

## **NMH student music teachers in Lebanon**

### Professional placement for bachelor students on the music education programme at the NMH

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Ever since 2005 bachelor students on the music education programme at the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) have been travelling to Lebanon to take part in a professional placement program. Even after the first two study trips we began to realise how much potential there was in the Lebanon project, both as a learning arena for the students and as a starting point for institutional development at the NMH. The placement in Lebanon is made up of three main components: teaching music to children and young people in the Palestinian refugee camp Rashidieh; concerts in Rashidieh and Lebanese schools; and culture seminars. The Lebanese context and culture are quite unfamiliar to our students compared with other professional placement situations that the students have found themselves in.

Feedback from the students in the first few years revealed that they had experienced a unique environment in which they were able to put many aspects of their training to use – both musical and pedagogical – and which had led them to engage strongly with social issues. The students also called for a more thorough process with regard to teaching preparations, concert repertoire preparations, and information about Lebanese society and culture.

In an internationalisation perspective, we found that the project could add a further dimension beyond the most traditional approach, which often involves meeting other cultures and cultural exchange. We felt that the NMH could offer expertise and resources that would be attractive to the project and thus approach the project as an arena for professional teaching placement and cultural exchange as well as humanitarian aid. Meeting children and young people who are living as refugees under difficult circumstances makes an impression and causes engagement. Seeing how musical activity can help improve quality of life for children and adolescents also adds another

dimension. Furthermore, these study trips corroborated our theory that this type of practice may be well suited to R&D activities at both master and senior research level.

In this chapter, we will give an account of the role of the Lebanon placement project on the music education bachelor programme, how we prepare for the project and what the project entails, including a presentation of the idea behind the concept of “multi-function score”. Finally, we will present some of the results of an R&D project focusing on the students’ learning experiences from the placement. We will be concentrating on the teaching taking place at the BAS centre in Rashidieh. The teaching activity can be seen as a sub-project of the placement project. The concert part of the programme involves school concerts in a number of schools and will be described in a separate chapter of this anthology. The culture seminars attended by the student music teachers are not covered by their own chapter.

### Implementation in the curriculum

A great deal of work took place after 2007 to implement the Lebanon project at the NMH. As well as making room for the project in R&D and allocating funding in the annual budget, the academy also worked to implement the possibility of student participation in the project in the new curriculum for the bachelor programme in music education. This involved incorporating a freer form of professional placement – project placement– as a supplement to the students’ obligatory placement arenas in primary and lower secondary schools, instrumental tuition and ensemble direction. Below we will explain how the placement project was defined in the curriculum after 2007, while also providing an insight into the various aspects of the music education bachelor programme at the NMH.

The curriculum for the music education bachelor programme describes the course as “a four-year performance course with integrated pedagogical training.” It continues:

The programme shall produce talented and independent musicians and music educators who take responsibility for their own artistic, creative and pedagogical development and who should be able to fill a variety of music-related roles.

Various forms of organised musical training are offered outside the education system, too: in choirs, brass and wind bands, orchestras, churches, kindergartens, and in special needs and social education.

The course is a varied, genre-independent and broad music education programme.

As we can see, the bachelor course is a performance and music education programme aimed at a wide range of vocational roles. The course also places strong emphasis on versatility and broader skills. We are finding that the student music teachers identify themselves with different roles during their course of study, whereby some of them see themselves primarily as musicians with teaching skills, while others assume a stronger teacher identity. We have also seen that for some students this can change over the course of the programme or after they have completed the programme.

The pedagogical topics on the programme are split into Pedagogical Theory and Didactics, where the latter comprises the following sub-topics: General Subject Didactics and Music Education Philosophy, Subject Didactics for General Music Education, Subject Didactics for Instrumental Tuition, and Subject Didactics for Ensemble Direction. There is also a professional placement element to the course, which is described in the curriculum thus:

The professional placement element should prepare the students for the various teaching and communicative aspects of being a music educator. The placement element should be integrated in all subjects on the programme to the greatest possible extent. The placements should total last for 12–14 weeks, they should be supervised, and they should take place in an authentic setting with pupils. The main elements are: Assistant teaching practice, Own teaching practice, Student collaboration, Teacher collaboration, and Project practice and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

As we can see from the curriculum, the course embraces a wide range of teaching situations. Professional teaching placement on the music education course is organised as follows:

Year 1:

Primary school, 2 weeks

Project placement in municipal arts and music school and primary/lower secondary school, 1 week

Year 2:

Instrumental teaching at in-house practice school, 3 weeks

Instrumental teaching in municipal arts and music school / secondary school

Year 3:

Lower secondary school, 2 weeks

Ensemble conducting with chosen ensemble: choir, wind/brass, band, strings or orchestra, 1 week

