Assessing MusicWorks' Creative Resilience Program

How Music Interventions Nurture Students' Resilience

Abstract

MusicWorks, a nonprofit organization in Cape Town, developed the Creative Resilience Program (CRP) to nurture the resilience and self-esteem of Grade 6 learners from marginalized communities, through social-emotional learning and music therapy. We evaluated the impacts of the program through surveys, student drawings, lesson observations, interviews with stakeholders, and a SWOT analysis. Our findings revealed that the program supports the development of resilience and individual growth in its students. This evaluation, which measures the impact of the CRP, could help increase the program's funding and outreach.

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Executive Summary

The Context of the CRP

MusicWorks is a nonprofit organization in Cape Town, South Africa, whose work supports learners in developing resilience to adversities they face in their lives, thereby promoting students' individual development. The Creative Resilience Program (CRP), a recent addition to MusicWorks' selection of programs, was introduced in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the subsequent lockdown, and the potential mental and psychosocial distress resulting from these events. The CRP worked with groups of Grade 6 children over the course of 10 months to nurture their resilience through music and other creative techniques. The program is unique due to the collaboration of community musicians and music therapists, and its use of both social-emotional learning (SEL) techniques and music interventions within their lessons.

In 2022, MusicWorks conducted the CRP in four schools located in Cape Town and its surrounding communities. We collaborated with MusicWorks to evaluate the program's ability to nurture its learners' resilience and individual growth, and to identify the strengths of the program as well as areas of improvement. This evaluation is intended to provide MusicWorks with a third-party perspective of their program and recommendations for improving the program for future learners.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of the project is to assess the CRP's impact on nurturing its learners' resilience and individual growth. To meet that goal, we identified the following objectives:

1. Identify the adversities that MusicWorks' students face that require the development of their resilience.
2. Assess the effectiveness of the CRP in nurturing the students' self-esteem.
3. Determine the students' perceptions of the CRP.
4. Determine strengths and weaknesses of the CRP through the perspective of the principals, school teachers, session facilitators, and directors of MusicWorks.
5. Conduct a SWOT analysis for MusicWorks to strengthen the CRP.

Using the data collected for these objectives, we discuss below the key findings and recommendations.

Findings and Analysis

Learners' Diverse Backgrounds and Living Conditions

Using information collected from interviews with principals, teachers, music facilitators, and MusicWorks directors, we identified four consistent themes that describe the context of the learner's backgrounds and the adversities that require their resilience. These themes that shape the learners' environments and thus, affect their emotional well-being, are: unstable family relations, physical and emotional abuse, stressful community experiences, and poverty and substandard living conditions.

Self-Esteem Scores of the CRP's Learners

Since the CRP aims to use social-emotional learning to support and nurture the self-esteem of their learners, assessing this quality is critical to determine the program's impact. We measured learners' self-esteem at Woodlands and St. Vincent primary schools using two surveys: one which was previously administered by MusicWorks; and a second which we designed to align with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, on which self-esteem values range from lowest at zero to highest at 30. We found that at the end of the program, learners at both schools had self-esteem scores between 15 and 22, indicating average to high self-esteem.

Key Strengths of the CRP

Interviews with school teachers, principals, music session facilitators, and MusicWorks directors revealed nine attributes of the CRP that support learners' resilience and individual growth (see Figure 1). These attributes include aspects from both the music interventions and the social-emotional learning portions of the lessons.

Figure 1. Key strengths of the CRP

Key Weaknesses of the CRP

Analysis of data collected from interviews, feedback surveys, student drawings, and observation, revealed ten areas of improvement of the CRP that limit the program's success (see Figure 2). These are aspects of the program that, if improved, could increase the program's growth and impact on its learners.

Figure 2. Key weaknesses of the CRP

Opportunities and Threats

The opportunities and threats are factors that are external to MusicWorks, which, although the organization does not have control over, are important to consider for the program's success. Using a SWOT analysis, we identified opportunities and threats for the CRP that MusicWorks could consider for program planning and implementation (see Figure 3).

Opportunities	Threats
• More primary school students from township communities would benefit from the CRP • Music therapy, child education, and SEL conferences are available that MusicWorks' staff could benefit from • School stakeholders could develop a better understanding of the CRP and incorporate its lessons into academic classrooms • MusicWorks could gain more publicity using word-of-mouth marketing as all the interviewees had a positive view of the program	• Donors could stop funding schools and the CRP • The Western Cape Education Department could stop supporting the life skills curriculum • A global pandemic could prevent MusicWorks from visiting schools, as well as have a negative effect on children • There is a lack of music professionals to hire in South Africa • The school community could speak a language that MusicWorks staff is not well-versed in • The loss or resignation of a staff member could cause instability in the organization

Figure 3. Opportunities and threats of the CRP

Recommendations

Based on the identified strengths of the CRP, we came up with a list of recommendations for MusicWorks to implement to improve the efficacy of the program.

- *Increase Fundraising Efforts*: By having more fundraisers, reaching out to more donors, and promoting word-of-mouth marketing, MusicWorks could increase its opportunity to secure more funds, which would help them hire more staff members. This would allow the program to expand to more schools and lower grades, thereby increasing its reach on young learners throughout Cape Town and surrounding areas.

- *Increase Stakeholders' Understanding of the Program*: By running an example session of the CRP with principals and teachers of the schools the CRP operates at, explaining the intentions behind activities, and encouraging teachers to use similar techniques, MusicWorks' key stakeholders will have a better understanding of how the program is run. This could increase the support and prioritization that MusicWorks' CRP receives. It would also be helpful to create an agreement between each school and MusicWorks that discusses the CRP's schedule throughout its duration, and establishes good communication between each school and MusicWorks.

- *Work Towards a More Well-Rounded Team*: In order to achieve a team well-versed in music therapy, SEL, and child education, the areas on which CRP intervention is based, MusicWorks could have its staff attend relevant workshops, conferences, and other events. These conferences could also increase exposure for MusicWorks, possibly resulting in attention from more potential donors and future staff recruits.

- *Improve the CRP's Curriculum*: MusicWorks could improve the CRP's curriculum by better-aligning its lessons with the Department of Basic Education's life skills curriculum, and by creating a curriculum for Grade 5 learners. We also recommend that they continue to assess the impact of the curriculum on students' self-esteem by conducting our Modified Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey and MusicWorks Evaluation Survey.

- *Connect to Other Student Support Systems at the Schools:* We recommend that MusicWorks staff serve on their schools' School Based Support Teams, which are already established in schools to assist classroom and subject teachers to develop and implement strategies that support pupil learning. This would assist MusicWorks in providing students with more support systems.

Overall, our evaluation highlights the CRP's success of combining SEL and music interventions to nurture the resilience of Grade 6 learners.

Chapter 1. Introduction

South Africa is a beautiful country surrounded by coasts and impressive mountain ranges. The country hosts a melting pot of cultures with a diversity of languages, cuisines, and music and dance styles. For Black and Coloured communities in South Africa, music is a central part of life, as it allows members of the community to connect with their ancestors through song and dance (Sandlana, 2014). Singing, dancing, and drumming are used in rituals as traditional African methods of healing. For these communities, their connection to traditional dance and song provides a form of healing that cannot be achieved by Western medicine. Drums are one of the instruments commonly involved in healing therapies among indigenous cultures. The mechanism of healing occurs when the human body moves with the rhythm and the frequency of the drum beat, which stimulates the mind to process trauma both consciously and unconsciously. In this way, music creates a gateway for healing the trauma in Black and Coloured communities, including the damage created through the violent history of apartheid (Sandlana, 2014).

Children from Black and Coloured communities in South Africa continue to face traumatic repercussions from the racial segregation between Whites and other racial groups during apartheid. The era left behind township communities living under impoverished conditions at the fringes of the city center. Under apartheid, Black and Coloured communities were forcibly moved from the inner city to townships and informal settlements. The townships often receive fewer municipal resources compared to more affluent White neighborhoods within the city of Cape Town (Larson, 2019). As a result of these disparities, children living in townships often face adversities, including exposure to a higher risk of crime, higher rates of disease, and a lack of essential resources (Larson, 2019). Children exposed to these harsh conditions develop resilience, even if subconsciously. This was demonstrated in a 2018 study which showed that South African students supported by religious, educational, familial, and social resources developed stronger resilience than their counterparts (Theron & van Rensburg, 2018). In this study, access to education and opportunities to form meaningful connections, in particular, were driving factors in students' hope for future success and ability to further their individual development. However, a recent study done by Christodoulou, *et al.* (2022) illustrated that exhibiting strong resilience during significant life transitions is challenged when children constantly face hardships without any support.

