

Chapter 5

Past R&D activities on the Lebanon project

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This anthology introduces and describes the *Lebanon project*¹, a development project which has been running for more than a decade. Annual reports have been produced detailing the activities and actions that have been carried out. In addition to the work taking place locally in Lebanon, it has also been the intention to involve and inspire various types of research and development activities in connection with the project. Amongst other things, R&D initiatives in music education have focused on different aspects of learning amongst the children and young people participating in the music activities in the Rashidieh refugee camp and amongst music education students from the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) while on professional placements. A study of the musical content of the music activities has also been carried out. Furthermore, projects and studies on music therapy have been conducted, especially in relation to the concept of health. Some of the work carried out straddles both music therapy and music education by incorporating themes such as hope and recognition. A master thesis in music education also looked at the Lebanon project as a form of aid work.

Some of the research into music education has taken place under the research partnership *Music Teacher Education as Professional Studies Between the Institution, Practicum and Labor Market within the Multicultural Society* (MUPP) at the NMH. The process culminated in the anthology *Educating Music Teachers in the New Millennium* (Danielsen & Johansen, 2012) with three chapters dedicated to the Lebanon project. Some of the perspectives highlighted by the project are briefly addressed in the opening and closing chapters. There has been increasing research activity on the Lebanon project since 2009, partly as a result of the above-mentioned MUPP project.

This chapter presents research that has been carried out on the Lebanon project. I have chosen to include research that has been disseminated in written form. Various presentations have also been given, and teaching materials in the form of song arrangements and repertoire have been produced along with CDs containing relevant teaching

1 You can read more about how the project has evolved in Chapter 1.

materials, created and recorded for use on the Lebanon project. This represents an invaluable collection that those involved in the project can use in their work. Some of the reports and books published by the FORUM for Culture and International Cooperation foundation also contain descriptions of teaching content and ideas.² At the end of the chapter is a complete list of publications, presentations, teaching materials and student papers resulting from the Lebanon project. Studies and papers presented for the first time in this anthology will not be addressed further in this chapter.

Perspectives on health, identity, hope and recognition

Two research projects have focused on the potential impact of participating in the music activities at the arts centre in the Rashidieh refugee camp on children and young people. The two projects resulted in the articles *Håp og anerkjennelse [Hope and recognition]* (Storsve, Westby and Ruud, 2009) and *Musikk med helsekonsekvenser. Et musikkpedagogisk prosjekt for ungdommer i en palestinsk flyktningleir [Music's impact on health. A music education project for adolescents in a Palestinian refugee camp]* (Ruud, 2011).

Based on the authors' own experiences and observations of the music activities, the article *Håp og anerkjennelse* (Storsve, Westby and Ruud, 2009) discusses the extent to which participation in musical activity can boost self-esteem, identity and a sense of belonging amongst the Palestinian adolescents in the refugee camp. It also looks at the project's potential in terms of musical learning and personal growth and at how the participants are offered new role models and responsibilities that can give them hope of a better future. The article thus incorporates both music therapy and music education perspectives. Health is a key concept in the article in terms of the Palestinian refugees' personal circumstances with high unemployment, social problems and mental health issues. In this context, health is defined as something more than just physical health. The focus is on a definition of health which depends on cultural factors relating to human rights, social status, sense of belonging, identity, recognition and perceived dignity. The authors claim that the health of Palestinian children and young people living in refugee camps is closely linked to how they perceive personal identity,

2 - Rodin S. and Gjestrud, G., ed., (2008). *Flyktning i Libanon. Fra al-Nakba til Nahr el-Bared*. FORUM for Culture and International Cooperation.