Ensemble conducting with mixed project ensemble, 1 week

Project placement in various settings, 1 week

Since 2007, project placement in Year 3 has thus comprised the Lebanon project. The curriculum describes this placement as follows: “[...] linked to a multidisciplinary or other collaborative project. A minimum of 12 hours of active, supervised teaching practice in groups.” We believe that the placement is well timed in terms of the progression of the course of study. The students complete the pedagogical part of the programme in the same semester and have thus finished all earlier placement elements and associated didactic subjects by the time they start the placement project in Lebanon. This means that they have gained experience of teaching music in the classroom, of instrumental tuition and of ensemble conducting with both specialised ensembles and larger, mixed orchestras. In other words, they now have experience of organising larger performance projects and have met pupils from across a wide age range. Musically, they have been able to develop both broad and specialised skills through performance practice, music theory and a number of supporting subjects. Although the project in Lebanon draws upon many of the students’ past experiences on the course, it has proved beneficial to link the preparations directly to specific subjects and placements that take place in the same year. This also helps meet the objective described in the curriculum of integrating the professional placement elements in all subjects on the course wherever possible. We have opted to link this project to the subjects Didactics for General Music Education II and Minority Cultures / Ethnic Music, the latter now incorporated into the subject Extended Musicianship II. We therefore hope the lack of preparation that the students identified in the first two years has now been redressed by these subjects.

## **The Lebanon professional placement project**

### Participation

Student participation in the project in Lebanon is not compulsory. The NMH does not offer full funding for the students' participation, and we can therefore not insist that they take part. The student music teachers who do participate make a financial contribution, most of which goes towards accommodation, travel insurance and food. Some students also feel unsafe and uncomfortable travelling to a country in one of the world's conflict zones and thus decide against going. The students are therefore able to choose a different placement project for the week in question in consultation with the course co-ordinator where the students themselves develop a guided project incorporating a multicultural perspective.

Over the years, 19 students have opted for alternative projects, while 103 students have participated in the placement in Lebanon. The size of the student groups has varied from 5 to 16 participants with 2–3 accompanying teachers/tutors.

### Content

The Lebanon placement has taken on a relatively consistent structure in recent years. As mentioned previously, it is made up of three main parts: music tuition with children and young people, concerts, and culture seminars.

1. The music tuition takes place during a 4-day project at the premises of the Palestinian health and social care organisation Beit Atfal Assumoud (BAS) in the Rashidieh refugee camp.
2. Some of the concerts are short recitals for the participants at the start of the music sessions in Rashidieh, concluding with a final concert together with the participants to which parents and siblings are invited. The students also give school concerts at the schools of the Imam Sadr Foundation, the Marouf Saad Foundation and at Shohour Public High School.
3. The culture seminars take place in the form of workshops on Arabic music and dance at the BAS centre and on Arabic singing with the music teacher at the Imam Sadr Foundation. Several information meetings are also held where the students get to hear lectures and participate in discussions with leaders of

various organisations. These meetings can be about relevant issues relating to Lebanese politics, history, education and culture, or about the Palestinians' situation as refugees. The students are given guided tours of Palestinian refugee camps and visit families living in the camps. Considering how different the culture is, it can also be both fascinating and useful to experience the country as a tourist.

In order to give readers an idea of the scope of the project, we have included the full programme below for the 2013 Lebanon placement.

### **Main program for students from NMH, Lebanon, April 2013**

Wednesday 3 April	12:20	Departure from Oslo via Istanbul to Beirut, Turkish Air
	22:00	Arrival Beirut International Airport Transport to Tyr – Al-Fanar Hotel
Thursday 4 April	09:00	Departure from Al-Fanar to Lebanese Army in Sayda, to get permissions for Rashidieh camp
	13:00	Rehearsing, planning and meetings
	14:00	Arabic song workshop
	16:00	Return to Al-Fanar Hotel, relaxing, planning and meetings
Friday 5 April	09:30	Rashidieh camp, Workshop
	16:00	Return to Al-Fanar, relaxing, planning and meetings
Saturday 6 April	09:30	Rashidieh camp, Workshop
	13:30	Visit families in the camp
	15:15	Arabic music workshop
	16:00	Return to Al-Fanar, relaxing, planning and meetings
Sunday 7 April	09:30	Rashidieh camp, Workshop
	16:00	Return to Al-Fanar, relaxing, planning and meetings
Monday 8 April	09:00	Rehearsing, planning and meetings
	13:00	Rashidieh Workshop, concert planning
	17:00	Concert
	19:00	Return to Al-Fanar, relaxing, planning and meetings