MusicWorks is a nonprofit organization in Cape Town, whose work supports learners to develop resilience to adversities they face in their lives, thereby promoting students' individual development. MusicWorks was founded in 2002 with the goal to use music to strengthen, heal, and inspire hope in children from Cape Town's marginalized communities. MusicWorks offers several programs, such as the Early Childhood Development Program, the Music for Life Program, Music Therapy, and the Creative Resilience Program (CRP). Each of these programs was designed to address a unique aspect of MusicWorks' mission.

The CRP is a recent addition to MusicWorks' selection of programs. Introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the subsequent lockdown, and the potential mental and psychosocial distress resulting from these events, the CRP worked with groups of Grade 6 children over the course of 10 months to nurture their resilience through music and other creative techniques. MusicWorks' programs were built on the framework of the Circle of Courage, an indigenous philosophy which is made up of four areas of the universal growth needs of children: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity. The CRP aims to connect children to resources not only within their external environments, but within themselves, with the end goal of helping learners become more confident, creative, and compassionate individuals.

Figure 4. Grade 7 learners from Woodlands Primary school participating in the CRP the year it was first run

After piloting the Creative Resilience Program in 2020, as seen in Figure 4, MusicWorks has continued to implement this program in schools around Cape Town and its neighboring cities. The organization wanted to assess the CRP's impacts on the participating children and to determine if the in-person lessons met the goal of the CRP. To achieve this goal, our team collaborated with MusicWorks to assess the CRP's impact on nurturing its learners' resilience and individual growth. To meet our goal, we identified the adversities that the students faced in order to describe the context within which their resilience was cultivated. Then, we assessed the effectiveness of the CRP in nurturing the students' self-esteem using a modified version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. We determined how the learners view the CRP through surveys and drawings, as well as how the program impacts them through observation and participant observation. Strengths and areas of improvement of the program were determined through our team's interviews with the principals, school teachers, session facilitators, and MusicWorks directors. Using the findings from our data collection, we conducted a SWOT analysis of the CRP. Finally, we developed a list of recommendations to MusicWorks on how the CRP could better cater towards the students' needs and strengthen the program. We evaluated the success of MusicWorks' CRP to assist the organization in improving its services for future learners.

Our evaluation of the program supported UN Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, and 10, which are good health and well-being, quality education, and reduced inequalities, as seen in Figure 5 (United Nations, n.d). Since MusicWorks aims to nurture Grade 6 learners' resilience and self-esteem, and bring restorative resources to the South African education system, our collaboration with MusicWorks tied into Goals 3 and 4. The impact of improved health, well-being, and education of children from disadvantaged communities in Cape Town and its surrounding areas would help to reduce the inequalities that they face.

Figure 5. Goals 3, 4, and 10 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.)

Chapter 2. The Context of the Creative Resilience Program

In this chapter, we discuss the background of students that MusicWorks supports within the South African context and the subsequent need for emotional wellbeing methods. We also examine the indigenous philosophy, the Circle of Courage, which is used as a framework for the Creative Resilience Program. We provide an overview of MusicWorks and discuss the CRP's relationship with no-fee schools. Then, we analyze the importance of social-emotional learning and music engagement in childhood development.

2.1 Apartheid and its Lingering Effects

Many children who attend schools where MusicWorks holds their Creative Resilience Program come from townships on the outskirts of their respective cities. These communities are still fighting to overcome the challenges that apartheid introduced, despite its end 28 years ago. During apartheid, many laws, such as the Group Areas Act of 1950, were introduced. These laws enforced racial segregation between White South Africans and other racial groups, which led to the development of townships (Morris, 2022, pp. 248-249). These regulations broke communities apart and destroyed the cultural fabric of life.

Although the laws that established townships have since been repealed, residents of these communities continue to face countless hardships, including poverty, high crime rates and limited access to resources. One of the major issues that still affects those in townships is insufficient access to schools and poor conditions in existing schools (Larson, 2019). After primary school, it is common in townships for children to not attend secondary school; some children are recruited by local gangs instead of pursuing higher education. Many of the children from townships have experienced high levels of trauma. The pathway towards success for these children can be difficult, and relies on creative mentorship and exposure to opportunities that can link beyond the townships.

2.2 The Start of MusicWorks

Through lessons that incorporate music interventions and music therapy, MusicWorks helps foster individual growth and provides support to children who experience hardships such as violence and poverty. Founded in September of 2002 and registered as a non-profit organization the following year, MusicWorks has provided music therapy to children in Cape Town for the past decade. Their organization began with two music therapists, Sunelle Fouché and Kerryn Torrance, who volunteered their practice to students attending school in Heideveld, Cape Town. After receiving immense positive feedback on their music therapy lessons, the pair decided to create an official music therapy program: MusicWorks. Their current board of directors is composed of highly qualified professionals, including music therapists, and those who have notable experience working in non-governmental organizations. Their staff includes music therapists, teachers of African dance, and community musicians who have experience playing instruments such as the violin, marimba, and traditional instruments like the djembe. The organization has grown since 2002 and is now supporting marginalized communities throughout the Western Cape through its various programs.

One of MusicWorks' programs is the Creative Resilience Program, which primarily supports students attending no-fee schools in Cape Town. In South Africa, no-fee schools are common for students who live in townships, since they are more affordable. However, these schools are underfunded and rely mainly on support from the government. This may result in limited resources for their students, such as a limited number of well-trained teachers and poorly maintained facilities (Theron & van Rensburg, 2018). The CRP aims to build strength, confidence, and emotional wellbeing in their students

through music engagement and social-emotional learning.

2.3 The Circle of Courage as a Guiding Framework

MusicWorks uses the Native American philosophy known as the Circle of Courage as a guiding framework for their lessons. The Circle of Courage follows four key pillars: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity (see Figure 6) (Brendtro *et al.*, 2019). This philosophy is used holistically to encourage positive development in youth. The first key pillar is Belonging, which is described in Native American culture as having a sense of community. Within indigenous culture, children are taken care of by elders which encourages this sense of belonging. The Mastery pillar refers to when one has a sense of achievement in their personal goals. For children, this can include showing competency in academics or other hobbies of interest. The Independence pillar involves a sense of having self-control and making decisions for oneself. This pillar also encompasses self-discipline and the ability to create goals. The last pillar, Generosity, is the capacity for one to be altruistic and contribute to one's community. These four pillars are guidelines that fulfill a child's needs. When these needs are unmet, children can develop behavioral issues that prevent them from developing positive emotional well-being, further impacting their academic success. Techniques that follow the Circle of Courage are strength-based and encourage empowerment (Reyneke, 2020).

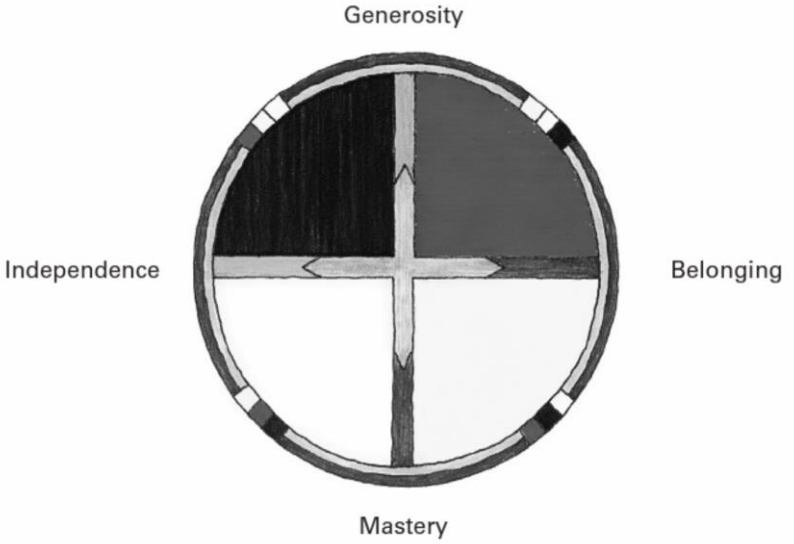

Figure 6. Circle of Courage Model (Brendtro et. al, 2019)

MusicWorks aims to use the four key pillars in the Circle of Courage to guide the activities within the Creative Resilience Program. The Circle of Courage was used previously in a project similar to the CRP in the Free State Province of South Africa, within the Motheo and Setsoto municipal areas. The Free State Restorative Practices program was conducted amongst 20 schools and evaluated teachers' use of Circle of Courage techniques during their lessons. The project found that it was important for teachers to be aware of the need to improve student's resilience. Schools in South Africa emphasize the importance of academic success and do not focus enough on the emotional wellbeing of their learners (Reyneke, 2020). Without strong personal development, students lack the resilience to face the challenges brought upon them in school and in their personal life. There are high levels of high school dropouts amongst South African schools due to the lack of student resilience.

