences from the Field Band Foundation and the perspectives of the research participants I believe that the activity of music is a very good arena to work with goals related to a broader respect for cultural diversity and gender equality. At the same time I find that there is a need for more knowledge about how teachers and other leaders in the bands can facilitate the music activity in a way that can fulfil the potential to a higher extent.

As we have seen, respecting cultural diversity and gender equality is a topic, which concerns most of the research participants. They talk about the progress and challenges within the organisation with a lot of enthusiasm. I find that these negotiations, which are happening through the musical activity is a significant part of participation in the bands. Wenger does not specify peace and harmony as necessary properties of a community of practice, but even says that disagreements, challenges and competition can all be forms of participation. "As a form of participation, rebellion often reveals a greater commitment than does passive conformity" (Wenger 1998:77). Even though the research participants have different opinions of concerning the degree of negative atmosphere these challenges and conflicts creates in the bands, my findings are that there is optimism. I believe the optimism is based on the fact that even though some of them feel that there is still a long way to go, most of them see that there have been some positive changes in the past years. What is interesting to see in the future is to what degree they manage to keep the bands as an arena for negotiations, taking small steps in the direction of a broader cultural acceptance and gender equality. The relationships created in

the bands through music are the very essence of the conflict transformation process. The established relationships create social values and form strong feelings of belonging (Wenger 1998). Harmonies as well as strained relationships are brought to the front. In other words, it is when the relationship is developed one is given the chance to negotiate the groups shared values and identity.

As we have seen respecting the cultural diversity and gender equality are important topics in a South African context and in the Field Band Foundation. The relationships created in the band are then not only relationships among the musicians, but also relationships to the outside world. According to Small, the relationships created through music have the strength to be a transformative effect outside the group (Small 1998:48). I will end this discussion concerning respect with a quote from one of the research participants, which I find sums up the findings:

Field band is slowly getting there, but let's just hope for the best, that it will actually grow. And maybe if they see the difference in field band, they can also take it back to their homes and also try to implement it there for their sisters, cousins, aunts, who ever. I think that will help a lot.

Cultural identity

The negotiation of a cultural respect within the Field Band Foundation can also be seen as part of negotiating cultural identity. Identity is particularly connected to where we come from and the geographical and ethnical space we feel attached to. It also concerns the time we have lived through and feel connected to (Ruud 1997, 1998). The combination of different individuals in one group will always affect and develop the musical and social space. The cultural negotiations in the Field Band Foundation can be seen as part of a political agenda where the aim is to build broader acceptance for cultural diversity amongst the youth of South Africa.

Vokwana (2007) discusses popular music in relation with culture and identity in new South Africa. He highlights popular music as an integral variable in creating and sustaining networks of individual and group identity. Music is here seen as “the agency of black youths in actualising democratic citizenship in celebrating aspects of the heritage through creative means” (ibid.:16). In his essay about resurrecting an African identity through popular music in post-apartheid South Africa Vokwana asks the question: *Iph'indlela? Where is the way?*

Bakken (2009) asks the same question in a master thesis regarding notions of cultural complexity and musical space in the Field Band Foundation. Focusing on the significance of three songs used in the Field Band Foundation, Bakken interviewed youth from three different field band regions. She finds that through music activities the Field Band Foundation contributes in guiding the youth on their way to make sense out of their everyday experiences, a process that does not happen without heavy negotiations. This study is especially relevant for the present study, since the research has been conducted within the same organisation I am using as a scene of investigation. In the lack of togetherness in the South African society, Bakken suggests that the Field Band Foundation creates a space for negotiations surrounding national identity and socio-cultural identity through musical activities.

My findings show that the field band affords a meeting point where youth from different cultures, who share the same interest in music, play together and through the musical interaction they also start to interact socially. My findings suggest that the common interest in music creates an arena for negotiation of cultural identity.

Even though we are different in cultures, cause there are Zulus, Xhosas and Twanas, but when it comes to music that's where we are united. That's where we are all Africans.

The research participants emphasise how the music build bridges between the different cultures. The role of music has in the interviews been covered mostly from a social perspective and music style has not been a topic, which have been brought up by me as a researcher. Therefore I have limited data material concerning how the different styles of music performed in the bands have an effect on the cultural negotiations in the band. As we have seen in the category named cultural diversity, some of the research participants' talk about a unique field band style, which is a combination of music from different South African cultures.