Tuesday 9 April	09:15	Imam Al-Sadr Foundation. Presentation and sound/hall preparation
	11:00	Arabic song workshop with children
	12.00	Concert
	13.30	Lunch and feedback
	14:30	Return to Al-Fanar, relaxing, planning and meetings
Wednesday 10 April	09:00	Departure from Al-Fanar
	10:00	Arrival Shohour secondary school
	12:30	Concert
	14:00	Picnic by the river
	17:00	Departure from the river
	18:00	Relaxing, planning and meetings
Thursday 11 April	10:00	Planning in Concert Hall in Sayda
	11:30	Concert
	13:00	Lunch
	14:00	Departure from Sayda
	15:00	Arrival Hotel Mayflower – Beirut, relaxing
Friday 12 April	09:30	Arrival Shatila Refugee Camp, visiting BAS centre in Shatila. Brief presentation of Palestinian history in Lebanon
		Guided tour in Shatila Camp
	12:00	Arrival Hotel Mayflower – Beirut, relaxing
Saturday 13 April	09:00	Departure from Hotel Mayflower. Guided tour in Bekaa valley and Baalbeck
	17:00	Back in Beirut
Sunday 14 April	01:30	Departure from Hotel Mayflower
	04:10	Departure Beirut International Airport
	11:25	Arrival Oslo Airport/Gardermoen

## Teaching practice in the Rashidieh refugee camp

Some key aspects of the context in which the students carry out their teaching practice are the lack of a shared language between the students and young participants, the unknown and complex teaching situation, and the large number of children of different ages and with varying degrees of experience of playing an instrument. The teaching practice ranges from one-to-one tuition with a single child to rehearsals with small and large groups of children playing different instruments and public performance.

### The music group in Rashidieh

The size, instrumentation and ability levels of the music group in Rashidieh vary from year to year. As with most organised musical activity for children and adolescents, new pupils continually join while older participants leave. We have found that the music group attracts slightly more participants during our student visits and that the event is used to introduce the project to new children. Over the last few years, the group has had more than 50 participants every year in the 7–20 age range, and even 4 and 5-year-old children will often come to watch.

The instrumentation also varies somewhat according to the number of participants and ability levels across the different instruments. One year we may have ten beginners on the violin along with three participants who have been playing the violin for a few years. The next year there may be four beginners, some who have been playing for a year and some with a bit more experience. The drums and percussion group comprises around ten performers, and we frequently have up to 5–7 young guitarists. There are two to three participants on bass guitar, and sometimes we will also have two electric guitars. The so-called keyboard group comprises performers of varying ages on electric keyboards, xylophones, accordions and melodicas. The number of saxophone players varies from two to five from year to year. Some groups have also been working with a local teacher or teaching assistant. Some of the local teachers play traditional instruments such as the oud, ney, bagpipes and darbuka. It can sometimes be difficult to keep on top of this motley group of participants, and that is indeed one of the challenges facing the students in Rashidieh.



## Preparing to teach in Rashidieh

Most of the teaching preparations for the professional placement take place in the subject Didactics for General Music Education. The subject addresses topics within various didactical categories in the context of different teaching situations.

All teaching preparations take into account the didactical categories of objectives, content, methodology, framework conditions, the experiences and backgrounds of the pupils and teachers, as well as assessment to a greater or lesser extent, and they are discussed in relation to the placement in Rashidieh in particular. Topics such as classroom management, how to organise the teaching, teacher co-operation and musical performance are also relevant to this subject and have high transfer value in terms of the teaching in Rashidieh. The subject Didactics for General Music Education dedicates a great deal of time to singing, movement and ensemble performance in big groups, focusing especially on making adaptations for children of varying abilities. Having the skills to deal with such varied teaching situations is important in Norwegian music classrooms and even more critical in exceptional situations such as the Rashidieh project.

There are many reasons why we have chosen ensemble performance as one of the main activities in the music activities in Rashidieh. Firstly, we have found that performing in an ensemble is a big motivating factor for the refugee children. This poses a number of challenges for the student music teachers as they plan and execute the teaching activities. The challenges are linked to the high number of participants of varying ages and ability, the fact that a large number of students are having to co-operate, the great number of instruments involved, and the fact that the students have to organise tuition for individual pupils, groups of pupils, instrument groups and ensembles. We must also ensure that the local teachers are able to continue working on the different songs once we have left. Music educators often find themselves in teaching situations with non-standard ensembles, preventing them from using existing musical arrangements or compositions. When working with mixed or randomly assembled ensembles, it is important to adapt the repertoire and musical material to suit the group in question. To give the students some experience of working with mixed and unusual ensembles, they are asked to create a “multi-function score”, which is tried out and evaluated before we set off for Lebanon. Some of the student arrangements are used during the teaching practice in Rashidieh.