- *X-art - a culture education program from Norway to Lebanon 2009-2011*. FORUM for Culture and International Cooperation.

continuity and affinity in terms of Palestinian history and identity. Experiencing musical learning and development can have a valuable impact on the participants' perceived health through achievement and recognition. The point is made that the communal setting of the music activities in Rashidieh is very generous and multi-dimensional in that it offers opportunities for the participants to position themselves in different roles at one and same time. This generous communality appears to work particularly well where different musical cultures and learning traditions meet and amongst pupils of differing abilities and ages, the authors claim. According to Storsve, Westby and Ruud (2009), the participants in the music project gain social skills that have a positive impact on their expectations for themselves and help strengthen their identity. They gain experience of playing multiple roles, they acquire knowledge of and skills in musical traditions, and they get a fundamental feeling of being seen and acknowledged by those around them. This shows that there is a close link between learning and identity formation. The music project can therefore be said to aid identity formation by empowering the participants. The concept of hope is also central in this context, whereby hope in itself is seen as a health-promoting process by believing that the goals you set yourself are achievable.

The issues addressed in this article are further elucidated with empirical studies in the article *Musikk med helsekonsekvenser. Et musikkpedagogisk prosjekt for ungdommer i en palestinsk flyktningleir [Music's impact on health. A music education project for adolescents in a Palestinian refugee camp]* (Ruud, 2011). In his article, Ruud looks more closely at the potential health effects of participating in the music activities at the arts centre in the Rashidieh refugee camp, in particular how participation generates health benefits known as "generative mechanisms" (ibid., p. 61). The study on which the article is based is an ethnographic study using participant observation and interviews. The author made three field visits between January 2009 and June 2010. During 2009, interviews were conducted with six young Palestinians – three girls and three boys – and a social worker at the Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS)³ arts centre in the camp. The main research question in the study is: *can musical activity have an impact on individuals and groups?* To seek answers to the main question, Ruud also asks: *how do the participants feel about performing in a group?* Ruud identifies generative mechanisms and looks at whether musical collaborations such as this can give the participants experiences that could be seen as being beneficial to health. This article, too, adopts a definition of health as "perceived health", that is to say, a subjective perception of improved well-being and better quality of life. The respondents

3 See chapter 2 for more information about the partner organizations in the project.

feel that participating in the music activities is very important to their vitality and self-experience, whereby mastering an instrument is key. The informants believe that life would be empty and boring without the music project. The girls say they have been given new opportunities and roles and that the project therefore offers them renewed purpose in life. The article also looks at how the project helps strengthen the participants' cultural identity, especially through their own musical traditions in the form of singing, playing and dancing. The article concludes by addressing the relationship between health, subjectivity and the self. In short, we could say that the article and its associated investigations show how participation in the project has the potential to improve the participants' quality of life as they experience achievement, receive recognition and discover contexts and meaning.

Perspectives on health are also central to the article *The new health musicians* (Ruud, 2012), which draws attention to the skills music professionals need in order to engage in health work through musical activity. The article is based on the interviews conducted in 2009 which it uses to discuss a *new kind of health musician*. In order to reap health benefits from music it is vital to be actively involved in music-making in the form of contextual practice where the focus is on the dynamics between person, situation and music (Ruud, 2012). Ruud investigates how musical activity can have an impact on the health of individuals or groups and seeks to identify the characteristics of successful musical interaction. The music project in Rashidieh provides the participants with concrete opportunities for learning and for developing their personal identities. Ruud also discusses whether such projects can promote health more generally by seeing health as something more than just the absence of physical or mental illness. By defining health as a subjective perceived phenomenon, it comes to have everything to do with the feeling of purpose and continuity in life, of control or achievement, and of vitality and emotional flexibility. In this context it should be noted that good health also involves a feeling of having the right or the opportunity to participate in social and political processes (Ruud, 2001). Ruud asserts that such projects have the potential to inject something unique into the relationship between cultural work and the promotion of mental health. What is needed is a kind of musician, therapist, community musician and music teacher – a *health musician* – with the necessary musical knowledge, methodical skills, theoretical background and, not least, the necessary personal, ethical and political values to be able to conduct such *health musicking* projects.

Student music teachers' experiences and learning in an unusual professional placement setting

Both on its own and as a professional placement element for student music teachers at NMH, the music project has provided a platform for investigating topics such as skills development and identity formation for student music teachers as well as our understanding of teaching practice and placements.