A study done by Reyneke (2020) found that students who lacked a sense of belonging turned to other activities to fulfill this need. Students became affiliated with gangs or were found to be hypervigilant, lonely, or attention-seeking. Students who lacked independence often became rebellious and had trouble making responsible decisions. A lack of Generosity led to selfish and antisocial behavior. Classrooms that did not encourage Generosity prevented learners from knowing about the value of community members. In

the Reyneke study, the pillar that students lacked the most was that of Mastery. Most learners did not get additional support for academics. In fact, teachers sometimes excluded students from extracurriculars as a method of punishment for not succeeding in their academics. The study recognized this as a negative method because it denied learners the chance to feel accomplished in other areas not related to academics. The study listed recommendations for improving student achievement using programs based on the four key pillars of the Circle of Courage. MusicWork's framework for the Creative Resilience Program creates a resource for learners that is currently lacking in South Africa.

2.4 The Benefits of Social-Emotional Learning in Education

Student success in a traditional learning environment is defined by strong academic performance and other forms of personal achievements. Students are expected to attend school and complete their responsibilities. A traditional learning environment fails to consider the adversities that a student faces outside of the school environment, such as family instabilities and dysfunctions, mental health issues, and poverty. Any learner across the globe, to some degree, faces similar challenges in these categories.

The need for a change in the typical learning environment to reflect these adversities starts with social-emotional learning. Social-emotional learning (SEL), is a strategic method of education that empowers students to develop emotional stability and high self-esteem. Researchers in Spain and the United States focused on the role of SEL on learners in local schools after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Evaluating the effects of SEL on learners in Spain established the connection that emotional stability and self-esteem relates to academic performance (Billy & Garríguez, 2021). A global event such as the COVID-19 pandemic highlights how outside factors significantly impact the social-emotional needs of learners and further impact their academic achievement. Students with limited social-emotional resources are found to have difficulty managing relationships, have low self-esteem, and struggle with making responsible decisions. SEL techniques integrate emotional intelligence, which is the ability to express and control emotions as well as the impact these emotions have on interpersonal relationships. Having strong emotional intelligence prepares students to adapt to the adversities they may face (Billy & Garríguez, 2021).

A study focusing on indigenous girls in Guatemala revealed that measurable SEL factors, such as emotional intelligence and mindfulness, are key pillars to emotional control and the support systems that lead to academic success (Toj & de La Cruz, 2021). Indigenous girls in Guatemala encounter an underperforming education system and can subsequently lose access to opportunities for future academic success. In these communities, women are more likely to enter motherhood than pursue higher education as "only 2% of indigenous women enter university," (Toj & de La Cruz, 2021). However, through the implementation of SEL, young girls from within this community were able to maintain family support and access to resources that engaged their emotional learning.

In summary, research in various learning environments across the globe show the positive impact SEL has on growing learners' academic success, in spite of the adversities they may face. Contributing to the number of studies supporting the role of SEL in boosting learning is an important step in conceptualizing how SEL can be leveraged in all learning environments. In the Creative Resilience Program, MusicWorks uses social-emotional learning to engage with students' ability to regulate their emotions.

2.5 The Power of Music Interventions

The Creative Resilience Program provides music interventions by incorporating musical elements like

drumming, traditional ethnic songs (sung in isiXhosa), and African dance into their lessons. While the children are not formally taught music, the children participating in these lessons are indirectly exposed to music teachings during each lesson, which over time, leads to the improvement of their musical abilities. While the following article addresses the effect of music education on brain development, as opposed to music interventions, it is crucial to understand the impact of the children's exposure to music. Examining the effect of music engagement on a child's brain development highlights the power of using music as an intervention method.

Research into the effect of music education on brain development, especially in children, is ongoing. Many studies confirm the benefits of actively engaging with music, some of which include increased linguistic abilities, improved confidence, and educational skills (Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014; Neves *et al.*, 2022). In general, the consensus on music education is positive. In the many studies conducted to assess this claim, subjects are commonly split into groups: those who will receive musical training, and those who will not. In these studies, individuals who were taught music education displayed improvements in self-esteem, intellectual development, and in some cases, cognitive skills (Neves *et al*., 2022). The music teachings and programs performed aimed to develop these skills, so evidence of this result was a positive outcome.

MusicWorks builds on a similar ideology through their teachings. Although they do not implement strict musical training lessons, they incorporate musical aspects into each class such as singing, dancing, and drumming, as mentioned previously. These musical activities allow the students to actively engage with music, which may contribute to the many positive benefits aforementioned in the research articles.

In other research papers, though, professionals claim that such studies have too many external factors that affect the results of these experiments; for instance, factors such as home/family life or activities that involve rhythmic training may improve learners' cerebral activity, but when solely looking for changes in brain activity that are influenced by music education, it is difficult to isolate this effect (Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014). Although there is skepticism regarding the exact ramifications of music on individual development, music is still believed to benefit people's lives and development. However, it is widely agreed that further, more specific research needs to be done in order to confirm any correlation between music education and brain development (Neves *et al*., 2022). Research has shown that active participation in music links to improvements in memory, listening skills, academic achievement, communication, confidence, and even structural differences in areas of the brain that are affected by music (Miendlarzewska & Trost, 2014). Thus, though research on this topic is ongoing, the effect of music is believed to be a positive one, benefiting those engaged with it.

2.6 Summary of the CRP's Context

Children living in the townships of Cape Town and surrounding communities face adversities in their everyday lives that impact their academic and emotional success. To support these students in achieving their future goals, MusicWorks aims to use music and social-emotional learning to promote emotional health in their learners. Our team assessed the CRP's effect on supporting its students' resilience and self-esteem by determining the background of the learners and measuring its strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The goal of the project is to assess the CRP's impact on nurturing its learners' resilience and individual growth. To meet that goal, we have identified the following objectives:

1. Identify the adversities that MusicWorks' students face that require the development of their resilience.
2. Assess the effectiveness of the CRP in nurturing the students' self-esteem.
3. Determine the students' perceptions of the CRP.
4. Determine strengths and weaknesses of the CRP through the perspective of the principals, school teachers, session facilitators, and directors of MusicWorks.
5. Conduct a SWOT analysis for MusicWorks to strengthen the CRP.

We describe our data collection and analysis strategies in the following sections.

3.1 Identify the adversities that MusicWorks' students face that require the development of their resilience

The first objective was to describe the life challenges that the students faced that require their personal resilience. We achieved this by conducting interviews with key players in implementing the CRP, who were: the principals and teachers of the schools that the CRP operated at, the music session facilitators, and directors of MusicWorks. This process allowed our team to learn about the baseline skills and resilient qualities that the program's students possess as shaped by their experiences in their communities.

To gain a better understanding of the types of challenges that the learners face, we met with the principals and teachers of the schools to hear more about the students' living environments, the common challenges faced in their daily lives, and the availability of social-emotional learning in their neighborhoods and schools. We also interviewed the session facilitators as well as directors of MusicWorks. The semi-structured interviews with the session facilitators, principals, and teachers varied from 15 to 60 minutes in length due to the interviewees' limited availability. The interviews included questions focusing on the learners' home life, potential challenges, and access to resources (see "Student Background Questions" in Appendices A, B, C, and D). The structure of the interviews allowed us to direct the focus of the conversation to contextual questions about the learners' backgrounds and the communities in which they live (Cochrane, 2014). Depending on their availability, either one or two team members interviewed the key stakeholders, which are listed in Appendix E. When there were two people conducting an interview, one person administered the questions and maintained discourse, while the other took detailed notes about the interviewee's answers and body language. When there was only one interviewer, they took notes about the interviewee's responses as the interview progressed. Furthermore, the interviews were audio recorded with permission, allowing for further analysis so that all points were carefully noted (Cochrane, 2014). To analyze the data, we transcribed each interview and identified recurrent themes from the interviews. We then summarized the key challenges and adversities that the CRP's students face.

3.2 Assess the effectiveness of the CRP on nurturing the students' self-esteem

The second objective of this project was to assess the effectiveness of the social-emotional learning (SEL) techniques used in the Creative Resilience Program (CRP). The CRP highlights the Circle of Courage as the guiding framework used in their lessons. MusicWorks compiled a schedule of activities that follows the four key pillars of the Circle of Courage: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity.

The MusicWorks team previously collected data using questionnaires and baseline assessments. These evaluations were provided in the form of surveys to the learners at the start and end of the program in order to assess the progress of various aspects of the learners, including their self-esteem. We analyzed the change in responses from the beginning and end of the year for Holy Cross and Walmer Estate learners. While the data collected provided potential insights to the effectiveness of the program, MusicWorks' questionnaires were not peer-reviewed. As a result, improvements could be made to have clear, scientifically supported outcomes.