## The “multi-function score”

A “multi-function score” serves as a bank of ideas containing a number of varied ensemble parts for a piece of music that can be used in a variety of settings, be it different instruments, ability levels or group sizes. It must be possible to continue to develop, simplify and vary the arrangement almost indefinitely, and it should contain everything from simple rhythmic figures to short two-tone melodies, riffs or ostinatos. There should also be opportunities for varying the complexity of the rhythms and incorporating more challenging parts, and it should be possible to perform the different parts on different instruments to accommodate the participants’ different ability levels.

The main objective of using arrangements with different parts of varying degrees of difficulty is to give each participant new challenges as and when they need it. Once a pupil has mastered a two-tone melody they might quickly get bored. That is when it is good to have a new challenge up your sleeve, be it additional notes, an expanded rhythmic pattern or even a brand new section. At the same time, the challenges should not be so great that the pupil is unable to see the bigger picture, i.e. communicating, listening to the others, and responding as the performance progresses. This is possibly one of the main reasons why we prefer playing by ear and moving away from musical notation when we perform.

We have found that it is best to start with something very basic when developing an arrangement based on this principle. We are effectively creating something out of nothing; a bit like in the old stone soup fable. We start with almost nothing, but we need to know which ingredients to add in order to make it taste good – or in this case sound good. A wide range of musical elements can be used as a starting point for the arrangement. A drone, a chord progression or a short melodic phrase from a selected song is often a good start.

One example of a working process to develop an arrangement is to identify a song that you want to present to an ensemble – ideally one with a simple melody and few chords. Most of the time this means creating a version of a song that someone has heard or would like to perform. Inspiration can be found in past recordings of the song – anything from solo recordings to large-scale orchestral versions. It may also be useful to look at sheet music to find ideas for the arrangement. When producing a multi-function score it is often a good idea to start by playing the chord progression and singing the tune to get a feel for the song. Next, you can explore and process

various options. This could be exploring the simplest ways in which the chords can be played and which instruments should be playing the chords. The chords are often also a starting point for creating ostinatos or other simple melodies by either looking for notes in the chord that you can work with, alternatively other notes that might fit. This could be used as an underlay for strings or winds, or perhaps even voices. All of this can be combined with an “ordinary” accompaniment for guitar, piano and bass. If so, the bass line must be decided upon, perhaps using the root of each chord as a starting point or trying out different variations with more complex bass lines with passing notes and different rhythms.

The melody can usually be performed by a number of instruments, or it can be sung. Decisions must be made on which key to use, whether the melody should be broken up and performed by different instrument groups, and whether variations of the melody should be created. The melody can often also be suited to improvisation, or you could create a multi-part arrangement with either parallel or polyphonic voices.

A multi-function score will often require ideas for a multitude of rhythmic instruments. It is possible to keep it simple, but you must always be ready to set challenges when necessary. Simple individual rhythmic elements can become quite refined when you put them all together. The scope for variation is almost unlimited, and we often find that the group or class ought to have been bigger in order to achieve the best results.

While the options are countless, the simplest and perhaps the first ideas to spring to mind are often the best. It is important to have a recording device and/or notebook to hand when working on arrangements like this. For many students it is also natural to use music software in the process.

Teaching the arrangement to pupils involves playing by ear combined with demonstrating on instruments or using various hand signals. This can be supplemented with various forms of written notation if needed, e.g. chord charts, tablature for remembering how to play the chords, simple graphic notation, letters, or even ordinary notes. The whole idea is that the pupils do not have to be able to read music to take part in the ensemble. When leading an ensemble activity, it is important to know the song well and to be able to perform most of the parts, ideally on the right instrument. It is therefore essential that the students are not afraid to use instruments that they do not have expert knowledge of. By knowing their material well, they can begin to explore the opportunities, and it may become easier to be spontaneous and to use improvisation. It may become necessary to create new, adapted parts when rehearsing

a song like this. This process is likely to throw up a number of new ideas, which can be put down on paper or recorded for future use. While we are keen to highlight the opportunities that multi-function score offer, we also have to warn of the risk of overloading the arrangement and turning it into an over-seasoned “stew” which tastes of nothing because one ingredient is drowning out or overpowering the other. It is important to make room for each and every part by varying the arrangement. Every participant should feel that he or she is performing an important part of the music. Repetition and variation can add changing textures and make the music flow.

### *The Fly* as a starting point for a multi-function score

One song in particular has been used frequently since the start of the Rashidieh project: “I have caught a little Fly”. This is a Hungarian folk tune often performed with just a single chord. The melody contains five different notes, which most of the participants in the music group in Rashidieh can learn to play or sing. English lyrics have been written for the song, entitled *The Fly*, which has since also been translated into Arabic.

Everyone is able to learn at least one variation of a rhythm or a rhythm or chord ostinato with one to three notes in the chord. The rhythmic instruments can also be given various tasks to fit with the rest of the music. The sum of the above makes for a good performance with a varied accompaniment and different soloists / solo groups for each rondo.