In 2010–2011 Brit Ågot Brøske Danielsen conducted a study of the students' reflective journals following the completion of the placement project in the Rashidieh refugee camp. The study formed part of the MUPP⁴ research project at the Norwegian Academy of Music and resulted in two articles: *Community music activity in a refugee camp – student music teachers' practicum experiences* (Danielsen, 2013) and *Praksisbegrepet i musikklererutdanning [The practice concept in music teacher training]* (Danielsen, 2012).

In the article *Community music activity in a refugee camp – student music teachers' practicum experiences* (Danielsen, 2013), the author sought answers to the following questions: *what do student music teachers learn from participating in the professional placement project, and how do these learning experiences relate to the students' development as professional music teachers?* As a theoretical starting point, the article focuses on what characterises professional skills and reflection on different levels. The article is based on an empirical study with a qualitative approach whereby the empirical material is the reflective journals written by the student teachers. The journals were written by students participating in the project in Lebanon in spring 2010. A total of 13 students took part in the study. The students describe the project as the single most important learning experience on the entire course. They also say that to their surprise they found that they could have gained similar experience on other placements in Norway. Further analysis of the material suggests that this apparent paradox relates to a perception of “learning” that does not involve existing knowledge and skills being reconstructed and put to use or applied in new ways and new contexts. The learning experiences that the students felt were unique included challenges concerning the

4 See brief description at the beginning. See also Danielsen and Johansen (Eds.), (2012) *Educating Music Teachers in the New Millennium. Multiculturalism, professionalism and music teacher education in the contemporary society. A Report from a Research and Development Project*. NMH research publications 2012:7.

http://www.nmh.no/forskning/senter_utdanningsforskning_musikk/musikklererutdanning_som_profesjonsutdanning

lack of a shared language between the students and children. By exploring the rich opportunities afforded by body language and the value of musical communication as an integrated part of the teaching strategies, the students began to understand the potency of the non-verbal nature of music. Their participation in and experiences from the Lebanon placement project were a significant motivating factor for reflection on different levels and led to deeper insights into the values and functions that working with vulnerable and marginalised groups may engender. The students' experiences from the project also had an impact on the development of their professional identities, something the students found to be important in motivating them for a future career and giving them a feeling of being suited to the music teaching profession.⁵

The same student journals were also the starting point for the article *Praksisbegrepet i musikk lærerutdanning [The concept of professional placement in music teacher training]* in which Danielsen (2012) investigates the scope for refining the concept professional placement and gaining new perspectives on the concept itself and on placements for music education students. The following issues were addressed in the article: *how can a placement project in a Palestinian refugee camp challenge our thinking around the concept of placements in music teacher training?* The students' journals were examined and analysed anew from a theoretical angle that focused on practice versus theory (Kvernbekk, 2001; Lauvås & Handal, 2000; Grimen, 2008) and on teaching practice as an element in teacher training (Lampert, 2010; Richards & Killen, 1994). The results suggest that the Lebanon placement project challenges both organisational and skills-related issues surrounding music teacher training. The project is organised differently to other placement situations in terms of the number of students teaching together, the context in which it takes place, and the time allocated to participation. A high degree of complexity in the context challenges the students in that they have to reconstruct skills obtained in other contexts to be able to deal with the highly unpredictable situations they encounter. According to Danielsen, the students' existing practices – defined as the habits, routines and behaviours we normally adopt when teaching (Lampert, 2010) – are challenged, and the students have to adapt and change their practices to suit the new context. The terms decomposition and reconstruction (Lampert, 2010) are used to describe the process whereby the students become cognisant of their practices and thus break them down, amend and adapt them for a new context. The author claims that these are key skills for music teachers tasked with teaching in a variety of different contexts and settings. The term “high-leverage practices” (Lampert, 2010) is discussed and defined in order to throw light on the

5 Chapter 3 contains more details of the students' practice experiences in Lebanon.

significance that the students ascribe to the placement project. Significance in this context refers to meaningfulness, emotional involvement and inner motivation in the students. The results of the study also show the importance of taking a relational perspective on the way student music teachers learn, linked to learning experiences gained in different professional placement arenas.

