

Chapter 1

What is the Lebanon project?

Project development, content, participants
and future aspirations

Vegar R. Storsve

In 2002, I had the pleasure of being invited to an event at Algarheim Elementary School in Ullensaker municipality in Norway. This elementary school had a group of Palestinian refugee children visiting from Lebanon, and the school's music teacher probably knew that this might interest me. The event was to be the conclusion of the visit to the school, and the pupils were going to show what they had been working on. I must admit I was somewhat sceptical, as it would not have been the first time I had had to endure noisy, foul smelling and fluorescent-lit low-budget arrangements in a gymnasium in a Norwegian school. In addition, it was springtime, the roads were free of snow and ice and the sun had started to warm the air. My mode of transport was a bicycle, and it was with a sense of freedom I wheeled down from the Jessheim bridge and across Gystadmyra on a brand new bike and a pedestrian trail on my way to the school this April afternoon. Should I whiz straight past or stop by for a short visit? It was not the first time a music teacher has considered the relationship between work and leisure, I am sure.

In a packed gymnasium, I was greeted with a tremendous show, a mix of Palestinian and Norwegian dance and music performed by children who had practised together and exchanged cultural knowledge for a whole school week. They were bursting with energy and the joy of playing. It looked as if they wanted to give it their all, and they demonstrated to me that friendship and being together in play, song, dance and music could not be prevented by huge differences in culture and in social and ethnic backgrounds. Neither was the lack of a common verbal language a hindrance to these children. I completely forgot the low budget, the gymnasium smell and the fluorescent lighting. Sometimes, noise is a positive thing in a broader perspective. An entire school district had gathered to see their children play, learn and culture exchange with children from a culture often presented by the media as indoctrinating, fundamentalist, frightening and incomprehensible. Of course, we also heard stories about

children having lost both parents and grandparents during conflict and about their hopeless situation in Lebanon and the poor conditions in the refugee camps. Strong emotional reactions from both children and adults, Palestinian and Norwegian alike, were evident that evening. I believe the concept of solidarity was revived in this school district that week. At least it was for me. This meeting at Algarheim was summarised by the Norwegian health organisation Norwegian Aid Committee (NORWAC) as an important experience in their mental health work among Palestinian refugee children in Lebanon. They particularly stressed the way the cultural activities functioned. NORWAC was founded in 1982 with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has since continuously monitored developments in Lebanon and contributed to emergency aid and the building of hospitals and health institutions in that country. In recent years, NORWAC has greatly contributed to the work on psychological health, both in the Palestinian refugee camps and in local Lebanese communities. It was these experiences that sparked the idea to invite a group of children and youth from the camps to visit the Algarheim Elementary School in 2002. The aim of the visit was to give the refugee children an opportunity to get out of the camp for a while, experience freedom, play, fresh air and a different school culture. For the Norwegian children, the visit was to allow them to experience another culture, teach them solidarity and show them that not all children in this world are as fortunate as they. The experience of this visit made NORWAC decide to conduct some trials to use music more actively in its work in Lebanon. Together with Petter Barg, then music teacher at Algarheim, I was challenged to participate in these trials.

This was the starting point of the work to, among other things, establish permanent cultural activities for children and youth in some of the 12 Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. It was also the start of the development of a cultural cooperation project that now involves several Norwegian, Palestinian and Lebanese schools and organisations, and—not least—it was the starting point for the establishment and development of a professional placement arena for bachelor students at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH).

10 years later—and an almost ordinary Friday in Rashidieh

After several project trips with many different cooperating partners and loaded with considerable experience, Petter Barg and I went to Lebanon in June 2013. We had our ups and downs with big and small challenges during these years, and now the war in neighbouring Syria was having considerable extended effects on Lebanon and represented a major potential hazard. This time, we encountered several challenges

and delays on our way; for example, we had to stay in Beirut for an unexpectedly long time, we could not pass Saida on our way to Tyre due to local battles and we did not get the admission permit from the Lebanese military quarter to enter the Palestinian refugee camp of Rashidieh. Therefore, the tension was high when we were about to pass the Lebanese checkpoint at the camp entrance. Together with our local Palestinian colleague in a private car, we were not spotted this time and therefore were not stopped. The soldiers were occupied with checking the merchandise in a small, battered lorry that had been pulled aside.

In the centre belonging to the Palestinian health and social organisation The National Institution of Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT) / Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS), the children were already in full swing rigging instruments and equipment for the reception concert the same day. Throughout the years, we have provided a lot of instruments and equipment for ensembles with around 50 children and youth aged 7–20. This Friday, as usual, a lot of work needed doing to arrange all the equipment: 20 fiddles, 10 guitars, keyboard, guitar amplifiers, xylophones, microphones, cables and percussion instruments such as local drums (*derbeka*) and Western drum kits. Most of it was in place this Friday morning, as it usually was. Chadi Ibrahim, who has been the musical leader at the centre since the beginning, had a cheeky twinkle in his eyes when he counted in *vahad, tnen, tleti, araba* (1, 2, 3, 4).

‘Hallingen’ from Alexander Rybak’s *Fairytale* echoed in the concrete building. It was brilliantly performed, with both English and Arabic lyrics in the refrain. The musical arrangement was based on the ‘multi-function score’ concept and contains everything ranging from a two-tone melody on xylophone and melodica and three-tone backing-parts for violins, with few chords, to a rather complicated ‘Halling’¹ tune and with intense rhythmical patterns in the drums. This was one of the tunes the student music teachers from NMH were working on during their placement project in Lebanon in April that year. At today’s concert, the Palestinian children also performed two traditional Arab tunes and a Hungarian folk melody.

When our enthusiastic applause had subsided, there was absolute silence, and everybody directed their gaze to us Norwegians. ‘Your turn,’ Chadi said. As always, when we turn up at one of these Activity Fridays at the BAS centre in Rashidieh, they expect a new repertoire and new ideas from us. Petter and I perform a somewhat funky blues piece on guitar and melodica, a simple tune and four accords and with a little

1 A type of old Norwegian folk dance.

improvisation. True to tradition, the children respond with a rhythmic pat-a-cake, terminating in a resounding 'bravo'.