One research participant who comes from a region without a mixture of different cultures and who has never attended national workshops still has an experience of a unique field band style. I believe this is because his teachers have brought music from other cultures back to the region, after attending National workshops.

This musician has played in various music groups outside of field band, but find the field band style to be unique:

I'm in Africa and the music we play here is more African and the beat is here, so yeah, I love it. (...) I have been at many music activities, like church and Christmas band. (...) this is more lively. (...) It's more unique than anything else.

I find that the way he talks about the unique field band style is related to the cultural negotiations, which are happening through the musical choices made in the bands. Through playing music, everyone participates in and negotiates the creation of a more complex and nuanced narrative they can have in common. Simon Frith (1996) emphasizes the role of music in the creation of a group; how a cultural activity is a way of living the ideas of the group:

[...] Is not that social groups agree on values which are then expressed in their cultural activities (the assumption of the homology models), but that they only get to know themselves as groups (as a particular organization of individual and social interests, of sameness and difference) through cultural activity, through aesthetic judgment. Making music is not a way of expressing ideas; it is a way of living them (Frith 1996: 111).

In a master thesis about the Divan, a famous symphony orchestra consisting of young musicians from various countries the Middle East, Solveig Riiser (2009), argues that common social values and common identity occur because negotiations of meaning take place in the orchestra, not because of the music's universality. In the DIME program Woodward et.al. (2008) found that making music with traditional links to the children's cultural heritage contributed to the construction of identity and self-pride. When teaching music that is part of the children's cultural heritage, the music becomes an important socially integrative tool. Further, the use of the children's mother tongue reinforced a sense of regard and respect for their own cultural identities.

I believe that in multi-cultural societies, such as South Africa and the Middle East, participation in music programs with members from the various cultures, can play a role in strengthening the cultural identity of the members. Sharing music from their own culture and learning music from other cultures can both lead to a strong cultural identity and a broader respect of cultural diversity.

Musicking as self-care

So far I have focused on significance of participation in the field band, from a social perspective. In the following section I will move from the social perspective and focus upon how the research participants use musicking as self-care. In recent years there has been a growing focus amongst music sociologists and music psychologists on how people are using music to regulate and control their emotional behavior (DeNora 2000) and take care of their health needs through music (Ruud 2010). This is a broad field, which could have been the focus of the whole thesis. Many aspects could have been included, but as this was not one of the main topics of the interviews I have chosen to limit the focus according to the data material I ended up with. I will introduce this part of the chapter by presenting an excerpt from one of the interviews in order to show how one of the research participants use music as self-care:

M57: Why is it so important for you to play music?

C57: (...) When you play you get that feeling that ah, I'm part of this music. (...) You get happy if you play and sing yourself. People interact with what we are playing, like clapping or singing along as you play. You get that feeling of knowing that I have done something for my people. The one thing that I always disagree with music is that you find yourself in a bad situation, but only to find out that when you're playing music some other people are happy. While you are the person playing the instrument, producing the music. You see, that really struck me off. Because they wouldn't know that you are not feeling well. They will always see an artist in front of them playing, not knowing that there are stuff happening in your life. (...) But no one would go deep and think maybe this guy is not feeling well. They will always cheer for the song, be happy, not thinking about you. But it's nice, not about always being about you have to be comforted. You have to comfort other people, even if you are not in a good mood.

M58: Do you think your music can make other people happy?

C58: For sure. (...) They get happy. Every time they get happy. We have played in every mall here in this province that I am situated in. They always fall in love with the band.

M59: You said that you don't always feel happy when you're playing. Can music change your emotions?

C59: Yeah, it does. Because if I know that I am not feeling well, when I play and I see people relating to what I play I get more confident. That bad feeling that I feel, or

what is wrong with me, at that moment it slips off my mind. Because of what the people are relating in terms of what I am playing.

M60: So you can forget about the bad stuff?

C60: Even if I wouldn't forget it all together, but for that period of time I can maybe forget. And for that period of time, it might lead me to even forget it totally. Sometimes when I am out of the stage I will really think, oh, I was having that problem and maybe I will think about that problem. I will see, that my problem can be fixed. It's just for me to realize that I can do something about this problem, because it's not about knowing that you have a problem and agree that you have a problem, but it's about looking for a solution against that problem. For me the field band is the way of solving problems at some points.