Master theses

In her master thesis *Musikk som buffer for barn. En studie av en musikkgruppe som mestringsarena i en flyktningleir i Libanon* [Music as a buffer for children. A study of a music group as a platform for achievement in a refugee camp in Lebanon], Anne K. Råmunddal Kippenes (2007) looks at how participation in a music group can have health benefits for refugee children. Her music therapy paper was completed at the Norwegian Academy of Music. Kippenes adopts a definition of music in line with Small's (1998) concept of *musicking*, whereby music is seen as an activity, and a definition of health consistent with Ruud's (2001) interpretation of the concept as a subjective perception of mastering life skills. The paper is based on interviews with the head of Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS) in Rashidieh and with Vegar Storsve as well as a survey of 23 children aged 9–16 who participate in the music activities in the Rashidieh refugee camp. The survey was conducted via email to the head of the BAS centre. The results suggest that music is very much seen as an indicator of the Palestinians' cultural identity through traditional music and dance. Participating in the music activities also enables the children to experience achievement, both in terms of mastering an instrument and developing social skills by playing an equal role in a musical collaboration. Music is used as a medium for channelling and expressing emotions, especially positive emotions in the children. The thesis also highlights how the music activities help create a sense of affinity with others, positive recognition and access to positive role models. Kippenes concludes that the music group plays an important role in promoting a positive self-image and social skills amongst the children, something which can be linked to their perception of health and quality of life. Through music the children are able to participate in society and exert influence in their local community. On that basis, Kippenes takes the view that music can serve as a buffer against struggles in other aspects of life.

As part of his master degree in music education at the Danish School of Education, Kim Boeskov spent eight months in South Lebanon teaching music on the Rashidieh

music project. Boeskov discusses the choice of content for the music activities in the refugee camp and the scope for local teachers to learn from the context in question. The empirical material comprises a 30-minute-long video of music activities involving singing, dancing and playing in the Rashidieh refugee camp. In the video Boeskov works with two local music teachers as well as a few young project participants. Using the video recording, Boeskov seeks to examine his own practices, thus becoming a *researcher-teacher* (Fink-Jensen, 2003). The co-operation and relationships between the Palestinian teachers and teaching assistants on the one hand and Boeskov on the other are the main focus as he sets out to study the selection and realisation of teaching content. In terms of theory, the paper draws on Nielsen's (1998) four content categories (phenomena; facts and context; professional activity and methodology; and personal and social experiences), thus signalling an interest in the function of the teaching content. Boeskov discusses how the functions of the content vary when working with different types of music. Some content helps connect different categories, e.g. multi-function scores⁶ linking professional activity and methodology with personal and social experiences. The ability of such arrangements to meet all pupils at their respective skills levels and enable the participants to feel that they are making an important individual contribution to the greater whole is one significant factor in connecting the different categories. The author also points out that Arabic and Palestinian music holds a different kind of status than the other content in that it is a key part of Palestinian culture. This content is therefore valuable in terms of the cultural reproduction and context that it helps bring together. He also asserts that all four content categories and their justifications can be at play simultaneously, something which can occasionally create conflict between the local teachers. However, different content categories and justifications can also change over the course of the teaching process. The second half of Boeskov's paper focuses on the local teachers' learning through perspectives on communities of practice, legitimate peripheral participation and situated learning. The author seeks to shed light on how the Palestinian teachers and teaching assistants develop their music teaching skills by participating in the teaching practice. Examples are cited to demonstrate how a novice music teacher on the project is given partial responsibilities under the guidance of a more experienced teacher. This allows for new ways of participating in the collective. Seen in light of social theories on learning, it is clear that meaningful moments of learning can be linked to the scope for participation. The two teaching assistants are given greater responsibility for the activities. Such a change in participation can therefore be classed as learning. The learning can also be linked to identity in that the learner changes

6 See Chapter 3 for further information about multi-use arrangements.

their attitudes towards practice and towards the world of which the practice is part. This is a process that can be interpreted as a continuous negotiation of meaning in practice (Boeskov, 2012).