In order to get more concrete quantitative data, our team worked with the MusicWorks team to revise the feedback surveys using a modified Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. This was done to assess the learners' level of self-esteem after their involvement in the program this past year (Wood et al., 2021). This scale was modified to accommodate for the literacy levels of the learners and can be seen in Appendix F. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is used globally to identify self-esteem within participants of the survey. Self-esteem is regarded as the way in which one positively or negatively views themselves as a whole. Our team followed the interpretation of the scale in which scores closer to 0 represent low self-esteem while scores closer to 30 represent high self-esteem (Wood et al., 2021).

To analyze the data, our team reviewed the surveys that were fully completed, in order to fit with the guidelines of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Using this subset of data, we assigned a number score between 0 and 3 to the answers of each question. For questions that indicated high self-esteem, strongly agree was 3, agree was 2, disagree was 1, and strongly disagree was 0. For questions that indicated low self-esteem, the opposite scoring system was applied: strongly disagree was 3, disagree was 2, agree was 1, and strongly agree was 0. We then found the self-esteem score of each student by summing each student's numerical response to the questions. From this, we were able to compute an average self-esteem score of the students, as well as create several charts, such as box and whisker charts and histograms, for each school. We were able to use this data to not only gather a baseline self-esteem score of children after completing the CRP, but also compare the program between different schools.

3.3 Determine the students' perceptions of the CRP

To determine the learners' views on how they are impacted by the Creative Resilience Program, our team observed the facilitators interacting with the learners, as well as created a feedback form about the MusicWorks program. We also worked with the facilitators on an activity asking the students to draw what MusicWorks means to them. The feedback forms allowed the students to rank each statement on a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements included topics such as, "I like

coming to class" and "I feel happy during lessons" (see Appendix G). The answers that the students provided through these surveys helped our team conclude what the children think of the program. We analyzed this data by creating pie charts and visual graphs to show what percentage of students agreed or disagreed with each statement (see Appendix H). This quantitative data will help the MusicWorks team improve the program for future learners. For the drawing, learners were given the prompt, "Draw What MusicWorks Means to YOU" (see Appendix I). We used the drawings to better understand the results of the survey and to gain a clearer understanding of what the students think about while they are participating in the MusicWorks lessons. We analyzed the drawings by looking for themes that recurred in many of the drawings, such as the word "happy" or a drawing of a drum. These drawings helped our team and MusicWorks to analyze how the students are enjoying the program and how the lessons are beneficial.

In addition to the feedback forms and drawings, we used participation observation to provide supplemental information on how the CRP impacts its learners. Team members participated in the MusicWorks lessons alongside the learners. The lessons from the program were conducted once or twice a week depending on the schedule of the school. After confirming a time with the staff from the program, three team members participated in the class that day (see Figure 7). During the same lesson, another team member took observational notes of the lesson without being a participant. This team member sat outside of the group and took note of observations during the program, such as the students' behaviors, noise levels, reactions, and attention to the lessons. All data collection was completed while facilitators or MusicWorks staff were present. The purpose of this was to collect as much credible data about the lesson as possible.

Figure 7. Our team participating in the dancing portion of the CRP lesson at Woodlands Primary School in Heideveld

There were a few logistical problems to consider when implementing participant observation and regular observation in this investigation. Firstly, the CRP was completed by our third week on-site, so not only did we miss the majority of the program, but we also had very little time to become engrossed in the CRP before it was over. Additionally, we kept in mind the culture shock that came from diving into an environment that is vastly different from our own. This included aspects such as the language barrier between our team and the students, as well as their reaction to us. When we arrived at the classes with the session facilitators, the students seemed surprised to see a group of Americans in their classroom. One of the music therapists explained that many of them had not seen a group like ours before, and thus explained the reasoning for their excitement and intrigue. This had the potential to affect our observation because with new faces in the classroom, the students may have behaved differently. However, our team did our best to not let that taint our experience and observation as we took part in and observed the program. Furthermore, we are not the CRP's target audience of Grade 6 Cape Town students, so it is likely that our reactions were not the same reactions to the CRP as those who it was

designed for. However, by using other research methods, such as those previously stated, in combination with participant observation and normal observation, we collected enough data to determine how the students view the CRP. To analyze said data, our team reviewed our notes that were taken during the observation and compared it to the data collected from the interviews and feedback surveys. We then made connections to certain themes identified from other methods.

3.4 Determine the strengths and weaknesses of the CRP from the perspective of the principals, school teachers, session facilitators, and directors of MusicWorks

To identify the strengths of the CRP and areas of improvement, our team conducted semi-structured interviews with the stakeholders. These semi-structured interviews helped our team to assess how the session facilitators, principals, teachers, and MusicWorks directors describe the program and its goals, allowing us to map how the CRP's activities are contributing to meeting the program's overall mission. Since the learners, session facilitators, and principals interact directly with the CRP, their descriptions of the goal of the Creative Resilience Program should be well-aligned with the MusicWorks directors' goals. In these interviews, we asked questions about what the interviewee believes the purpose of the CRP is, what their personal opinion on it is, how the program could be improved, how they see the learners benefitting from participating in these lessons, and other related questions about the CRP. The interview questions are described in Appendices A, B, C, and D, under the "CRP Purpose Questions" section. To start analyzing each interview, our team manually transcribed them and then identified the strengths and weaknesses of the CRP that were discussed by the interviewees. We then made connections to the themes shown in data collected from the feedback surveys and drawings. This information will be used to make recommendations to MusicWorks about what they should consider changing about the program to make it more effective and key aspects that they should continue to implement.

3.5 Conduct a SWOT analysis for MusicWorks to strengthen the CRP

Using all data gathered from the previous objectives, we assessed the CRP's impact on the learners' self-esteem and resilience. This data is presented in the form of a SWOT analysis, which represents the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of MusicWorks' CRP. The strengths discuss the positive attributes of the current program, while the weaknesses consider the challenges the program currently faces. The opportunities section discusses how MusicWorks can improve their program in the near future, whereas the threats section considers what external factors may be harmful to the success of the CRP. This SWOT analysis considers the purpose of the CRP and how it impacts the emotional well-being of the learners, and aims to help MusicWorks make the program stronger for future classes. A stronger program will not only help the learners in building their self-resilience, but it will also strengthen the donors' impressions of MusicWorks and their willingness to finance the organization. This will allow the CRP to continue making a strong impact on the emotional well-being of learners living in Cape Town and its surrounding areas. Looking at the findings from the methods conducted, our team identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. We then created a visual aid describing the findings of the SWOT analysis for the organization, as seen in Appendix J.

Chapter 4. Findings and Analysis

The following chapter discusses the analysis of the data collected from the methods above. The data analysis is split up into four sections that align with the study's four objectives: understanding the learners' backgrounds, assessing the self-esteem of the CRP's learners, and lastly, identifying strengths and areas of improvement of the CRP. The chapter also presents the opportunities and threats of the CRP based on a SWOT analysis of the data collected through all methods.

4.1 Learners' Diverse Backgrounds and Challenging Living Conditions

Using information collected from interviews with principals, teachers, music facilitators, and MusicWorks directors, we identified four consistent themes that describe the context of the learner's backgrounds. These themes, as shown in Figure 8, are: unstable family relations, physical and emotional abuse, stressful community experiences, and poverty and substandard living conditions.