An ordinary Activity Friday often starts, like today, with everyone joining an ensemble shift. Afterwards, the children join different instrument groups with a dedicated teacher or with one of the youth functioning as an assistant teacher. This Friday, we split the group in two—one melody group and one backing group. The first group get instructions on various simple backing parts, while the other group is practicing the melody. All of it is based on ear, supported by visualisations using the instruments and a range of adapted notations. After a while, the groups come together again for the first attempt at the ensemble. The tune is repeated over and over again, as we and the local teachers show, support and assist where we see and hear there is a need for it. The atmosphere on the premises is good, and the joy of mastery and the sense of community appear to be the most prominent among the participants. When the ensemble is over, many of the children are reluctant to leave and take several detours and find pressing duties to take care of before they leave the centre. Some want contact through questions such as 'What is your name?' (even though they know the answer very well) and 'How old are you?' Others want to show what they are able to play on their instrument or just to talk with and fool around with their friends. Suddenly, a group of young people starts a dance that gradually evolves into a big circle dance where everyone joins in. Again, I get a strong feeling that this centre and this music activity represent an important 'breathing space' in an otherwise gloomy daily life for many of these children. The minutes fly by, and the leaders have to nag and chase the children who are supposed to go home. Many of the slightly older ones are supposed to go to Friday prayers in the mosque, and the lunch, prepared by the volunteers at the centre, is now ready for the employees and the visitors.

After lunch, the oldest youth return and are ready for a new session directed at them and the teachers. The objective is to prepare for the teaching on Sunday, the second weekly activity day at the centre. We go through, repeat and test out the parts we have presented up to now, as well as new possibilities in the musical arrangement. If the teaching material and tunes are to be put into use later, it is paramount that the teachers and assistant teachers get an outline of the content and are able to pass it on to the younger participants. This session emerges into a jam session with a fine mixture of blues, Norwegian 'Reinlender' music and traditional Arabic music. Just when we think it is all done for today and are supposed to have some meetings with the leaders of the centre, the premises is once again filling up with children and youth

making ready to practice Palestinian folk dance (debke) for the following week's performance at a prominent event in the UNESCO hall in Beirut.

In the remainder of this chapter, I outline the development of the *Lebanon project* so far, the main content of the music part and those who are involved in the project. I will also share some ideas for future development. The presentation will be chronologic, and I will divide the time span into six periods: 2003–2005, 2005–2007, 2007–2009, 2009–2012, 2012–2014 and 2014–2018.

The music activities in Rashidieh have developed over a period of 15 years, and this has been a central part of and the most stable arena for professional placement in Lebanon for NMH student music teachers since 2005. In conjunction with the *Lebanon project*, NMH has also been involved in establishing music teaching at several Lebanese schools, which again has prompted these schools to employ music teachers and to make the music discipline an integral part of their curriculum. Every year, our NMH students visit these schools and hold concerts as part of their project placement.

Palestinians in Lebanon

The UN recommendation in 1947 to divide Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state and the subsequent proclamation of the state of Israel in 1948 resulted in major political conflicts leading to what is called the Arab–Israeli war. As a result, 750,000 Palestinians were urged and/or forced to flee their farms and homes. The UN estimates that approximately 300,000 Palestinians fled to Lebanon in the spring of 1948 under what the Arabs call Al Naqba, 'The Catastrophe'. It is difficult to establish the exact number of Palestinians living in the country today, 70 years on, not least because the last census in Lebanon was conducted in 1932. The UN's organisation for Palestinian refugees in the Middle East, UNRWA, reckons there are between 350,000 and 450,000 Palestinians in Lebanon. More than 90% of them are under the age of 60, which means that most Palestinians living in Lebanon today were born there and constitute 10% of the population. The country is marked by its history of Israeli occupation and internal civil wars and continuing major political, religious and ethnical conflicts. The war in Syria has resulted in a continuous stream of new refugees, many of them Palestinians moving in with relatives and friends in the already overcrowded refugee camps.

Palestinians in Lebanon are still denied basic human rights such as citizenship, the right to vote and the right to own a house or other properties. Furthermore, Lebanese laws prevent Palestinians from holding a multitude of occupations. Their only safety net is what minimal help they receive to survive, basic healthcare and basic education of, by our standards, poor quality provided by UNRWA. UNRWA was established by the UN General Assembly as a temporary arrangement on 8 December 1949. Their mandate was to be renewed every three years if needed, and in the absence of a permanent solution, this has been renewed several times (<http://www.unrwa.org>).

The Palestinian refugee camp Rashidieh

An UNRWA survey on the 12 official Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon reveals that the Rashidieh camp is divided into 'old' and 'new' parts. The French government built the old part in 1936 to accommodate Armenian refugees fleeing to Lebanon, while UNRWA built the 'new camp' in 1963 to house Palestinian refugees evacuated from the Gouraud camp in the Baalbek district in Lebanon. Most of the inhabitants of the Rashidieh camp come from the northern part of Palestine. The camp is situated by the coast, about 5 km from Tyre. Today, more than 27,500 registered refugees are living in this camp, an area of approximately 2 km². The possibility for employment is very limited. UNRWA runs four schools, including a high school, in Rashidieh. They also run a health centre and programmes for food and emergency aid (<http://www.unrwa.org>).

Support from NGOs

In addition to UNRWA, these refugees are dependent on help from family abroad and/or local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Our most important partner in this project who runs the aforementioned music project is the Palestinian health and social organisation BAS. For more than 40 years, this organisation has worked with deprived children and their families. BAS runs a centre in each of the 12 Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, offering among other things family guidance, dental services, kindergartens and help with homework. They regard international contact and culture as important in their work, and the combination of culture and mental health has become a trademark of their activity.