He starts by talking about the good feeling of being part of the music and how it makes him happy to play or sing. Then he talks about interacting with the audience and having a positive feeling of doing something good for his people. Then there is a change of focus as he starts talking about the discrepancies between him and the audience, when he is feeling sad and at the same time his music makes the audience smile and dance. Even though he is not feeling happy his music makes other people happy. But then he says that it can sometimes be nice to see that his music can comfort other people and that it makes him forget about his own problems. Throughout this short dialogue the research participant both talks about music, in terms of belonging, sharing joy and happiness with an audience, and emotional support, where the music he creates together with his fellow band members have a comforting effect on him. In a different part of the interview the same research participant talks about losing both his parents and growing up in a community where he did not find the sense of belonging that he needs. I find that this story is an example of how playing music can be used as self-care. This can further be seen as a way of finding meaning in life and making life manageable. In this thesis musicking as self-care is divided into three categories: (1) *music and feelings*, (2) *musicking as support* and (3) *hopes and dreams*.

Music and feelings

Regardless of culture, gender, age, level of education and economy we all have emotions and are mindful of emotions of others. From the interview transcripts I see that the research participants and I use the terms feelings and emotions interchangeably. In everyday life we tend to not distinguish between these two terms. I will now turn to Damasio (1999) in order to

define these terms. Damasio distinguish between so-called *primary* or *universal emotions*, such as happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise and disgust; *secondary* or *social emotions*, such as embarrassment, jealousy, guilt, or pride; and *background emotions*, such as well-being or malaise, calm or tension. According to Damasio a shared biological core underlies all these phenomena. He finds that across different cultures and among individuals there are variable expressions and variations in the precise configuration of stimuli that can induce an emotion. Damasio find that the human impact on emotions depends on the feelings engendered by the emotions. Here Damasio distinguishes between emotions and feelings, as a continuum: A state of emotion, which can be triggered and executed non-consciously; a state of feeling, which can be represented non-consciously; and a state of feeling made conscious (Damasio 1999:37). In short, he finds that consciousness must be present if feelings are to influence the person having them beyond the immediate here and now. I find that when the research participants talk about music and refer to emotions such as happy, sad and joy these emotions are made conscious and I will refer to them as feelings. Damasio further argues that having feelings is of extraordinary value in the orchestration of survival.

Music can have a strong impact on our feelings. We can use music to attain, enhance or maintain states of feelings and bodily energy. According to Sloboda (2005:203) “There is a general consensus that music is capable of arousing deep and significant emotions in those who interact with it”. I find that the excerpt above is a good example of this. In a study of music and identity Ruud (1997, 1998) found that the emotional experience of music seems to help people establish memories and integrate and formulate them in a metaphoric form that gives direction to their personal narratives. These musical emotional memories can provide a sense of continuity and sameness in life. Ruud (1998) further argues that this can easily be linked to a general feeling of meaning in life, but it can also be seen in how music could become part of the resources that help us resist illness, or in other words, promote health. In the data material I found that several of the research participants enhance or regulate their feelings by playing their instrument.

Enhance feelings

Feelings related to playing an instrument and playing in the band is evident in most of the interviews. One of the research participants even describes playing music as an “out of this world”-experience:

When you start playing, you become part of the music you play. So it's actually not a good feeling, it's a fantastic feeling playing your instrument. Playing any kind of music you can be playing. But just that feeling of I am playing this music. It's just fantastic. It's out of this world. It's way-way out of this world.

Another refers to passion and happiness, in relation to playing and teaching:

I love music, music is my passion, music is my life. (...) I love playing music and I love teaching. I feel happy if I am in the band and playing. I feel so happy and alive. (...) So music is my passion. I don't know, if I'm playing music, I feel happy. I feel alive, cause I am playing.

Several other research participants support these experiences of happiness and passion. The feeling of experiencing happiness and joy gets an extra dimension when seen in relation to the living conditions of the research participants. My knowledge about the communities the bands are situated in and the membership statistics, tells me that many of the members come from difficult living conditions. What often amazes me when I visit the field band rehearsals is the enormous amount of joy and cheerfulness in the musical activity.