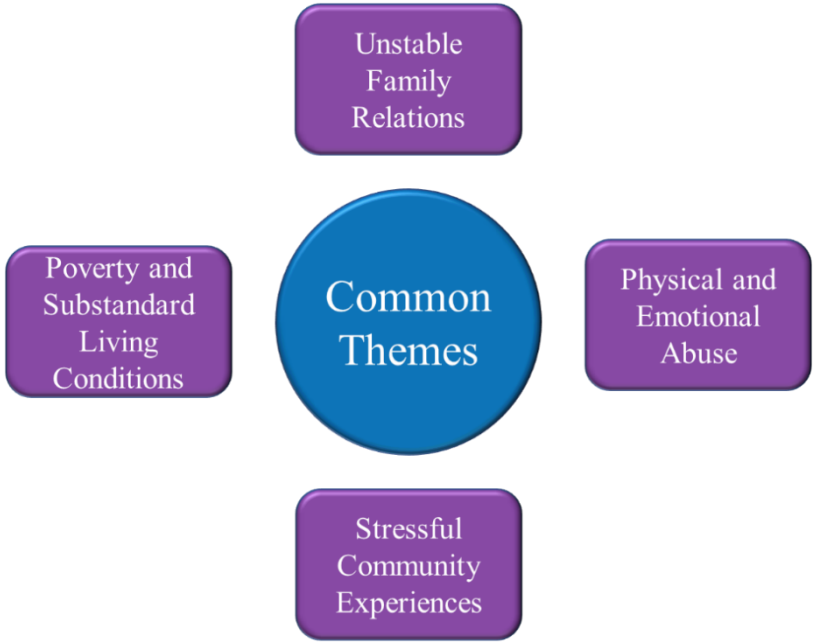

Figure 8. The common themes identified about student backgrounds

4.1.1 Unstable Family Relations

When asked about the students' backgrounds, 92.9% of interviewees described the relationship of the student with their caretaker(s) as tense and/or absent. Often, students do not have two parental figures in their lives; in fact, many are taken care of by their grandparents. Learners' school teachers were aware of the strained relationship between students and their caretaker(s); School Teacher 3 shared in their interview, *"I would say many of the parents are absent so for a lot of the students, [they say] 'it's grandma's taking care of me, it's grandpa's taking care of me; mom isn't there, dad isn't there.' Mostly if mom is there, dad isn't there."* The students' caretakers are often gone by the time students leave for school, not returning until hours after the students get home from school. As a result, these children may find themselves taking on the responsibilities of an adult. The stress that this kind of relationship causes could distract students from their academics throughout the school day, but could also make them want to spend longer hours at school in order to avoid their home issues. Through the interviews conducted, the consensus about the relationship between a parent and their child is that it is an unstable one that weighs on the mind of the learners.

4.1.2 Physical and Emotional Abuse

Students also experience abuse, both physical and emotional, from a variety of authoritative figures in their lives. They are exposed to domestic violence from parental figures, as well as by observing conflict between adult figures at home, sometimes including sexual abuse. A teacher at

Woodlands Primary commented that some parents take the physical beatings on their child too far. Music Therapist 1 highlighted that students also experience emotional abuse from caretakers, who say things like *"you're rubbish*," "*you can't do this,*" and other harmful words to their children. In addition, some caretakers encourage their children to go find work instead of focusing on their academics. At school, authoritative figures would label a child as a "problem child" if they were misbehaving, furthering their emotional abuse against the student because some teachers did not care to look further as to why they were misbehaving.

The abuse from caretakers and teachers puts the children in an environment where they lack access to a safe space for discussing their emotions. The children suppress their emotions because they are not encouraged to discuss them – it is not common for them to talk about their emotions or hardships. This proved to be true during the initial COVID lockdown in 2020, where students were exposed to the death of family members and were expected to simply move on, as there was no emotional support from their community.

This lack of openness with emotions, as well as physical and emotional abuse, causes children to keep their emotions to themselves. It makes it difficult for them to talk about their feelings, and thus, makes it difficult for others to know when there is trouble at home or with the student. If there is something bothering the learner, it is likely to affect their academic performance and emotional well-being.

4.1.3 Stressful Community Experiences

As previously mentioned, many of the students that attend the CRP are from townships in and around Cape Town. These areas are often hotspots for gang activity. This gang presence is so strong that children sometimes lay in their bathtubs to avoid being caught in crossfire, and police are often either paid off by gangs or are gang members themselves. Sometimes when police officers that are not associated with gangs investigate gang incidents, gang members will ask children in the area to hide their gang-affiliated drugs or weapons, hoping that the police will not suspect a child to be working with them. However, even a small favor to a gang member can lead to a child's later involvement in gangs. From experiences such as this, children living in townships are often exposed to drug and alcohol abuse at an early age. Music Therapist 1 recalled that her Grade 6 students know the types of drugs that people on the streets take, as well as which houses deal drugs in their neighborhoods. Another interviewee even mentioned that they had a few students in the CRP who dealt drugs in school. For these students, their families were involved with selling drugs, so being a part of this business was ordinary to them. It was what they knew.

However, involvement with drugs and gangs could greatly affect the children's learning and life outcomes. If these students were to be preoccupied with these activities, they would be distracted from learning and school. If found with drugs on school grounds, as well, they could be suspended or expelled (Government Gazette, 2002). A criminal record highlighting their involvement with drugs or gangs, too, could greatly impact their access to future occupations.

Furthermore, interviewees explained that learners are exposed to death when they are young. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the students' family members died from the virus. When we attended the lesson in person as well, we saw that many of the learners heard about a Grade 3 student who had recently passed away because of a car accident. Music Therapist 1 also mentioned that some learners speak casually about people getting shot, highlighting the normality of the violence in their community. As such, coping with death is something that many of the

learners have had to do at a young age, often on their own. This is not a simple task, though, as mourning and processing could take a large toll on a person's ability to be present and to focus on what they are doing. For the children, this may affect their ability to pay attention in school, as well as their emotional well-being. Since they have experienced much hardship in their lives, they have been forced to learn to cope and adapt on their own.

4.1.4 Poverty and Substandard Living Conditions

Most interviewees discussed the poor living conditions of the students, many of whom live in impoverished surrounding townships (such as Figure 9). Within the municipality of the city of Cape Town, the 2011 consensus found almost 36% of households to live below the poverty line, which was less than R3,500 per year (Statistics South Africa, n.d.). At home, these children often lack basic necessities. In their interview, Principal 3 noted that some of their students did not have access to clean clothes. For example, after noticing that a student had come into school with the same clothes as the days before, the Principal washed their clothes to provide them with laundered clothing.

In addition, food insecurity is a prevalent issue in many of the learners' homes. Some students rely on receiving the school's provided breakfast and lunch, due to the lack of food access at home. As a result, these students go long stretches of time without eating. Principal 1 discussed how students arrive at school with stomach pain that goes away after eating breakfast. The students do not associate the pain in their stomach with hunger pain because food insecurity has simply become the norm in many of their lives.

Additionally, poverty has contributed to challenges in commuting to school. Most schools do not provide transportation for students to and from school; learners are responsible for their own travel. Students attending primary school at Walmer Estate have to travel far to attend school each day, often waking up as early as 4:30 a.m. in order to make it to school on time. Parents of these students hire crowded taxis that are limited on space to transport their children to school early in the mornings. Since taxis are hired independently from the school, administration and teachers cannot regulate the safety of them. This daily commute to school can become pricey as well, sometimes being the reason why learners are absent for the day. Additionally, the areas where the schools are located can be dangerous for learners who must walk to school. In Stellenbosch, for instance, St. Vincent RC Primary is located just off of a busy road. On the way to school, learners frequently have to walk alongside these unsafe roads with speeding vehicles, posing a safety concern for many students.

Figure 9. Woodlands Primary in Heideveld is gated from outside visitors as a safety measure

4.1.5 Conclusions on Learners' Backgrounds

Our team determined the learners' backgrounds through interviews, which allowed us to identify the four key themes shown in Figure 8. Students of the CRP face adversities in many aspects of their life such as rough relationships with caretakers, exposure to violence and drugs, and a lack of access to resources. These adversities validate the existence of the CRP because they explain the need for a program that

nurtures the resilience of children from these communities.

4.2 CRP's Effectiveness on the Self-Esteem of its Learners

Since the CRP aims to use social-emotional learning to support and nurture the self-esteem of their learners, it was important to assess the self-esteem of the learners. We measured the learners' self-esteem using a survey previously made by MusicWorks as well as a survey we designed in collaboration with MusicWorks that aligned with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Wood, 2021).

4.2.1 Baseline Surveys from MusicWorks

Our team compared responses to MusicWorks' baseline survey from the start and end of the Creative Resilience Program at Walmer Estate Primary and Holy Cross Primary. Of the 99 total responses to the survey at the start of the program, 34 were from Walmer Estate Primary while 65 were from Holy Cross Primary. Of the 96 total responses at the end of the program, 32 while 64 were from Holy Cross Primary. The difference between the number of students that responded "yes," "no" and "not sure" to each statement at the start and end of the CRP is shown for each school in Figures 10 and 11.