In 2010 Tone Jordhus submitted her master thesis *Musikkpedagogikk som utviklingshjelp? En studie av kulturelle utviklingsprosjekter og deres rolle i norsk utviklingspolitikk [Music education as development aid? A study of cultural development projects and their role in Norwegian aid policy]*. Jordhus's study examines the extent to which music and arts projects can contribute something unique in relation to one of the key objectives of Norwegian aid policy, which is to help "reduce poverty and promote human rights".⁷ Her thesis investigates two arts projects: the project in the Rashidieh refugee camp in South Lebanon and an arts project in Southern Africa. The thesis aims to answer the following questions:

- How do selected participants and leaders judge the outcomes of the arts projects in Lebanon and Southern Africa, and how do their assessments correspond to the objectives of the projects?
- How do the participants from the South feel about the impact of the arts projects in relation to their personal development and future plans?
- Can music and arts projects contribute something unique in relation to Norway's foreign aid objectives, and to what extent can the experiences from Lebanon and Southern Africa help elucidate this question?

The empirical material from Lebanon comprises qualitative interviews with six young Palestinians, both male and female, who have been part of the music project for some time and who have been on exchange visits to Norway at least once. The interviews were conducted in collaboration with Even Ruud in November 2009. Two Norwegian leaders were also interviewed to establish how they evaluate the projects and how their views correlate to the objectives of the projects. The participants state that the music activities in Rashidieh are particularly beneficial when it comes to instrumental, music, singing and dancing skills. They also feel that it is important to develop arts provision and that they themselves wish to make a contribution by volunteering at the centre in the form of teaching the youngest, thereby giving something back to the organisation.

7 <http://www.norad.no/no/om-bistand/norsk-utviklingspolitikk>

The music activities are also important in highlighting their own life situation. The leaders who were interviewed use words such as recognition, achievement, democracy, integrity and identity when evaluating the participants' outcomes. In response to the question of how the project impacts the participants' personal development and plans for the future, they describe how the music provision is important because this is the only opportunity to learn music in the camp. The participants note that gender roles can change over the course of the project and that this can boost self-confidence and instil a belief that there are opportunities available to them. At the same time, most of them express a pessimistic view of their future in Lebanon and hope that they will be able to travel to Norway or another country where they may have an opportunity to study or work. The evaluations of the project are overwhelmingly positive amongst both participants and leaders. However, Jordhus (2010) holds that the objectives for the projects are so wide-ranging and diffuse that it can be difficult to determine whether they have been met. As for the question of whether the arts project has something unique to offer, Jordhus (2010) concludes that the Lebanon project helps challenge perspectives on gender roles and break down social norms that prevent equal opportunities from being afforded to everyone. Jordhus examines the project with a critical eye, especially in terms of the extent to which such a project can be deemed a contribution to Norway's aid efforts. She argues that clearer objectives and more and better systematic evaluations should be introduced in order to be able to say something concrete about the effects of the project on the participants.

Project evaluation

The NMH has echoed this call for analyses of the Lebanon project, and in 2010 an extensive evaluation project was launched. The evaluation was carried out on the basis of information about project participation and activities from project manager Vegar Storsve, a survey of 78 students who have been on professional placement in Lebanon, written evaluations by participating teachers at the NMH, written evaluations by the partner organizations in Lebanon, and interviews with staff in the Rashidieh refugee camp. The aim of the evaluation was to measure the value of the Lebanon project to the different stakeholders. The evaluation looked at how the Lebanon project has helped develop the NMH students' teaching skills and professional identity, how the teachers at the NMH have developed as educators and researchers over the course of the project, and how the partner organizations in Lebanon judge the project.

The Lebanon project is seen as significant by the different stakeholders. The students feel they have learnt a great deal about music teaching/therapy as a result of their

participation. The experiences from Lebanon have had an impact on their professional awareness, strengthened their belief in the function and value of music in society, and helped develop methodologies and repertoire for teaching pupils from different cultural backgrounds than their own. The report cites strong and unequivocal statements from the students whereby the benefits they describe extend far beyond the academic aspect. They find that they have developed as people, gained deeper insights and social understanding, and are better prepared for a career as professional music teachers in a multicultural Norway following their Lebanon placement.