Regulate feelings

Music can serve as support both when we are feeling happy and when we are feeling sad. Music can calm us down or cheer us up when needed. Some research participants talk about using music to change their feelings. One of the research participants says that he has had a lot of difficult days in his life and explains how the music helps him in different various situations:

There's always a joy with the music. The happiness, you know it calms you down. It's just that deep-deep-deep drive inside of you. When I'm down I sing or play my instrument. When I'm happy I sing or play my instrument. Doesn't matter what I feel, its always that music.

This way of connecting to music is supported by one of the other research participants who also tell about difficult times growing up. She explains that she sings a lot when she is happy, but she can also remember times when they stopped singing at home. When feeling sad, another research participant likes to practice on her instrument, because it is something she loves and makes her happy:

If I know I'm sad I just go there, take my instrument at home and play. Play-play-play. Then that thing is gonna go away, cause I am concentrating on my instrument, something that I love, something I feel happy doing.

I find that the research participants have found ways to enhance and regulate their feelings through playing their instrument. In this part of the chapter the main focus has been how each individual uses music as self-care. I will now focus upon how the band can provide support for the musicians.

Musicking as support

In the excerpt introducing musicking as self-care we saw how the research participants forget about challenges in life when he plays music. Sometimes he manages to forget and find comfort just for a short while, but sometimes music helps him forget his problem for good. When I visit the field bands it is often impossible to spot which of the children are hungry, anxious to go home to an abusive family or struggling with other matters. A fourteen year old boy once told how he get a stomach ache if he do not get to play his instrument. At a later stage my colleague and I learned that this boy was living in a child headed household and often had to go to bed hungry. This story makes me reflect upon the value of music as a here-and-now experience. The way I understand this boy's story is that the band affords an arena where he forget about the challenges in his everyday life. I find that this musician is using the rehearsals as self-care. One of the research participants thinks that band offers an arena where the children and youth who struggle at home can relax and have fun:

I think with those things happening around at home, you just need somewhere else to go. There's field band and they are gonna take you away for a while, doing music or dance or whatever you can. Just break away from that. Here at field band they can be calm or they can just relax and forget about everything that is happening at home or something. So I think field band is actually a way to just forget about that and come enjoy you for a while, but also learning new things. (...) I think there's a lot of them. They wouldn't like tell us they have problems or anything, but they will just come to field band and come and enjoy themselves. So I don't think you can see like this child she's having problems or anything, because when at field band they are totally different people, I think, than they are with the circumstances at home.

Another research participant tell me that her students say the band is where they completely forget the fact that they have abusive parents or parents who do not care and they feel free to be a kid. For me it is difficult to know if these are things that the kids have actually told her or if it is her interpretation of the kids' experiences in the band. Either way I think her observation is valid, because she also says that she is counting herself in the whole lot. She comes from the same background as her students and I wonder if some of the feelings she is saying that her students have, are the feelings she has experienced herself. Most of the research participants did not share personal stories concerning the music as a support in challenging life situations and I did not feel that it was ethical to ask for personal stories. Often my experience working in the bands were that my students would tell me how the band was a place where members who struggled could forget about their problems and enjoy themselves when they played music, but just a few would tell me about personal experiences.

Hopes and dreams

All children face different conditions growing up, and the research participants are no exceptions. Not all of the research participants shared stories from their family background (and I found it unethical to ask), but stories told in the interviews include growing up in a stable home with both parents present, growing up with an abusive father and having lost both parents. Challenges in the community are probably easier to talk about (and to ask for), and I ended up talking to all the research participants about challenges in their communities. For children and youth growing up under difficult living conditions, hope is an important factor in managing the challenges in life. One research participant tells that the band is where the children can relax and forget about their problems. She finds this to be part of creating hope:

We need projects like this, because actually for kids in my region it's their only source of hope. They tell you that this is where they completely forget the fact that they have abusive parents, parents who don't care.(...) And they say that's where they sort of feel free to be a kid. Be taught a lot of things about life, learn about other people and mingle with friends. They tell you this is the only place where they laugh and relax and feel at home. So it is their only source of hope.