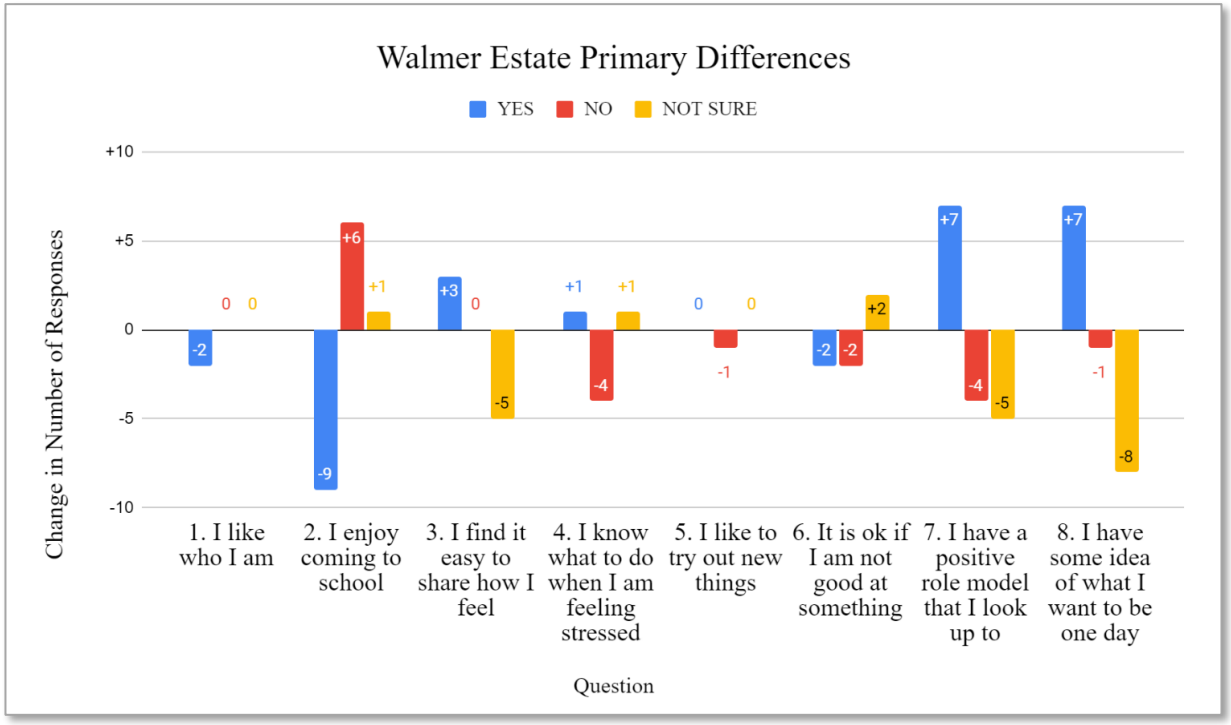

Figure 10.Bar graph detailing the change in responses of MusicWorks' survey from the beginning to the end of the school year at Walmer Estate Primary. Positive numbers indicate an increase in that type of response, while negative numbers indicate a decrease.

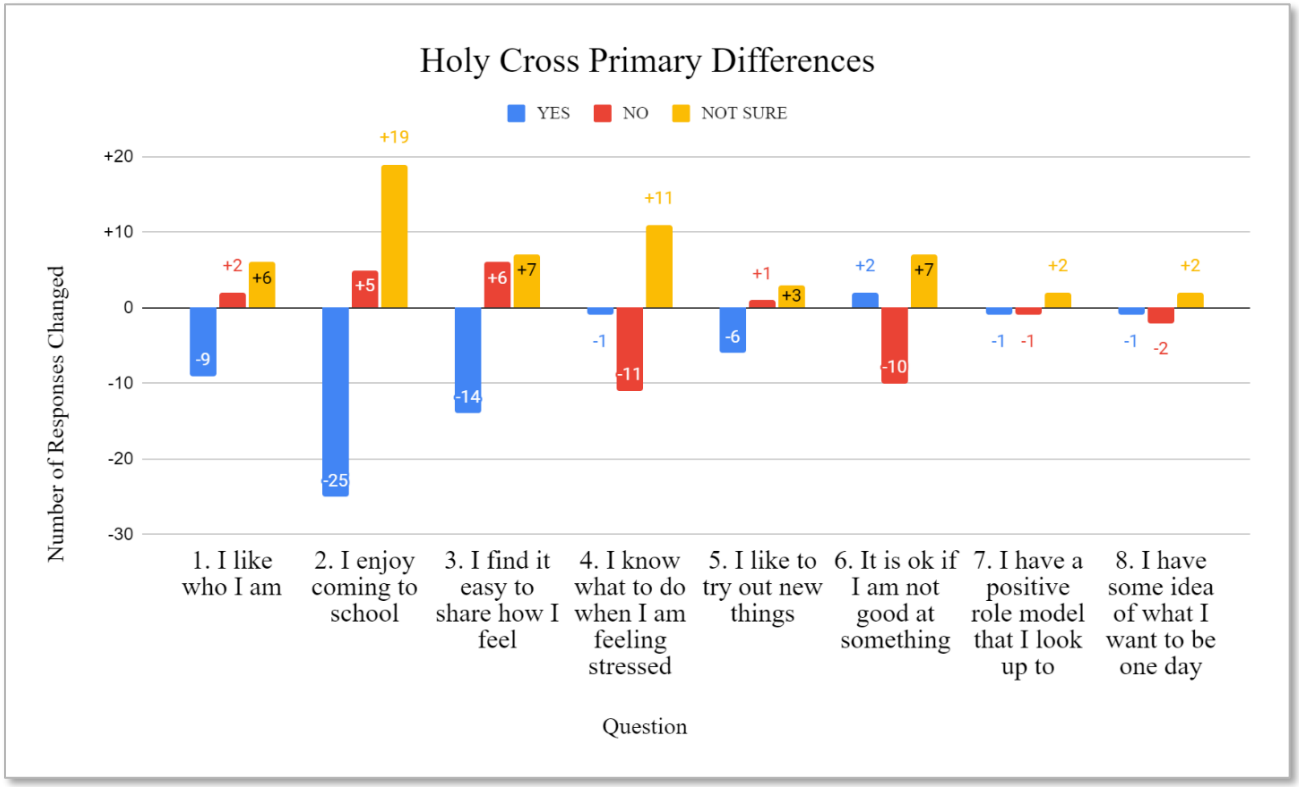

Figure 11. Bar graph detailing the change in responses of MusicWorks' survey from the beginning to the end of the school year at Holy Cross Primary. Positive numbers indicate an increase in that type of response, while negative numbers indicate a decrease.

Since there were two less responses to MusicWorks' end-of-year baseline survey at Walmer Estate Primary, the actual difference could range from two less or two more than the difference shown in Figure 10. This is because the two students that did not answer the end-of-program baseline survey could have both answered "yes" or "no." This means that we can only be certain whether the number of responses increased or decreased for a difference of greater than +2 or less than -2.

Thus, for Walmer Estate Primary, we can be confident that the number of learners who responded "yes" to statements 3, 7, and 8 increased, while the number of learners who responded "yes" to statement 2 decreased. We can also be confident that the number of learners who responded "no" to statement 2 increased, the number of learners who responded "no" to statements 4 and 7 decreased, and the number of learners who responded "not sure" to statements 3, 7, and 8 decreased. This shows

that more students found it easy to share how they felt, had a positive role model that they looked up to, and had some idea of what they want to be one day, while fewer enjoyed coming to school.

As for Holy Cross Primary, there was one less response to MusicWorks' end-of-year baseline survey, meaning that the actual difference could range from one less or one more than the difference shown in Figure 11, similar to Walmer Estate Primary. Therefore, we can only be certain that the number of students who responded "yes" to statement 6 increased, while the number of students who responded "yes" to statements 1, 2, 3, and 5 decreased. Additionally, we can be confident that the number of learners who responded "no" to statements 1, 2, and 3 increased, while the number of learners who responded "no" to statements 4 and 6 decreased. This means that more students felt that it was ok if they were not good at something, while less students liked who they were, enjoyed coming to school, found it easy to share how they felt, and liked to try new things.

While the changes in response to these questions could be a result of the students' involvement with the CRP, it is not certain, as other variables may have affected the students. Additionally, our findings from other methods illustrated themes of the CRP's positive impact on its learners. The differences shown in the data could represent a common trend for Grade 6 learners or could simply be a coincidence. One external factor that could have had a dramatic effect on statement 2, "I enjoy coming to school," is that the end-of-year baseline surveys were administered amidst the students' final few weeks of school, when exams were taken. From our interviews, we found that this time of the school year is very stressful for students, which could have contributed to the dramatic decrease in students that enjoyed coming to school.

For both Walmer Estate and Holy Cross, we did not get to observe the CRP while it was ongoing, as the program had already concluded before we arrived on-site. When Music Therapist 2 administered the survey, they mentioned that the groups of students from both Walmer Estate Primary and Holy Cross Primary were more troublesome than previous years. This could also factor into why the results of these surveys show more decreases than anticipated.