Cooperation and network

During a period of relative political optimism in Lebanon in 2000–2005, NORWAC was engaged in numerous mental health projects in cooperation with several organisations in Lebanon. They have been working to establish a network of professionals from Norway and Lebanon to build better organised facilities in this field in Lebanon. The Marouf Saad Foundation (MSF)² in the city of Saida has started a schooling facility for mothers to teach them to better help their children who attend the MSF schools. The Imam Sadr Foundation (IAS)³ in the city of Tyre has started courses for nursing students on mental health issues. At one of their schools, NORWAC has also helped establish a separate department for teaching children with special needs, a group one usually does not see much of in the Lebanese school system. Family Guidance Centres have also been established in Beirut and Tyre in cooperation with BAS. These centres were established to diagnose children with learning difficulties and to help determine which facilities can best assist them.

This network is the starting point for the common culture project that NMH is a part of and that we discuss parts of in this anthology. This cooperative project is informally referred to as the *Lebanon project* and has developed into a collaboration between NORWAC, the Forum for Culture and International Cooperation (FORUM), NMH, Jessheim High School and Algarheim Elementary School⁴.

An extensive and good cooperative climate has gradually developed over the years, and all the partners constitute important parts of a large network of solidarity work, health work, cultural exchange and teaching. Last but not least, this collaborative project has turned into an important arena for fieldwork and professional placement for NMH students.⁵

2 Conf. Chapter 2 for information about the organisations.

3 Conf. Chapter 2 for information about the organisations.

4 Conf. Chapter 2.

5 Conf. Chapters 3 and 9

2003–2005

The music project is established

During the period from 2003 to the first visit by fieldwork students from the Bachelor's Programme in Music Education at NMH in April 2005, Petter Barg and I headed 10 project trips to Lebanon. We initiated cooperation with three local musicians at the BAS centre in Rashidieh. The Palestinians have a long tradition of folk dance (debke), which is a common activity for the children and youth at the centres and which our collaborating local musicians were already involved in. What was to be our challenge, then, was to demonstrate that children and youth are also able to learn to play a musical instrument without having to attend lessons regularly and to solo with a 'master performer'. We wanted to show that music and ensemble could have a social function, giving the participants the experience of mastery and assurance, as well as actually learning something from it. The goal was to present music activities in the camp using the motto 'coziness and chaos, a breathing space in everyday life, from playing to learning and music for everybody' (Storsve, 2008, p. 62 and 63).

We invited friends and colleagues, teachers, kindergarten teachers, musicians, music therapists and music students, both privately and through our own workplaces in Norway, to participate in the work. We found there was enormous interest and enthusiasm and that the activities in the refugee camps were very positively received by the participants and the BAS leaders.

Parallel to the work in refugee camps, we also attempted to demonstrate music teaching and carry out teacher training activities in schools run by IAS. All this work was organised through NORWAC's contacts in mental health projects. These activities were financed mainly by NORWAC, although many were also based on private funding and idealism.

Local contacts and cultural encounters

Throughout, we have worked to gather musicians and other professionals to work continuously to support the local activities in Lebanon. As previously mentioned, there is no tradition in Lebanon for teaching music, especially not in the Muslim culture, and musicians do not have high status. On the contrary, they are often regarded as frivolous and not serious.

On our visits, we have placed importance on doing a multitude of demonstration lessons at several schools and culture centres. We have encouraged learning through experiencing mastery and joy and have demonstrated customised training regarding the level of competence, function, gender and age. The teaching material we have presented is inter-cultural, but at the same time we have encouraged participants to incorporate music from their own culture.

These early experiences from Lebanon were distinguished by many new challenges in the meeting between Norwegian, Lebanese and Palestinian cultural traditions, especially regarding how music is viewed, who should be playing music, which music genres are acceptable and which are haram (sinful). Gradually, we detected changes and nuances. First, I will emphasise the differences in how music is viewed. We were mainly in contact with Muslim culture but could detect no standard for what was accepted and what was not. Some people were used to considering music as sinful and were sceptical about music activities in general. Some considered music as something associated with certain people of low standing. Second, there were divisive opinions regarding different genres and instruments. Some hold that 'classical music' has an edifying function and that popular music is something to avoid. Others are, for religious or political reasons, opposed to using, for example, traditional debke drums in the teaching or believe that the jazz saxophone symbolises American imperialism or a culture with roots in frivolity, promiscuity and drunkenness. We even had a six-month halt of the project at one of the schools when we wanted to acquire guitars for the teachers at the beginning of a supplementary training course. The school board regarded it unfit to have string instruments in the school. Eventually, guitars were purchased for the teachers participating in the project, and the only explanation for this seemed to be that guitars would be accepted for pedagogical use. Third, we were faced with a few gender-related challenges, especially regarding dance activities with both men and women in the same room. However, we had witnessed breakneck speed dancing at local weddings and were familiar with the strong dance tradition of several cultures in the country. Despite the many objections, we could also find spokesmen/women for the important role of music in breeding and discipline, improving concentration and fine motor function. Others would argue for the function of music activities in developing creativity. Many different arguments and motifs (many more than I can mention here) emerged in the discussions. A common element in the discussion was a positive curiosity and interest in the activities, particularly related to children and youth. Several of the musicians we have collaborated with have stated that they gradually experience a growing respect for their music competence and an understanding that this competence may have a positive value.





We have also followed the attempt of one of our partners to gain acceptance in their local community for arranging a school concert for the students at their school. In many respects, music education appeared to be a new and exciting theme for discussions in many of the institutions, and we experienced much positive wonderment and openness. What the basic grounds for music activities in the various institutions and schools are here today I am not quite sure. But then I guess we are not fully aware of the situation in Norwegian society, either.

Many teachers and heads of organisations expressed a wish to have music activities established at their schools and organisations in Lebanon. The main obstacle seems to be a lack of professional music teachers, both in schools and in voluntary music organisations. The music conservatory in Lebanon⁶ offers traditional teaching focusing on music theory and instrumental tuition and runs both an Oriental and a Western orchestra. They also have a kind of music school with instrumental teaching for all levels, from beginners to students at a professional level, with branches in Saida and Tripoli.