### The melody

As we can see from the music, the melody comprises only three different notes in the first part (bars 1–8) and only two new notes in the second part (bars 9–16). It moves in steps with the exception of the transition between bar 8 and bar 9. Many of the phrases are repeated, making the tune easy to learn.

Once you have memorised bars 1 and 2, you have also learnt bars 5 and 6. And once you have memorised bars 3 and 4, you have also learnt bars 7 and 8. Put together bars 1, 2, 3 and 4, then repeat for bars 5, 6, 7 and 8. You have now learnt half of the song. If you then proceed to rehearse bars 9–10 followed by bars 11–12, you have learnt the entire song since bars 13–14 are the same as bars 9–10, and bars 15–16 the same as both bars 3–4 and bars 7–8.

## The Fly

Hungarian folk tune

Mi minor  
Em



### **The Fly** (lyrics: Kjetil Lilleås)

*||: I have caught a little fly, fry it in the evening :||  
Fly was flying in the sky, asked what was the meaning  
Caught her and I smile and said, fry you in the evening*

اهي وشب اسملاب عن ابد طقل ايدب

يكيب وش ين تلأس امسلاب  
اهتكسم قري اطنك يكيب وشب  
اسملاب اهلتلقو

*(translated from the English by X-art participants)*

*||: Baddi oloot dobbini ble masa beshweha :||  
Kinit tayri be sama saalitni sho biki Msaket-ha w  
etelha bel masa beshwiki*

*Phonetic notation of the Arabic*

## Chord ostinato



As we can see, this song has only one chord. Since it is an E minor chord, it can easily be performed by a guitar accompaniment, here with the bass note E on the open 6th string and the offbeat on the three lowest strings. With standard tuning this would give us an E minor chord. One nice little effect is to perform the same guitar accompaniment with harmonics by carefully placing a finger across the strings at the 12th fret.

The same accompaniment can also be transferred to other instruments. Sharing the task between violins, xylophones or metallophones has proved to work well. It could look like this:



It may also be a good idea to think about incorporating some more melodic ostinatos. Here is one example:



## Rhythmic ostinatos

Using different rhythmic patterns can give the song a touch of different genres. This particular song can be performed as a slow ballad, as a mysterious and chilling horror film soundtrack, as a jaunty polka or a fiery samba. We have also performed a more rocked up version of the song as well as versions involving traditional Palestinian dance rhythms, to mention but a few. As a curiosity, we should also mention that dropping the last quaver every second bar creates a fun variation on the song. This gives us a nice tune in 7/8 time for those who like odd time signatures.



## Ensemble play

This arrangement is designed to work with any combination of participants and for any mood or function that the song should serve. The ensemble's conductor makes the necessary adjustments and conducts the performance by bringing in and out parts and instruments in every rondo. It might also be an idea to add an eight-bar interlude without the tune in order to prepare new soloists/solo groups. One can also add variety to the interlude by introducing different parts, instruments, dynamics or even improvisation and sound effects.

This can give the music a nice sense of flow, varied dynamics and different soundscapes and tonal qualities. It may also generate anticipation amongst both audience and musicians as to what the next rondo will bring. We have found this song to be a sure-fire hit, and nobody seems to mind playing it time and time again. We have probably performed this song in hundreds of different versions, and it would be impossible to put a figure on how many different soundscapes we have created in the process. The latest addition to the song is its Arabic translation, something that came about when developing teaching materials for the X-art courses. The strange thing is that neither the participants nor we ever seem to tire of the song.

## Organising the teaching practice in Rashidieh

In addition to the multi-function score and ensemble sessions, the students also prepare various musical games, dances, singing and rhythmic activities. They can be activities that serve as preliminary exercises before the ensemble sessions, as focal points before or after breaks, as a way of getting to know each other better, or as a diversion during periods of rehearsal and practice. A main programme for each day is drawn up containing joint activities, group rehearsals, ensemble play and activities for the music education students only. The student music teachers distribute responsibilities between themselves and ensure that the teaching material is reviewed and that the children are where they should be at all times. The students' supervisors/teachers monitor the different groups to observe the teaching and ensure that there is communication between the groups and the student music teachers.

A day in the camp can last between 6 and 9 hours, and the activities therefore have to take place on days when the participants are not at school or college. The day will often start with a mini concert where the NMH students perform music from their concert

repertoire or pieces that will be used later on in the project. Next, the children will often perform an activity – maybe a dance or a song from their repertoire. Sometimes this will be a song that we are planning to work more on in the group rehearsals. This first session will often continue with joint activities supervised by the students. After that, it is usually time for the group rehearsals. The participants are split into groups according to instrument types, and the students pick their groups according to what they feel they are able to teach. Most of them want to teach their own principal instrument, but that is not always possible because of the make-up of the group. The students may therefore find themselves teaching instruments they are not experts on, e.g. singers or wind players may coach the keyboard group, or guitarists with some knowledge of the violin may instruct the violinists. This way the professional placement accommodates the objective of the music education programme of giving the students a versatile and broad skills base.