With MusicWorks' baseline survey, only the change in the number of each response to the individual statements can be evaluated. This makes the results difficult to analyze if there is a different number of total responses as our team is not confident of the total differences. Our group thinks that it would be helpful to obtain an overall score of the students' self-esteem so that the average, median, minimum, maximum, and range of scores can be compared. In this way, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale proved to fit those guidelines and was favored by our team.

4.2.2 Modified Rosenberg Self-Esteem Surveys

MusicWorks staff administered our Modified Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey to 73 St. Vincent RC Primary learners and 86 Woodlands Primary learners, for a total of 159 Grade 6 students (see Figure 12). Each response to a given question was weighted as zero, one, two, or three, with higher numbers indicating higher self-esteem. At the end of the survey,

Figure 12. Students at St. Vincent RC Primary filling out feedback surveys

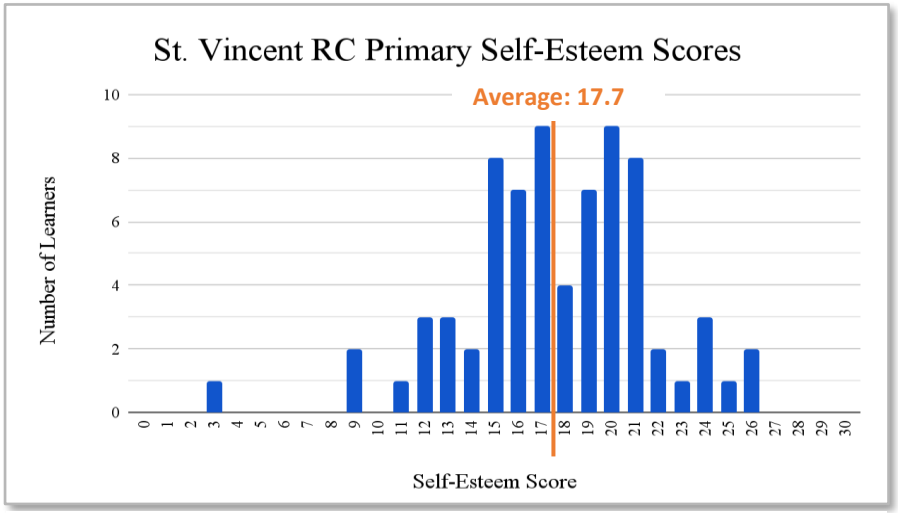

Figure 13. Histogram of self-esteem scores for St. Vincent RC Primary Grade 6 learners. The scores calculated are based on the methodology used in the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Wood, 2021). A higher score indicates greater self-esteem.

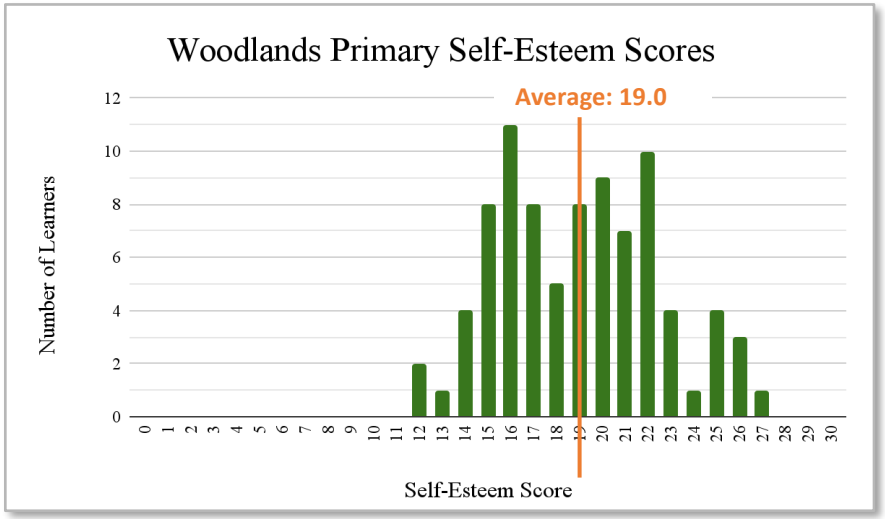

Figure 14. Histogram of self-esteem scores of Grade 6 learners from Woodlands Primary Grade 6 learners. The scores calculated are based off of the methodology used in the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Wood, 2021). A higher score indicates greater self-esteem.

the learner's responses were tallied up to find their self-esteem score. The results of these surveys for St. Vincent RC Primary and Woodlands Primary are shown above in Figures 13 and 14, respectively. The findings from this survey resulted in self-esteem scores ranging from a minimum of zero to a maximum of 30. Scores closer to zero were interpreted to represent low self-esteem while scores closer to 30 were interpreted to represent high self-esteem.

St. Vincent's learners had an average self-esteem score of 17.7 and Woodlands' learners had an average self-esteem score of 19.0. The scores from St. Vincent range from 3 to 26, while the scores from Woodlands range from 12 to 27. Figures 13 and 14 illustrate that most of the students have average to high self-esteem scores. Very few of the students' scores strayed far from the average. The most notable outlier is in Figure 13, where one student had a self-esteem score of 3. This score is far from the other data points, and shows that for the Grade 6 learners at St. Vincent RC Primary, a score like this is uncommon. Additionally, for St. Vincent's data, there are a greater number of students' scores that are at the lower end of the distribution, having scores at or below 11, unlike Woodlands' data, where the lowest score is 12. For the data gathered at Woodlands, there are no outliers. The distribution appears normal, showing that the majority of the scores are relatively similar. This data is also shown in a box and whisker plot in Figure 15. The whiskers on this graph, which represent the minimum and maximum values, illustrate that the self-esteem scores of learners from St. Vincent RC Primary were more widely distributed than the scores of the Woodlands Primary learners. However, the majority of the scores from both schools are similar, illustrated by the lower quartile, median, and upper quartile. The data between the lower and upper quartiles represent 50% of the total scores, showing that although there are data points outside of this 50%, many of the scores

are relatively similar. In conclusion, the Grade 6 learners at both of the schools generally had similar self-esteem scores at the end of the CRP.

There is not a concrete reason as to why St. Vincent Primary's confidence scores are consistently skewed lower than Woodlands Primary. However, through our observations, we noted there were several key differences between how the CRP was run between the two schools. While the program at Woodlands was run in a room devoted to the CRP and similar activities, the program at St. Vincent was run in a multipurpose room, as seen in Figure 16. Before each lesson, MusicWorks staff had to clear the room of tables and anything else that may have been in the way in order to make a spacious circle. While this was better than some other schools where the CRP had to run out of normal classrooms, it is clear that Woodlands' space was more conducive to teaching the CRP than St. Vincent's. A much more dramatic difference was that, due to MusicWorks' small staff size, there was no music therapist during lessons at St. Vincent, meaning the community musicians needed to act as both community musicians and music therapists. Thus, students at St. Vincent may not have been taught critical social-emotional learning topics as efficiently as those at Woodlands Primary. These differences may have impacted the effectiveness of the CRP at both schools, and by extension, the learners' self-confidence, although it is unclear to what extent.

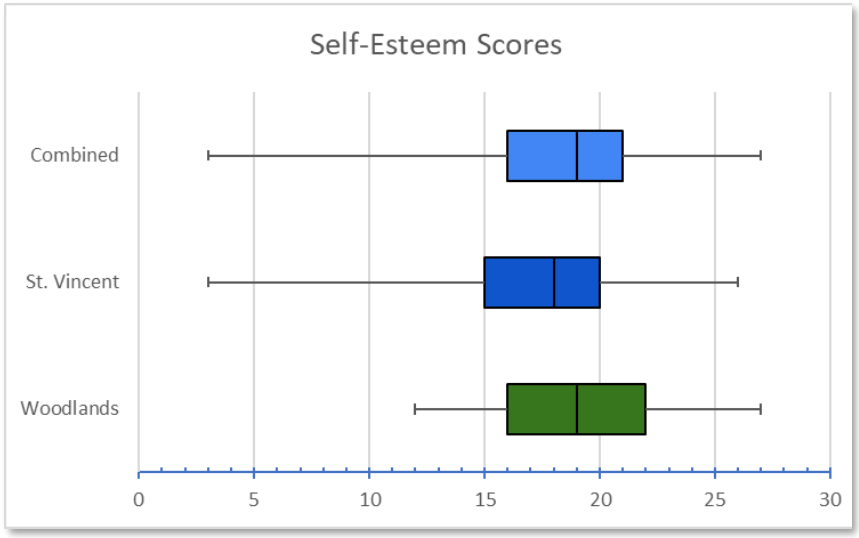

Figure 15. Box and whisker plot of the self-esteem scores of Grade 6 learners from St. Vincent RC Primary and Woodlands Primary. The combined scores from the two schools are also shown as a box and whisker plot. From left to right, the five vertical lines/data points on each box and whisker plot represent the minimum, the lower quartile, the median, the upper quartile, and the maximum, respectively. The data between the lower quartile and the upper quartile represent 50% of the data.