In a conversation my colleague from NMH Inger Anne Westby and I had with the then president of the music conservatory of Lebanon, Walid Gholmieh (1938–2011), he voiced an interest in collaborating with NMH on music teacher education in Lebanon. His predicament was that there was no tradition for the music discipline in Lebanese schools and was therefore a risk of music teachers being educated only to find no work. He also told us that plans for music as an elementary school subject had been prepared, whilst the teachers we were in contact with told us they did not have music in their curriculum due to a lack of music teachers. The situation might appear rather grim, and with only a few Norwegian idealists and a rather small budget, we came to acknowledge our limitations for this work at the time.

New possibilities

During this period, we contacted artist Sophie Rodin, who at that time worked on a decoration project at the newly built BAS centre in Rashidieh. Our meeting and collaboration in Rashidieh resulted in Sophie inviting some of us to help establish a foundation that would have some means at its disposal for international culture work among children and youth. She writes:

⁶ More on the music conservatory in chapter 2.

I can see the development potential in the project and want to continue this work. In order to expand the frames and possibilities, the foundation Forum for Culture and International Cooperation (FORUM) is established. Two musicians, Vegar [Storsve] and Petter [Barg], the coordinator of NORWAC, Kjersti [Fiveland], Gro [Gjestrud], who is a translator, and myself will form the foundation's board. We aim to develop culture projects in Rashidieh and maybe expand to other camps. I can see a possibility of introducing drawing and painting activities as a permanent offer. We are also discussing getting engaged in the library of the centre and working to better their command of English. We have lots of ideas (Rodin, 2006, p. 61).

With the establishment of the FORUM, the project expanded considerably in terms of funding, predictability and impact area. The objective—to offer as many children and youth in a difficult situation due to war or poverty as possible continuous culture education facilities—was ambitious, and FORUM soon saw its limitations regarding the need for and the possibility of increased activity. FORUM discussed ways to involve more people in this work. I therefore presented the possibility of initiating a collaboration with NMH. Through employee and student participation, NMH already had several experiences and ideas to continue the work. This led to FORUM giving NMH students some economic support to travel to Lebanon and participate in the project.

2005–2007

NMH enters the field

Based on all the interesting issues we encountered in Lebanon and the promise of external economic support from FORUM and NORWAC, the notion of student participation in the project was presented in early fall 2004. The response was very positive, and as NMH was in the process of strengthening the content of music educator training by means of a broader multicultural profile, we thought this project might provide a useful arena. Furthermore, we hoped NMH's participation would help fulfil the intentions of FORUM's objectives.

A budget was set up and some preconditions for participation presented, which the students had to consider. In addition to the grants from FORUM, NORWAC and NMH, the field trip entailed a small economic deductible for the students. A programme

for the trip was set up. We held three planning meetings with nine students who had chosen to participate in this pilot project in the spring of 2005. NMH took this opportunity to send more teachers, and Signe Kalsnes, who could support the students and help assess the potential of future activities in the project, joined the team. The NMH funding was drawn from the Department of Education and Research to develop the vocational aspect of the teacher training. In their letter of allotment, some of the provisions were as follows:

Interdisciplinary topics and disciplines, such as adapted teaching, multicultural diversity, entrepreneurship, cooperation with the parents, preventing bullying and the ability to meet children and youth in different crises, should be emphasised (Department of Education and Research, NMH).

The present project was regarded as exceptionally relevant for our institution because it included several of the criteria listed by the Department, and as it focused on new arenas for fieldwork and because it had a cultural exchange and internationalisation perspective.

Report from a field trip to Lebanon for the students in the Bachelor's Programme in Music Education 31.03–09.04.2005

Nine students from the Bachelor's Programme in Music Education and three teachers from NMH participated in the first field trip to Lebanon. The time spent on this field trip was legitimated by the working methods of the curriculum for the subject 'Minority cultures/ethnic music orientation' (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2003, p. 48)⁷, in addition to a great deal of voluntary effort from both students and teachers. After this experience with what we termed a *pilot project* in the discipline 'Minority cultures/ethnic music orientation', a report was written. This report was based on the experiences of both students and teachers and was meant to document the project content and form the basis of planning for later placements for students and of a strategy for the development of the *Lebanon project* as a whole at NMH. To present this background material, I choose to reproduce an excerpt from the report.

7 'Through the work on this subject, the student shall obtain insight into the main features of the ethnomusicological discipline history, develop the ability for critical reflection and problematising through studying other music cultures and obtain experience of a broad specter of ethnic music. The teaching shall be held in the form of tutorials, projects, workshops and possibly excursions.' From the curriculum for the Bachelor's Programme in Music Education (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2003, p. 48).

Excerpt from 2005 report

A pilot project in the subject 'Minority culture/ethnic music orientation'. Vegar Storsve and Inger Anne Westby

The work in the Palestinian refugee camp Rashidieh, Tyre

BAS is a health and social organisation working inside the Palestinian refugee camp. At their centre, both students and teachers did practical work with the children and exchanged musical experiences with the musicians Chadi, Nabil and Haider. The idea was to continue the work by expanding the repertoire and methods for the music teaching. We worked with music in terms of both general joint activities and instrumental groups. A common repertoire was rehearsed, which was to culminate in an ensemble with everybody. The NMH students contributed with teaching and guidance of both individual students and mixed-age groups of students on different levels. Some of the NMH students also got the opportunity to try instructing and directing the entire ensemble.

The teaching culminated in a fantastic show where everyone participated. A grand orchestra with 40 children and 14 adults sang and played 'Sambalele' and 'Look, the sun is rising'. We got to see and hear Palestinian dance, polka and 'Reinlender' (Norwegian folk dance) performances, Palestinian/Arabic drumming and a couple of songs by Tom Næss in Norwegian. The NMH students had also planned their own section in the concert.