Teachers at the NMH find that they have developed their tutoring skills, research expertise and understanding of what it means to be a music teacher in a multicultural society. The children and teachers in Rashidieh describe the visits by the NMH students as the highlight of the year. The music teachers who were interviewed feel they learn a great deal by observing how the Norwegian students teach, and they believe that it is good for the children to receive instruction from different kinds of people and teachers. They find the students to be skilful and interested in learning about their culture. For the partner organizations and people in Lebanon, the project has brought about considerable change. As a result of the project, around 600 children now receive weekly music tuition in Lebanon and in Palestinian refugee camps, and a growing number of teachers are being trained through the X-art programme.⁸ The partner organizations in Lebanon see the school concerts given by the NMH students together with their pupils as something that gives direction to the tuition during the year. Many of the organizations believe that the concerts have encouraged the children to take pride in their own music and culture by having students from Norway coming to learn from them, and that being on stage boosts their self-confidence. The partner organizations in Lebanon say they are grateful for what the project has helped create and hope that it will both be continued and expanded further.

Research and engagement after 2013

A total of four articles on the Lebanon project have been published following the Norwegian publication of this anthology in 2013. The research interest of these articles has centred on the concept and theory of community music. The Lebanon project can be seen as a community music project in a number of ways. However, the project has also enabled discussion and critical reflection on the theory behind community music (CM).

⁸ See Chapter 4 for more information about X-art.

Vegar Storsve and Brit Ågot Brøske (2016) wrote the chapter “Musikkarbeid med palestinske flyktningbarn i Libanon – et community music perspektiv” in the anthology *I transit – mellom til og fra. Om musikk og deltagelse i barnevern* [“Making music with Palestinian refugee children in Lebanon – a community music perspective”. *In transit – between to and from. Music and participation in child protection*] (Stensæth, K., Krüger, V. and Fuglestad, S., 2016). In light of the theory behind community music, Storsve and Brøske discuss how the concept of multi-function scores can help include refugee children in musical interaction. They discuss the relationships between music-making and *musicking*, between facilitation and teaching, and between the long-term and short-term aspects of community music projects. Looking at the different elements of multi-function scores and at managing the process of creating such scores, the authors also discuss the relationship between musical learning and personal and social development. Here the authors argue how multi-function scores can be a useful tool for keeping both these perspectives in focus during the musical practice.

Based on its experiences and past research associated with the Lebanon project, the NMH was tasked with curating a special edition of the *International Journal of Community Music*, with Kim Boeskov and Brit Ågot Brøske as guest editors. The term community music is not widely used in the Nordic countries, although the concept is very much in existence (Karlsen et al., 2013; Veblen & Olsson, 2002; Boeskov & Brøske, 2017). In the special edition entitled *Community music and the Nordic countries* professionals and researchers were invited to explore the CM concept and CM practices in the Nordic region. The extent to which the term and the concept are justified and relevant in a Nordic context remains unclear, however. In our social democratic tradition there is perhaps less of a need for a concept that focuses so strongly on musical activity outside formal structures. Yet the values and ideas on which CM is based remain relevant in a Nordic context. We still have some way to go in creating inclusive musical practices for different groups of people in society, not least refugees. This discussion is also about the term community music and how the term and the concept can be translated into a Nordic context. In the themed edition Kim Boeskov and Brit Ågot Brøske wrote one article each on the Lebanon project.

Based on the theory behind community music, Brøske (2017) addresses dilemmas and challenges in the meeting with a Muslim culture in the article *The Norwegian Academy of Music and the Lebanon project. Challenging characteristics of community music when working with Palestinian refugees in South Lebanon*. The article discusses three perspectives or dilemmas that reveal themselves when applying the theory of CM to the Lebanon project. The first perspective is about how the aim of cultural

democracy and equal rights can come into conflict with ideologies, traditions and social structures in the local culture. The debate is then about whether or not it is right to be promoting cultural democracy if this could further marginalise vulnerable children and young people, thus affecting their future. The second perspective is the degree to which learning should be central to CM projects. Brøske argues that long-term goals can be reached by creating arenas for musical learning and by exemplifying various teaching roles spanning from that of facilitator to more traditional roles. The third perspective addressed in the article concerns how a formalised infrastructure can be an important prerequisite for participation in music activities. Here, Brøske challenges some of the scepticism towards formal structures that she believes exist in CM literature.