According to Snyder (2009) hope is a cognitive set involving an individual's beliefs in his or her capacity to produce workable routes to goals (waypower or pathways) and beliefs in his or

her own ability to initiate and sustain movement toward those goals (Snyder, in Lopez & Snyder 2009:134).

I believe that having hopes and dreams for the future is part of making life manageable when in a difficult situation. Antonovsky (1987) says that finding life manageable is an important factor in maintaining good health. Manageability is the experience of having enough resources to manage the challenges we are facing in life. I find manageability to be an important factor in promoting health for youth growing up in socially and economically challenged areas. I believe that having hope and dreams for the future is an important factor in finding life manageable.

Creating hopes and dreams for the future is an important part of any youth social development work in South Africa. With the HIV pandemic and other health threats in the communities it is important to provide the youth with a motivation to be responsible. When one is faced with the challenges many of these youth face in life, it is very easy not to care how one behaves. If there is no future anyway, some feel there is no point in changing anything or to act responsibly.

I find that the research participants have found a way to use music as self-care through enhancing and regulating their feelings. Also, attending field band rehearsals can be a way of escaping from a challenging everyday life. In this chapter I have discussed musicking as self-care in a here and now perspective and with regards to hopes and dreams for the future. These findings are supported by evaluation of the DIME program. According to Woodward (2008) evaluators found that making music has the potential to influence and change the moods of the children. The shared enjoyments children experience from playing music have triggered positive emotions such as delight, elation, pleasure, and contentment. They further found that music making has therapeutic effects on the psychological state of the children.

Throughout this chapter we have seen how the research participants has developed social relations through participation in the band, which has lead to friendships and a sense of belonging. The social relations developed through the shared interest in music has for some of the musicians played a central role in helping them to reframe their social rules. Because of the social relations the members have built through musicking, the band becomes an arena where the youth can negotiate important topics such as respect for cultural diversity and

gender equality, through their everyday activities. Further, I find that for several of the research participants the music affords a way to enhance and regulate feelings. They also describe how the activity of music can help other children and youth who are have a hard time hopes for the future. The music-making in the field band affords an arena where the musicians can experience joy and happiness, but also find support in a challenging everyday life.

The music made an effect in my life and in lot of other kids in the community. (...) Because of the discipline and the self-drive and the passion that it entails.

5.0 Summing up



The current project came about with the aim of gaining a broader understanding of the significance of participation in a band, for youth from socially and economically challenged backgrounds in South Africa. In the introduction I presented the research question: “What aspects seem to be of significance for the youth in the Field Band Foundation when participating in the band?” In order to explore the research questions I have interviewed eight musicians from the Field Band Foundation. Through their perceptions, I have attempted to understand and discuss the significance of participation in view of relevant literature and my own experience.

The research participants in the present study come to the band first and foremost because they love music and want community. Through their engagement in the band most of them have also found that participation in the band may help them in some way with the particular and unique context in which they find themselves. I have found that the research participants find involvement in the field band to be significant in various ways. The field band is a community of musical practice where...:

- ...members can develop friendships and a sense of belonging.
- ...the musicians can strengthen their cultural identity and gain broader respect for cultural diversity and gender equality.
- ...youth can be motivated to reframe their social rules.
- ...youth who struggle can find support and forget about their problems for a while.
- ...members can learn to use music as self-care.

Significance of participation in the field band has in this thesis been explored through social perspectives and musicking as self-care. Social perspectives have been dealt with in more

depth than musiking as self-care. This does not imply that social perspectives are more important; merely that this is where I had most data material. Still, through the research participants' descriptions I have found that the activity of music is the binding factor in the community of musical practice.