The work at Imam Sadr Foundation Elementary School, Tyre

The NMH students observed how the teachers worked in their student groups using adapted teaching and music activities from previous courses. In collaboration with the school's music teacher, the NMH students arranged a concert for all the students of the Special Education Department.

Visit to the conservatory in Lebanon

We had made an appointment with the President of the conservatory in Lebanon, Walid Gholmieh, to witness a rehearsal of the symphony orchestra and the

Oriental orchestra at the conservatory. In addition, the NMH students were taken on a guided tour, and they were invited to attend individual teaching of the main instruments. The conservatory in Lebanon does not offer music teaching education but is very keen to develop the collaboration on music pedagogy with NMH regarding music teaching in schools.

Student evaluation 10.05.05

Before we go:

- Important to prepare ourselves in advance concerning the music material we will be working on. The students' preparation may, for example, involve preparing ensemble arrangements of the material.
- It is hard to make preparations when one does not know the groups, relevant tasks, space, materials, etc. To what extent are we able to do more research here, and to what extent is this fieldwork experience relevant?
- All the students ought to have 1–2 games they can teach here and now. Everybody ought to have written down and tested ensemble arrangements for the material we will use.
- The students ought to have rehearsed material suitable for off-the-cuff performance.

In Lebanon:

- Time for summary, planning the next day—approximately 30 minutes at the end of each workday.
- Clarify the need for guidance. What do the students need?
- Should the assignment tasks or research questions be clarified before we leave?

Value of a project like this in the study:

- 'I can't envisage a better way to learn about teaching in another culture.'
- 'Have to practice teaching on a wholly new level due to language problems. As well as being an important experience as teacher, it will provide a unique insight into how schoolchildren with a different linguistic background

may experience teaching in a classroom in Norway, where teaching takes place in Norwegian.'

- 'Offers unique insight into how music can contribute to life quality. Hard to find equivalent professional placement/experience in Norway because music has a very different standing in school and cultural life.'

Our experiences (participating lecturers), April 2005

The students have the possibility of personal and musical meetings at several levels. From a multicultural perspective, it means a lot that the students can encounter other music cultures in their original context and get a feel of the challenges of teaching and guiding children of another linguistic, musical and cultural background.

For the adult musicians in the camp, it is inspiring to meet students that have significant pedagogical skills in addition to being competent performers. Both the adults and the children are very motivated to acquire more knowledge and are eager to introduce new instruments and activities. They also greatly appreciate being able to share their culture with us. The dance group has achieved a very high competence level and serves to inspire the younger children. This group is being invited to present their folk dances abroad. This creates further inspiration and provides support for the performers in the cultural identity work.

Teachers and leaders at the Imam Sadr Elementary School are also motivated for further courses. It turns out that our rather frequent presence inspires continuous practice. Every time we visit, they want to show us what they have been working on. The regular visits are paramount for keeping up the motivation and providing more subject-specific material.

Regarding the work at both the camp and at Imam Sadr Elementary School, NMH's professional contribution is most significant. By running courses for teachers and schoolchildren, our teachers educate teachers and adult musicians, and prepare a potential professional placement arena for our students.

In addition to the practical teaching activities, another objective is to motivate NMH students and the music academy as an institution to engage in this type

of activity in the future and to show how international work can also be a professional arena for musicians and music teachers.

Assessments of NMH's possibilities and future role in the Lebanon project

From an internationalising perspective

Traditionally, the internationalising work of Norwegian educational institutions consists of student and teacher exchanges and education collaboration between educational institutions of equal standing. the *Lebanon project* does not have this focus but adds a new dimension to the internationalising work by focusing on cultural diversity and education as international aid. Both perspectives are important in UNESCO's work for education from a global perspective and may be of increased importance in the internationalising work of the education sector. In the *Lebanon project*, NMH's participation in music pedagogy, both in Palestinian refugee camps and at the Imam Sadr Elementary School, bears evidence of professional and pedagogy-related aid work. The work will entail both training of the teachers/leaders/musicians involved and work with schoolchildren. Any future NMH participation in the Lebanon project might therefore have an education perspective.

From a teacher training perspective

In Norwegian teacher training, there is an increasing focus on the multicultural challenges facing teachers in both elementary and secondary schools, and municipal music and arts schools. Is it sufficient to open the gates to students with a different musical and cultural background and have them participate in the activities traditionally offered by the schools, or is it necessary to change these activities in line with the wishes and musical/cultural prerequisites of the users?

Future music teachers will be expected to be familiar with schoolchildren's different musical/cultural expressions and to be able to meet them with insight and knowledge. Furthermore, it is of great value to the NMH students to experience teaching children across musical/cultural affiliations and without a common language.

From an R&D perspective

If NMH decides on a more long-term involvement in Lebanon, R&D projects related to this activity will be well prepared. In this type of project, student involvement will be both welcome and necessary. In Lebanon, we see great potential for developing an R&D project where music teaching, cultural exchange and a multicultural perspective are emphasised and where students participate actively.

New ideas, new field trips

Many exciting and positive experiences form the basis of further development and planning for the project. The project had ambitions to expand the target group in Lebanon, and at NMH there was an interest in further development and in involving more student groups and teachers from other study programmes. We felt a need for a tighter organisation in Lebanon, an improved preparation process for the students and integrating more lines of study at NMH. We also saw the need for securing a close collaboration with relevant organisations in both Norway and Lebanon, for economic and organisational reasons. At NMH, two lecturers who applied to the Committee for Educational Quality were granted resources to prepare a more systematic documentation of the students' stay in relation to the potential of the professional placement experience of the field trip. We used these allocated resources on a trip to Lebanon to make a detailed plan of the content for the next field trip for the music educator students. Again, we were to run a music course for the local teachers and social workers and establish contact with more institutions and relevant arenas for professional placement for our students. Three master's students in music therapy who wanted to use our local contacts in Lebanon for fieldwork for their master's theses joined us on this trip, and the participating teachers took on the roles of tutors and facilitators for their activities and observations. We implemented courses for teachers at Imam Sadr Elementary School in Tyre and new ideas for the work at the BAS centres in three Palestinian refugee camps. We also visited and carried out demonstration teaching at the schools of the Marouf Saad Foundation in Saida. As music therapy students had joined us this time, some of the courses and the demonstration teaching were devoted to music therapy activities and discussions around this. The activities were well received, and this was an important contribution beyond what we music educators usually

present. Not least, it resulted in good discussions on the differences and similarities of music in therapy, music in educational activity and music as a recreational activity. Again, we saw the enormous impact of this project