We try to vary the teaching tasks, which means that the students may switch groups during the process. There may also be more than one student music teacher working with each group, and they may then split the group into sub-groups according to the participants' ability levels. The students also work with a local teacher or teaching assistant, who must also get an idea of the teaching material. This is a challenging situation for the students, but most of them say that they find it educational and that they are happy to be challenged by being set different tasks.

When the groups come together to perform as an ensemble, they usually first show each other what they have been working on. We may then listen to the guitar and bass group, followed by the singers or saxophones before either listening to some of the groups together or the entire orchestra performing. When the full orchestra performs, it may involve as many as 70 musicians, including our students and the local teachers who will keep the music going under the direction of one of the students. The different groups are conducted in and out of the different sections or repetitions, and the other students help out in their respective instrument groups. The volume is always high and the atmosphere good during these ensemble sessions, and everyone deserves a good lunch break afterwards.

After lunch, we often follow a specially planned programme for our students, involving workshops on Arabic music with the local music teachers or on traditional Palestinian dance. Incorporated into the programme are also visits to some of the families living in the camp as well as a briefing and discussion with centre manager Mahmoud Zeidan. The afternoon session is often similar to the morning session and increasingly focuses

on ensemble performance since the programme often concludes with a joint concert where parents, siblings and others come to listen.

### **A typical teaching timetable from the professional placement spring 2013**

Friday 5 April	09:30	Concert with performances by the group in Rashidieh and NMH
	10:00	The students direct games, singing and rhythmic activities
	11:00	Group rehearsals in instrument groups
	12:00	Ensemble play
	12:30	Lunch
	13:30	Workshops on Arabic dance and music for the students
	14:30	Group rehearsals in instrument groups
	15:30	Ensemble play
	16:00	Close
	17:00	Summing up, evaluation and planning
Saturday 6 April	09:30	Mini concert with NMH students
	10:00	The students direct games, singing and rhythmic activities
	11:00	Group rehearsals in instrument groups
	12:00	Ensemble play
	12:30	Lunch
	13:30	Visit to families in the camp
	14:30	Meeting with centre manager
	15:15	Workshops on Arabic dance and music for the students
	16:00	Close
	18:00	Summing up, evaluation and planning
Sunday 7 April	09:30	Mini concert with NMH students
	10:00	The students direct games, singing and rhythmic activities
	10:30	Group rehearsals in instrument groups
	11:30	Ensemble play
	12:30	Lunch
	13:30	Ensemble play and concert planning

	15:00	Workshops on Arabic dance and music for the students
	16:00	Close
	16:30	Summing up, evaluation and planning
Monday 8 April	13:00	Workshops on Arabic dance and music for the students
	14:00	Concert planning and rigging at the BAS centre
	14:30	Break
	15:00	Dress rehearsal
	17:00	Concert with invited audience
	18:00	Party
	19:00	Thanks for having us!
	19:30	Summing up, evaluation and planning

## **The student music teachers' learning experiences**

The student music teachers participating in the practice project in Lebanon have written about their experiences by keeping reflective journals. Many of the students describe the project as the single most important teaching experience on the study programme.

In 2010–2011, a study was carried out into the students' reflective journals following the completion of the 2010 project (Brøske Danielsen, 2012; 2013). The study looked especially at what the students actually learn from participating in the professional placement and at how these learning experiences can be linked to the students' development as professional music teachers. The empirical evidence in the study is made up of the students' reflective journals from 2010. The reflective journals are full of stories about adventures and experiences from the placement. The richness of the stories is down to the powerful experiences the students encountered in Lebanon.

We will now present and discuss the students' teaching experiences according to the following categories<sup>1</sup>: teaching strategies and language; prejudice and preconceptions;

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<sup>1</sup> More exhaustive information about the study and its results can be found in Brøske Danielsen (2012; 2013)

co-operation between colleagues; value base and the significance of the placement to the students.

### Teaching strategies and language

One of the challenges the student music teachers faced in this unique teaching context concerns the lack of a shared language between the students and the young participants in Lebanon. This meant that the students had to make immediate adjustments to their teaching strategies and methods. 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 potential of the non-verbal nature of music. The students were forced to refine their body language and use imitation and demonstration more than they normally would. One student writes:

Yet the language barrier was less prominent that I'd expected. So much about music can be communicated by demonstrating and playing together.