Kim Boeskov has written the article “The community music practice as cultural performance” (Boeskov, 2017). This article is an outlining and discussion of a theoretical framework inspired by anthropological and performance studies that allow for a deeper understanding of the connection between community music practices and processes of social transformation. By conceiving the community music practice as a cultural performance, Boeskov suggests that the relationships enacted in community music practices involving socially marginalised groups are better understood as inherently ambiguous, which challenges the idealistic perspectives often encountered in community music research.

Kim Boeskov is also working on a doctorate based on the Lebanon project. *Music and social transformation: Exploring the significance of music making in a Palestinian refugee camp*. In his thesis Boeskov looks at how music-making is linked to social, cultural and political structures and how participation in music activities could potentially help change these structures. In an ethnographic investigation of the music activities in Rashidieh and the social and cultural context that frames them, Boeskov explores how the music-making helps build a social, cultural and national identity. Using insights into anthropological theory and performance studies, he constructs an understanding of musical practice as an arena for exploring alternative positions and experiences but also as a cultural practice where important social narratives are handed down and assimilated by the new generation of Palestinian refugees. Boeskov completed his doctorate in 2019.

Reflection and conclusion

Seeing that the NMH has been involved in the Lebanon project for more than a decade, it could be claimed that relatively little research has been carried out by the project. Research activity and interest has increased in the past few years, however. The research that has been carried out is qualitative in nature, and studies based on empirical material have largely involved interviews and observation. Overall, the research is based on relatively limited empirical data, especially when disregarding the NMH's evaluation report. The research has by and large been conducted by researchers and professionals who either teach on or take a particular interest in the project and who have spent extended periods in or made repeated visits to Lebanon. A relatively large proportion of the research has been concerned with investigating the effects of the project on different participants. Different stakeholders in the project have served as informants in various studies: children and young people participating in the music activities in the refugee camp, project leaders in Lebanon and Norway, and student music teachers from the NMH who have been doing professional placement in the camp. The emphasis has been on the effects of the project in terms of perceived health, developing skills and a professional identity, aid work and cultural exchange. The choice of focus may be linked to what motivates the studies and who conducts them. This could perhaps be explained by a desire and a need to legitimise the project within the NMH as an institution. Such projects rely on a positive reputation in order to be "viable". Another possible reason may be the particular context that the Norwegian researchers and participants encounter. The motivation for investigating the effects or consequences of the project could therefore be down to the fact that the project is taking place in a unique context that creates existential encounters between music and children, adolescents, students, teachers and researchers in Lebanon.

In this chapter I have sought to demonstrate how the Lebanon project has been subject to systematic research and development work. The project in itself is a complex one. It is founded on co-operation between multiple partners in Lebanon and Norway with a common desire to create a music teaching practice to benefit Palestinian refugees. The development perspective is therefore paramount. The research has been similarly diverse and brings in a number of perspectives, ranging from studies on values, health, meaning and life skills to studies on learning, methodology, teacher training, and formal and informal music teaching models. There are several common themes across this spectrum, however, particularly in relation to a number of ever relevant questions. What is music? What is the purpose of such teaching practices? How should we interpret the relationships between music

education, personal development and social circumstances, norms and needs? How do tradition, culture and power affect music teaching practices, and how does this interrelationship play out as an obstacle to and opportunity for development? And last but not least, how do we see ourselves in the reflection of cultures as different to ours as the Lebanese and Palestinian cultures? It is a sign of recognition for the Lebanon project that various people have chosen to carry out research and development studies in connection with the project. This interest should not be taken for granted, however. The Lebanon project also involves important aspects of a political, ideological and religious nature. These perspectives are not easy to relate to when conducting research into music education or music therapy, and they become particularly conspicuous when scrutinising cultures like the Lebanese or Palestinian cultures. But again we have an opportunity to advance our domestic understanding of our own practices thanks to the courage of researchers and teachers in taking up the challenge.

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