A new project report from 2006 and experiences from 2005 provided us with ideas for development opportunities and issues we wanted to follow up on concerning the student field trip, potential R&D activities and measures for further development in Lebanon. We wished to:

- convey the unique placement opportunities, both of an educational and a performing nature, embedded in encountering the multicultural perspective in a culture different to our own;
- convey how we, with our culture traditions, are perceived by and in other cultures;
- investigate the multicultural encounters, focusing on which educational challenges these encounters offer when we are the ones who are the 'strangers';
- develop new arenas for reflection on our own basic views of music education (humanitarian and educational views, views on knowledge, etc.)
- get the students more involved in the R&D activities through their experiences and logs and
- generate R&D projects at NMH that can provide new knowledge about the relationship between music education and the field of professional placement.

Further work on project development

The multicultural field is a reality in the society for which student teachers are educated. At the same time, we know that educational institutions are slow in changing their traditions and working methods. From this perspective, we found the project unique in that it did not require anything more from us than testing out new ideas in new cultural contexts. We thought it would offer our students valuable experiences.

As an institution, NMH is able to make the knowledge and experiences from the project available for people other than those participating by working systematically on the project as R&D work. We considered the possibilities of designing one or more R&D projects as very good. In spring 2006, practitioners in the music education specialist environment wrote an application to the Research Council of Norway focusing mainly on this theme. We were not granted external research funding in this round, but internal priorities at NMH gave new inspiration to continue evolving the project.

We still held this to be a very interesting and a strategically important area for the education sector. Therefore, we wanted to:

- develop the joint R&D project that formed the basis for the application to the Research Council in 2006;
- use personal R&D time (with individual adjustments) to make the Lebanon project into a combined professional placement and research project;
- assess the possibility for increased NMH participation in the form of more student and lecturer groups and
- investigate the possibility of initiating an international cooperation project with one or more educational institutions in Lebanon/the Palestinian territories to improve qualifications/provide further education in music for teachers and musicians.

2007–2009

Formalising the activities at NMH

In the process of involving lecturers and students from both music education and music therapy studies at NMH, a professional placement project for our students was established in Lebanon and was anchored in the curriculum as an integral part of the subjects offered students in the bachelor's programme in music education.⁸ Furthermore, we launched an opportunity for music education and music therapy master's students to participate in the project as fieldwork. Several master's students expressed interest, and colleague Rita Strand Frisk joined as an observer and tutor for music therapy students.

More than 100 students have participated in the work in Lebanon in one way or another. Some students have used their experiences in their master's thesis, while students at the bachelor's level write reflection logs of their teaching and concert experiences from their placement in Lebanon. The focus has been on music education, music education development work, community music, music dissemination, concertising, cultural exchange, studies of foreign cultures' music and music and health in music therapy. Since 2007, the project has had a separate budget post at NMH, and

8 Ref. Chapter 3.

the tutors participating in the project have to a great extent applied their experiences in their R&D work, both in the preparation of teaching materials and by publicising and disseminating their research findings.⁹

Student logs

We have now established a fixed routine for the music education students to write a log in the aftermath of the placement in Lebanon to reflect on their experiences in the project. The logs have developed over the years, and we have focused on systemising and collecting them as they might offer valuable insight regarding the development of the project.

The logs have been used as empirical data in the R&D work (Brøske Danielsen, 2012; 2013), have been used to make adjustments to the course and the content of the field trips and have been used to legitimise the project as part of the NMH activities. In addition to R&D, the planning process for new field trips and guidance during the project implementation, the logs provide an important pedagogical opportunity for the students to seriously reflect on these experiences. The students write about strong personal interactions with foreign cultures that have given them new perspectives on both the music discipline and other more personal matters. Many of the students see new opportunities for occupational arenas in the future. They find their placement in Lebanon a most relevant background experience for educational music activity in multicultural Norway (Brøske Danielsen, 2012). Even Ruud (2012) also uses the *Lebanon project* as an example in his discussions on which qualifications music teachers and music workers will need in the future and has coined the term 'new health musicians' (Ruud, 2012, p. 95).

Students as performers

An important part of our activity that we have continuously developed and made a priority in the *Lebanon project* is to give different audience groups in Lebanon a live music experience. The NMH students prepare a concert to be performed at various institutions and schools in southern Lebanon that contribute to the objective of giving the students experiences in holding concerts in unfamiliar and foreign cultural environments.¹⁰ In 2007, our students contributed to a historic breakthrough by

9 Ref. also Chapter 5.

10 Ref. Chapter 9.

holding a concert in a public high school in the village of Shohour.¹¹ Under previous principals, music had not been welcome at this school. The new principal showed a great interest in our work in Lebanon, and he joined NMH students' concerts at other schools on several occasions. He had applied to central school authorities and local imams for permission to invite us, and his application was finally granted. Since then, we have followed up with annual concerts at this high school, and through contacts in this project the high school in Shohour has also signed a friendship and cooperation agreement with Jessheim High School.