It also appears that the absence of a shared language made performing alongside the children a more central part of the teaching strategies. The lack of a shared language also gave the students a more nuanced understanding of the necessity of language in general, not just in this particular context:

You therefore have to be very proactive with non-verbal communication: clear body language and imitation are effective solutions.

I will definitely take this experience with me in my work in Norway. [...] More activity makes for a good learning model in many situations.

As we can see, the students value non-verbal communication as a tool, and it helps them recognise body language and musical communication as significant elements in teaching. It also appears that this encourages reflection and ideas surrounding teaching strategies and makes them appreciate the value of body language and musical communication more generally, including in settings where teachers and pupils share the same language.

## Prejudice and preconceptions

The professional placement challenges the students' preconceptions in several ways. The students write about how they were expecting to meet desperate, sad and introvert children. Instead, they were surprised to encounter happy and highly motivated children and adolescents. In particular, the students noticed the high level of motivation amongst the children for performing music, learning to play an instrument and generally taking part in the musical activities. One student writes:

The participants in Rashidieh displayed extraordinary interest and enthusiasm, unlike pupils in Norwegian schools. [...] It was touching to see a high-spirited crowd who just loved playing, singing and dancing. [...]

The context in which the students were able to experience Arabic culture and personally witness the situation that the children, youngsters and adults are in has also given the students greater respect and acceptance for other cultures in that they themselves got to experience the feeling of being different. This has led them to reflect on their own understanding of and arguments surrounding multicultural issues:

This project has made us more reflective and better human beings, better prepared teachers, less prejudiced, prepared for a multicultural classroom. Most definitely a very good thing for us.

In my opinion, having the opportunity to work in a foreign culture is an advantage to any music teacher. There are pupils from foreign cultures in Norway, too, and I think that having encountered other cultures gives us a broad frame of reference for understanding our pupils. [...] I for one have started looking at this differently after the trip.

## Co-operation between colleagues

In terms of the co-operation between the students, it would seem that joint planning, execution and evaluation of the teaching practice made them more aware of their own capabilities by observing themselves and their peers acting as competent music teachers. Their competencies were being affirmed, they found that they are capable, and they see each other as competent. The student music teachers seem to act as mirrors for each other:

It strikes me that I've learnt quite a lot in my three years at the NMH and now possess a number of skills that I can't quite remember when I learnt. It's clear that pedagogy, didactics and practice must have taught us something over the years. This extends to my fellow students, too; I was surprised to see how competent they have become.

These kind of experiences are clearly important to their self-confidence as music teachers and increase their motivation to work as music teachers in the future.

### Value base and the significance of the professional placement to the students

This category looks at justifications and value bases – at the students' take on the value of music and music education. The experiences in Lebanon have helped make the students proud of their education and motivated them to go into music teaching.

In many ways, this trip legitimises my entire education.

I'm exceptionally proud of having gained this qualification, and I now understand that after much back and forth I'm in the right place.

This just confirms to me why I want to become a teacher, and it's just wonderful. For me, there is no greater reward than the validation you get by seeing how much fun the children are having when I teach.

The students are given affirmation that they are suited to being music teachers, and they are given plenty of opportunity to reflect on and discuss the value of community music activities. The reflective journals clearly show an awareness of the value of music thanks to the students' participation in the project. The following quote sums it up well:

The placement in Lebanon has been a decisive factor for my future as a music teacher. It's the single most important teaching situation I've experienced for the duration of my training. Of course, the learning outcomes in terms of practical teaching strategies have been great, but even more important is getting a broader perspective on music education. I have developed and become more conscious of my view on music, on humanity and on education. Maybe it hasn't changed all that much, but it has become clearer and more thought through.

In other words, many of the students are highly motivated for the placement in advance, and it also appears that participation in the project leads to increased motivation for the music education profession. One student writes:

Ever since I first heard about this project I've considered it to be the highlight of my training. When I experienced low periods at the academy in previous years, one motivating factor for carrying on was that in my third year I'd be going to Lebanon to do some proper work for once.

This student sees the teaching practice in Lebanon as more "authentic" than the other placements and therefore highly motivating. One explanation for this could be that the unique circumstances of the Palestinian children help reinforce the feeling that this is meaningful work. This is highlighted by other students:

One nice thing for me personally was the feeling that we are doing something important. We experienced that when working with the children in Rashidieh, where you could see the pride, joy and humanity in doing something musical together.

I felt that the participants in Rashidieh displayed extraordinary interest and enthusiasm, unlike pupils in Norwegian schools.

I can see much more clearly now how important music education is, and I feel even more confident that my future career will be meaningful, rewarding and important.

It would therefore appear that the students are being motivated for their future profession by the joy and motivation displayed by the children in Lebanon. Many of the reflective journals reveal a personal commitment from the students participating in the placement. It is clear that the students are moved on a human level and that the placement project becomes a revelation once they realise how much the children appreciate their teaching.