The categories that emerged through the analyses were subjective and not validated by anyone else. However, I feel that my findings are supported by the findings of Stige et.al. (2010). In recent research on community music therapy in a broad range of contexts, they have found that music and musicing¹⁷ have helped people in a broad spectrum:

Music and musicing has helped people find their voice (literally and metaphorically); to be made welcome and to welcome others; to be accepted and to accept; to be together in different and better ways; to project alternative messages about themselves and their community; to feel respected and to give respect; to create supportive networks and social bridges; and quite simply, to generate fun, joy, fellowship, and conviviality for themselves and their communities (Stige et.al. 2010:277)

Stige et.al. (2010:290) further finds that the collective musicing has a rippling effect that moves beyond the individual. Through the rituals of musical performances, rehearsals, and concerts the individual and the music group opens out towards society. It also ripples inwards, from the public event towards the group and the individual. A summary of their findings in relations to this is: "music(ing) is never alone, never abstracted from either its immediate context of place or use, or separated out into just sound" (p.292). Their study is much more extensive than this study, but I find that some of their findings reflect my categories. For example, I found that the various relationships in the band are significant for all the research participants. Relationships are not only evident when talking about social relationships, but also when talking about feelings, support, hopes and dreams for the future. I found that the music plays a role in various degrees in all categories. Friendships have been built, because of relations that developed through the music. Some have gained a broader acceptance for other cultures through the negotiations happening in the music activity. I believe that the related findings confirm that my findings are within reasonable norms.

In South Africa today there is a need for community projects, which can help the youth find meaningfulness, predictability and manageability in their everyday life. I believe that

¹⁷ Elliot (1995) introduces the term *musicing*. In this thesis I do not differ between *musicing* and *musicking*.

participation in community music projects such as the Field Band Foundation can help youth gain a feeling of coherence and continuity in life.

Critique and recommendations for future research

This study has been conducted as a base in an exploratory research question, which I have answered through empirical data and relevant theory. Throughout my work, it has been important for me to create a text that is honest. By this I do not mean that I have avoided information that is untrue (or worse, a lie) but that I have been careful to convey the complexity of the band as I experienced it, and as the musicians described it to me. After arriving at the end of the project I realize that there are many aspects, which have not been covered in this study. Along the way I had to make choices, leaving out interesting perspectives. The fields of investigation are broad fields, which all could have been investigated further. Each of the categories covered in the data material could probably have been a whole master thesis. In many of the fields I wanted to relate the findings to more theory, but because of the limitations in a master thesis, I have had to make choices. There will always be other perspectives, which could have been included.

I would also suggest that future research could take many of the directions suggested by Stige et.al. (2010). Throughout eight case studies they have brought into relief how participation, performance, ritual, collaboration and inter-group processes have been vital to success in the projects. They invite readers to explore to what degree one or more of these studies could serve as parallel cases to those of their own work.

In the multi-cultural social context of South Africa I find it problematic that white, western researchers conduct most research on music and health. My hope for future research is that the voice of other cultures will be present. Even though this thesis has aimed to present the participant perspective, I still find that this project has several weaknesses due to my cultural and professional background.

As we have seen, playing in a band is an activity, which is of significance for the research participants. Still, there is always room for improvements, both in the quality of the musical activity provided and in the ability to give more children and youth the opportunity to benefit from the activity of music. I have not focused on how the conductor or other leadership can

play a role to develop the band in a positive or negative direction. I believe that my findings are of relevance for teachers and music therapists working in related fields and I hope that future research will focus on the role of the musical leader in community music projects, such as this. This project does not evaluate the efficiency of the music project. From my own experiences both as a teacher in the Field Band Foundation and from this research project, I feel that there is need for more knowledge concerning how we as music teachers and music therapists can facilitate community music projects in a best possible way. I also hope that more research will be conducted on how participation in music groups can be part of breaking down racism barriers, developing equality and strengthening cultural identity.

Epilogue

Throughout the period of working with this thesis I have kept myself updated on what is happening in the Field Band Foundation. On a few occasions I have received news from South Africa, which have made me sad. It has been challenging to write about the health promoting aspects of participation in a band, and at the same time learning about former students making the wrong choices in life. However, this is a part of social development work and something we have to learn to deal with. Luckily, the good news has outnumbered the bad news. There are numerous of success stories about members managing to create a better future for themselves and as one of my former students once told me; the skills he gained in the field band has helped him a lot in his daily job, even though he does not work with music.

A month before the FIFA World Cup, international attention is drawn to South Africa. The soccer World Cup is always about much more than soccer. It is also an opportunity for the host country to show the world what they have to offer, including music and culture. The Field Band Foundation will be there, performing at the several events. Sigiya Ngenzoma!

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Personal communication

Interviews might contain personal information, which potentially can identify the research participants. Therefore the transcribed material is not attached to the thesis.