2009–2012

The need for further education

Our experiences from working in Lebanon have showed that it is difficult to find qualified teachers willing to teach music in classrooms or as a leisure time activity, as done in Rashidieh.¹² Furthermore, there is no tradition of applying music as a tool in the teaching of other subjects or in health and social work. Neither the conservatory nor the universities in the region offer courses in music pedagogy. Starting in 2009, NMH has, in collaboration with NORWAC and FORUM, established a three-year long educational programme for 40 people from our partner organisations working as elementary school teachers and/or culture, health and social workers among Lebanese and Palestinian children and youth. Through workshops and tutoring in The X-art Project¹³, the participants have obtained certain basic qualifications to apply different art disciplines in their work. NMH lecturers have contributed by teaching basic skills in music and dance and didactic thinking around the use of this competence in various teaching situations. The feedback on the project from the participants and their respective principals/heads of organisations has been very positive. They report a great need to continue developing competence in recruiting and educating more music workers. They also voice a big need and wish to increase the competence of those who have already participated in The X-art Project.

11 More on the school in Shohour in Chapters 2 and 9.

12 More on the music project in Rashidieh in Chapter 3.

13 Ref. Chapter 4.

Increasing involvement

Throughout the entire period, and especially after 2009, the *Lebanon project* has been subject to greater attention at NMH. This is not least due to the project becoming better known, and we detect an increasing involvement among the students as well as the staff. The students have arranged fundraising for instruments and teaching, held support concerts, recorded a Christmas CD for the benefit of the project and taken on the responsibility of hosts for visits to NMH. We continuously receive inquiries from students who have previously participated in the project and other young musicians about the possibility of joining the project. We have succeeded in involving many of them. For example, we have managed to facilitate fieldwork in Lebanon for a Danish master's student at Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitetsskole. He spent more than eight months in Lebanon collecting empirical data for his thesis and working as a music teacher. He shares with us some of his experiences of cultural exchange in this anthology.¹⁴ In addition, since 2009 Brit Ågot Brøske has been heavily involved in the work by participating as a tutor for the music education students in their project placement, being a course instructor in the X-art Project, doing research and being one of the editors of this anthology.

The presidency and administrative management of NMH have had a positive attitude towards the project. In order to obtain a better assessment basis for the frequent applications for funding of the activities in Lebanon, the vice-president of NMH Ingrid Maria Hanken requested an evaluation of the project in 2010. The NMH administration was commissioned to design and implement a study in connection with the evaluation. All the NMH students and lecturers who had been involved in the project were invited to participate in a survey. In addition, three Palestinian teachers from one of the refugee camps and the leaders of the local organisations in Lebanon got the opportunity to comment on the project (Norwegian Academy of Music, 2011). The results of the survey were available in 2011, and the conclusions from the survey were predominantly positive in favour of continuing the project.

The results of the survey inspired us and the presidency to initiate further work to continue and expand our engagement in Lebanon. This is based both on the social mandate of our institution and on the potentially wide scope of this project for our students' education. We now wanted to strengthen dissemination of our experiences and continue to contribute with our competence. This has resulted in the work on

¹⁴ Ref. Chapter 8.

this anthology, and it is most pleasing to be able to present parts of this work at NMH that show a social involvement beyond educating good musicians.¹⁵

2012–2014

Optimism and further planning

Throughout the 2012–2013 academic year, we discussed how we can help increase expertise in Lebanon. In connection with this, we have designed an education programme and have applied to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for economic collaboration on this.

Pending an answer from the Ministry, we continue with project development internally at NMH. In particular, we are trying to involve additional student groups. The then Vice-Principal and Artistic Director, Kjell Tore Innervik, participated as an observer at the students' concerts in connection with their project placement in Lebanon in April 2013. As a follow-up, we prepared a project specification for the course 'Music in perspective' for performing master's students. The students now have the opportunity to choose to participate in a concert tour for our network in Lebanon; this began in Spring 2014. Seventeen students expressed interest in this.

On a project trip to Lebanon in June 2013, Geir Johansen, coordinator for the master's programme in music pedagogy, participated as an observer. His work in this connection targets potential problem areas and ideas for future master's projects and further R&D related to the *Lebanon project*.¹⁶

From autumn 2013 onwards, we were again engaged in preparing new students for the annual professional placement project of the third year KAMP students.¹⁷ The first edition of this anthology was also published in autumn 2013. The aim was to facilitate further development and continuity of the work, and we think the milieu at NMH has an obligation and are qualified to move this work forward.

15 Ref. also Chapter 11.

16 Ref. Chapters 6 and 7 for details.

17 More on this in Chapter 3.

New challenges – Rejection by UD

UD rejected our application for support for the competence building of music workers in southern Lebanon. In addition, the economic support of student participation from our partners was about to be phased out, as the FORUM fund was dwindling and NORWAC was faced with new restrictions on what they could allocate means to as a health organization. NMH's budget was earmarked for supervision of students' professional placement, project management and R&D activities—in other words, means that primarily should be allocated to teacher activities. Therefore, we knew we had to provide some new financial support from an external source to be able to offer our future students this professional placement project. However, the student placement for spring 2014 was secured economically and was well planned for both bachelor student music teachers and master's students.

A temporary halt

We live in a turbulent world. In Norway, we experienced a terrorist attack against the Government Quarter in Oslo and mass killings at a political youth camp on the island of Utøya in Buskerud on 22 July 2011. In the latter incident, 69 people were killed, and another 66 young people were seriously injured. The aim of the terrorist was to punish political organizations enabling what he termed an Islamist takeover of the world.¹⁸

Due to increased vigilance against terror in general, further intensification of, for example, the war in Lebanon's neighbour Syria, the political conflicts across the world and growing support for the activities of fundamentalist groups and resulting terrorist acts, the Norwegian government felt the need to run through the security and preparedness routines of our public institutions. NMH was also challenged on this. One of the conclusions drawn from this review was that NMH would not offer any field trips to areas that UD discouraged Norwegian citizens to travel to. Since the civil war in Lebanon and some later conflicts, such as along the border between southern Lebanon and Israel, UD's official travel advisory has warned against non-essential trips to certain areas of Lebanon, including south of the Litani River. Our main partners reside in the town of Tyre, which happens to be located in that area. Therefore, the professional placement in Lebanon had to be called off in spring 2014.