The students' input is therefore of significance and value both to themselves and to the children they meet. The feeling that this is something real combined with the close relationships they forge with the children and their realisation of the value of music make this a meaningful and game-changing placement. The game-changing nature of the project differs from most of the students' other placements, although this is not an express goal or focus for the professional placement in Lebanon.



## Concluding perspectives

The focus of the study has been on how the students' experiences from the placement can help them develop professional skills as music teachers.

It appears that all the student music teachers have had positive and valuable experiences on the project, which seems to have offered them a number of varied learning experiences. The project helps the students improve their skills at various levels. This can be related to Erling Lars Dale's (1998) perspectives on professional skills linked to three different contexts of practice. The first context of practice concerns the teaching context – when they meet the children. The second context of practice relates to the planning and evaluation of the teaching and takes place in partnership with colleagues, while context three is about legitimation and value perspectives on the teaching context. The results from the cited study can be related to these perspectives in that the teaching practice helps improve the students' skills in all three contexts of practice. Of particular interest is how and to what extent the experiences help develop the students' skills in context three and how they contribute to the ongoing relationships and interactions between the skills at the three different levels.

The students do not know in advance which teaching strategies will work in this given context, which means that they must act on the basis of what they have learnt in other contexts. This way their experiences from one context contributes towards reconstruction and enhanced skills in the same context, e.g. when experiences from the first context of practice contributes to enhanced or reconstructed teaching skills (skills in context one). Through testing and reflection-in-action (Schön, 1987) the students are able to challenge and reconstruct their skills and try them out in the situation in question.

It is also interesting to note the significance of the teaching practice to developing the students' skills in the third context of practice. Analysis, discussion, reflection and participation in argumentative dialogues take place outside the actual teaching context, independently of the teaching context and free from the interventionist aspect of teaching (Dale, 1998).

The students were given ample opportunity to take part in dialogues and discussions, thus enabling them to develop skills in the third context of practice. Allocating time for reflection is not the only issue here, however. The results also suggest that

the students' experiences from the actual teaching situation (P1) are a key factor in their strong motivation for analysing, discussing and reflecting on theory, values, convictions and ideas through exploration, action and skills development in context three. This enhanced motivation can be seen as a direct consequence of the students' participation in the extraordinary context in the refugee camp, which was entirely new and unfamiliar to them and where they therefore had to act on the basis of the skills they had already acquired. The students had to familiarise themselves with the unfamiliar, take note of what they had already learnt, and reflect on their skills in new ways and through new lenses – something which helped make them more aware of their own capabilities.

By identifying the unspoken conditions and by reflecting on and assessing them, it is possible to gain a new understanding (Lauvås & Handal, 2000). The unique context contributed to the students' reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action as their experiences identified the need for reflection at various levels (Schön, 1987). The unique context that faced the students along with the feeling of doing something meaningful for others were important to the students and made it impossible for them to remain unaffected. This can be described as discontinuous and existential learning experiences with parallels to Bollnow's (1976) meeting concept. A meeting according to this concept comprises existential and pivotal experiences, which require personal involvement and force the individual to reorientate themselves in that their existence is affected.

It would also seem that such existential learning experiences motivate the students to develop skills in the third context of practice. The relationships between the children and the students were crucial to the students' personal and professional development because discussing, analysing and reflecting on the teaching process and the value of music and music education results in increased enthusiasm and interest. The students write that they could see the value of their future profession and that they gained a greater understanding of the importance of community music activities and music in general. Experiences from the professional placement also helped the students see themselves as competent music teachers. It seems that the placement offers rich opportunities for developing the students' personal and professional identities.

All in all, it would appear that the teaching practice in Lebanon is of great significance to the students – that is significance in terms of meaningfulness, emotional involvement and inner motivation in the students. Firstly, the new and unknown context gives the students greater awareness in terms of their choice of teaching

strategies. Secondly, the students feel that they are doing “proper work” when they see how valuable music education and music is to the children. Thirdly, the students are beginning to see themselves as competent teachers suited to the profession, something which increases their motivation for the profession. Fourthly, the context in which they meet children in an extraordinary situation and the relationships that are forged between the students and children also help make the professional placement a significant experience for the students. The placement in Lebanon becomes a revelation to the student music teachers, and many of them say it is the single most significant learning experience on the entire course. That could perhaps be adopted as a goal for placements in general: for the placements to provide important teaching experiences for the students, to have an impact on their development as music teachers, and to increase their motivation for the profession. It appears that significance in this context can be related to the concepts of meaningfulness, emotional involvement and inner motivation, and this could perhaps pave the way for discussions about whether professional placements should focus more on which factors can help make the students see the placements as significant to their development.

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