¹⁸ <https://no.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massedrapene>

2014–2018

The work continues

The situation in Lebanon is still perceived as chaotic and under pressure on several fronts. There is a huge influx of Syrian refugees, leading to new challenges, antagonisms and conflicts. The Palestinian refugee camps are also being overcrowded by new Palestinian refugees who have fled the war in Syria. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, every fourth inhabitant in Lebanon is a refugee from Syria or Palestine.¹⁹

The politicians in Lebanon are finding it hard to form a functioning government, and basic community services are being neglected. This imposes new challenges on the many NGOs that are doing their best to provide basic aid and health services. The schools have become overcrowded, and many children cannot attend. Unemployment is on the rise, especially among marginalized groups fighting for the few jobs available. Despite this, we witness our partners go to great lengths to continue to develop cultural activities and education for children and youth. Many of them hold that the need for activities focusing on community, mental health, learning and knowledge are especially important in times like these. We notice that music activities, such as participating in choirs, dance groups, ensembles and other forms of music training, have been established and have evolved in the Beit Atfal centres in several Palestinian refugee camps. The inspiration from Norwegian musicians and teachers has always been considered a vital contribution to the motivation and development of the programme, according to Mahmoud Seidan, the current director of the centre in Rashidieh. He adds that the Norwegian economic support of the programme has been a prerequisite for running it. We also notice that several Lebanese schools are rising to the challenging situation, maintaining and continuing to develop music activities and music as a subject for their pupils.

The threat of terror from fundamentalist groups and individuals creates a dilemma regarding further involvement. Is the threat of terror going to prevent us from carrying out our social responsibility as an educational institution to help secure what is termed cultural human rights in areas that are under threat?²⁰ This question will continuously be debated. Nevertheless, we still think that based on our experiences

19 <https://www.flyktninghjelpen.no/herjobbervi/midstosten/vart-landprogram-i-libanon/>

20 See Chapter 11.

as aid workers in the *Lebanon project* and the high value this arena has for learning in the international field, the project deserves continued existence in the future.

Alternative arenas for professional placement

As an arena for new and alternative international professional placement for our students at NMH, this project has provided us with valuable experiences. A tightly knit collaboration with Arts for Young Audiences Norway²¹ has enabled our students and us to participate in and develop some of their international projects. We particularly note their collaboration with the Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts in Bangalore, India, the aim of which is to encourage the discipline of music in Indian primary schools in Bangalore, including Western music and methods. This has resulted in cooperation with NMH, which is now contributing with both tutors and students to increase competence among music teachers in India and to teach children in Indian schools.²²

A similar project integrating NMH students has been set up in Tbilisi, Georgia. Here, NMH is involved in a four-year project with the Tbilisi State Conservatoire to establish a music teacher education programme, including competence building using an active-musicking approach.²³ The project is financed through the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education.²⁴

New strategies for the *Lebanon project*

Currently working on several placement arenas, NMH tutors want to simultaneously contribute to further work on the *Lebanon project*. We have a budget for international project development that allows us to travel to Lebanon. Our tutors contribute with workshops for musicians and teachers in Lebanon and with teaching materials and other R&D. Some of these experiences are presented in the form of research articles in scientific journals and books and as presentations at Norwegian and international conferences. In the fall of 2015, Kim Boeskov was employed as a PhD scholar at NMH. The theme of his PhD is 'The musical practice as cultural performance: Relations of meaning, musical agency and social transformation in community music'. The empirical

21 <http://www.kulturtanken.no/>

22 <http://www.sapa-india.com/sapa-in-schools/sapa-in-schools/brochureforms-and-payments>

23 <https://nmh.no/ansatte/nyheter/5-millioner-til-meir-samarbeid-i-tbilisi>

24 <https://www.siu.no>

material for his work is based on field work in Lebanon in 2016. His thesis is set to be completed in June 2019.

New project collaborators

Interest in the project has come from multiple quarters, such as from students who participated in the professional placement in Lebanon and from the Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts (NCSMPA). With some economic support from the Forum for Culture and International Cooperation, we have succeeded in engaging former students who participated in the project during their period of study. Following new project trips in 2016, they are now about to organize a volunteer special interest organization to support the continued operation of music groups in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

Through our contact with Anders Rønningen, a consultant at The Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts (NCSMPA), we have established a collaboration with NCSMPA. This has resulted in Rønningen and some teachers from municipal schools of music and performing Arts (referred to as culture schools) joining us on a trip to Lebanon to observe the activities. In light of the limited ability of the culture schools to offer refugees in Norway proper facilities, increasing competence in music work in Muslim cultures has been the main objective of employees' participation and engagement. We also see that teaching material and our working methods for the music group in Rashidieh may provide fresh ideas in the work on the brand new broad-ranging educational programmes in the culture schools, as outlined in the new curriculum plan. We are now developing a further educational programme at NMH for culture school teachers, including placement in our network in Lebanon.

Exciting future

We hope our experiences in Lebanon will be a source of inspiration to projects geared towards sharing professional competence to give marginalized groups the chance to participate in music activities, and we hope to get the opportunity to continue developing the *Lebanon project* in the years to come. We believe the project will be resumed as an arena for professional placement for students. We now notice that UD's adjustment of their official travel advice from 2015 is somewhat more specified under the heading 'Lebanon travel information': 'Non-essential travel or staying south

of the Litani River is dissuaded, *with the exception of the town of Tyre* (our italics).²⁵ Rashidieh and several other Palestinian refugee camps are situated in Tyre; hence, we see the possibility of resuming an exciting and informative placement project that means a lot to those involved. We also know this travel advice is continuously being revised by UD.

We have witnessed many warm moments in the meetings with children allowed to experience an instrument they have never touched before let alone play. A lot of eyes were opened wide and filled with tears. We believe this makes a difference to children, young people, students, teachers, researchers, parents and others who are concerned about children's right to have cultural experiences.

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25 https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/utenrikssaker/reiseinformasjon/velg-land/reiseinfo_libanon/id2415116/

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