Ideally, our team hoped to compare self-esteem scores from before and after the CRP, but because Woodlands' and St. Vincent's school years started months before our arrival in Cape Town, we were only able to gather data at the end of the program. As a result, we do not have any concrete data to support that the CRP improved students'

Figure 16. St. Vincent's multipurpose room where CRP lessons are conducted

self-esteem. However, completing the Modified Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey at the start and end of the program would allow for the assessment of the changes in students' self-esteem and suggest the effectiveness of the social-emotional learning techniques integrated into the CRP lessons. Though we were unable to gather data about the change in self-esteem from the start to the end of the program this year, the data from the end of the program shows that most of the learners had self-esteem scores between 15 and 22, placing them slightly on the upper end of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

4.3 Key Strengths of the CRP

The section below describes the strengths of the CRP which were identified through interviews, observations, drawings, and feedback surveys. By analyzing the evidence from our different data collection strategies, our team identified several consistent positive attributes of the program as gathered from the learners and interviewees (see Appendix E for the list of interviewees).

To understand the context of the lessons itself, this paragraph describes a typical lesson of the CRP based on the observations conducted by our team. From school to school, the structure of the class remained largely the same. Typically, MusicWorks staff arrived at the school before the start of the lesson and set up the classroom by arranging chairs in a circle around the room. The Grade 6 learners were split up into smaller sections and brought to the lesson by a music facilitator. Each lesson began with a welcome song sung in isiXhosa. Then, the music facilitators conducted a check-in activity with the class, asking how each of the learners felt at that moment. The facilitators then conducted a few activities as the bulk of the lesson; these activities often included singing, dancing, and/or drumming. To close out the lesson, the facilitators conducted another check-in activity, and calmed the learner's by leading a mindfulness activity that included arm stretches and breathing. The learners then left for class and the next group of learners entered the classroom. The next lesson then repeated with a similar structure.

Figure 17. A poster at Woodlands Primary School depicting class rules

4.3.1 The CRP Provides a Safe Space

One of the important aspects of the CRP is that it establishes a safe space for its learners to discuss and express their feelings. The CRP develops a safe space by allowing learners to share their feelings during lessons and by guiding them to reach out for support when they need it.

The MusicWorks staff leading the CRP's lessons intentionally created boundaries so that the learners felt safe and could open up to the class. The music facilitators expressed that they were not the learner's academic teachers, separating the CRP lessons from the students' regular school classes. The community musicians and music therapists asked the learners to call them by their first name which allowed learners to feel closer to the MusicWorks staff. This also

allowed the CRP lessons to feel less strict and more open. In addition, the staff encouraged the learners to be involved with the boundaries created by conducting an activity where the learners created classroom rules for their class to follow together. In this way, the learners could have a stronger connection to the space while also feeling responsible to respect the rules of the lesson. Figure 17 depicts the rules Woodlands students created together. Setting these rules helps to create a space where each learner feels respected and therefore safe.

It is important to create a space in which the learners are comfortable because sharing their feelings is an act that is typically not encouraged by those surrounding them. Children are not encouraged to talk about their feelings at home or at school. Most of the caretakers of the children do not ask simple questions such as how their day was (Community Musician 1). The learners then learn to internalize their feelings because it is not normalized to talk about what they are feeling. In this way, the learners often do not have a voice. 35.7% of interviewees explicitly mentioned the lack of space for children to share their feelings. When the CRP was implemented at St. Vincent, the learners finally had a space to talk about their feelings. One of the

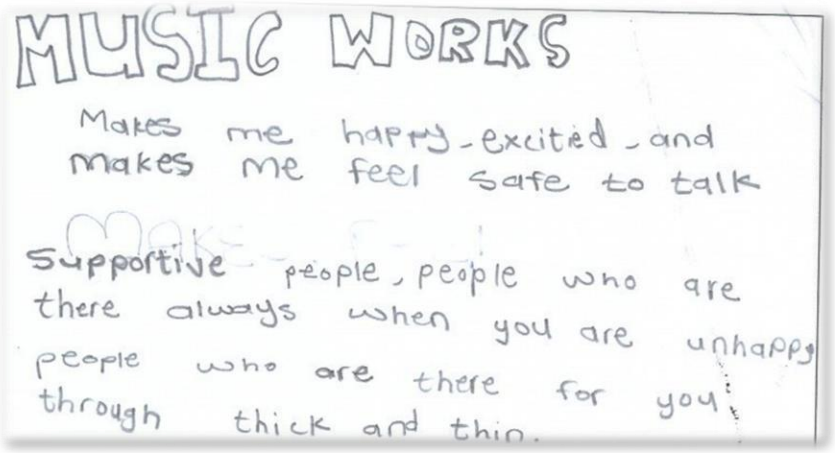

Figure 18. A student drawing which depicts their experience in the CRP

teachers at St. Vincent shared with the MusicWorks staff that they should check in with a specific student who cried in class. Although the student was not able to talk about their concerns *in* class, the teacher was able to send them to the CRP lesson because it was a space where they could share their feelings.

Learners that are not used to expressing their feelings with others need guidance on how to do so. At the start of the program, MusicWorks staff spent time teaching the learners basic skills about how to express their feelings. One of the music therapists shared, "*No one talks about their feelings at home, no one…so we work on a very basic skill of just being able to express how you feel or what you think"* (Music Therapist 2). The basic skills included simply being reassured that it was okay to feel any emotion whether it be sad, happy, or angry, etc. They taught the children how to be responsible for the emotions that they felt. The MusicWorks staff showed the children it was not the end of the world because of an emotion they were feeling, and that they could do something about it. These skills were taught in subtle ways as well. During participant observation, our team participated in an activity in which the class shared their mood for that day by choosing a type of weather it correlates to. The activity was simple and did not require anyone to share how they felt in big sentences, but rather compared it to something they could relate to. This activity is an example of creating a space where children become used to discussing how they feel.

Being taught how to express their feelings allowed the learners to share deep and tough feelings. Music Therapist 2 witnessed students being able to share complex feelings stating, "*...we've had tears because there are some things that we go through with them that bring back some really rough stuff that they have to deal with in the communities that they live in.*" The learners are comfortable enough to talk about emotional things in the CRP lessons even though they are typically not used to those environments. In the drawings, a student wrote, "*MusicWorks makes me feel happy, excited, and makes me feel*

safe to talk" (see Figure 18). The music facilitators contribute to the safe space environment, which was proven by the large number of learners whose drawings showed themes of feeling safe and supported by MusicWorks staff. Community Musician 2 shared their observation of how the learners come into the CRP lessons smiling and wanting to hug the MusicWorks staff saying, *"They want to hug you. I don't think that they get that at home: the laughs, the hugs.*" These connections with the MusicWorks staff inspire some learners to come to the staff with personal issues they have. Community Musician 2 shared how they connected with a learner who expressed issues she had with her family life during an activity in a CRP lesson. Later, the student wrote them a letter, telling them about her situation. Three interviewees mentioned another letter written by a student who expressed their feelings, highlighting the learner's ability to confide in the MusicWorks staff regarding their problems. They felt safe enough to reach out to the staff outside of the classroom setting.

The creation of a safe space continues through the emphasis on creating a sense of belonging in the lesson. The MusicWorks staff encouraged the learners to work as a team and bring each other up (see Figure 19). Each lesson started with *Molweni Nonke*, a welcome song. The song was led by a community musician and each student was welcomed by the class in the song. They sang "Hello" and said the name of each individual student. This lets the students be seen and know that they belong in the space (Community Musician 1). In the surveys conducted with the learners, 82.9% of students

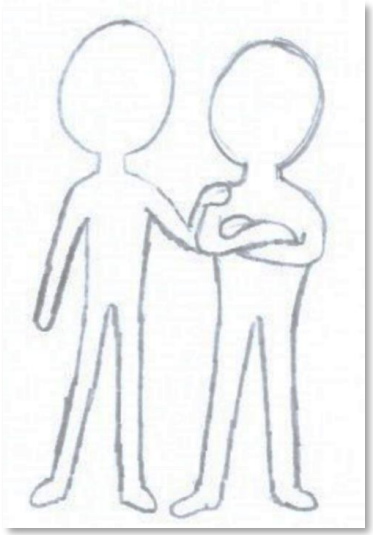

Figure 19. Someone comforting another, who looks to be sad/angry

overall from both Woodlands and St. Vincent shared that they felt included in class. The lessons have become a space where learners feel that they belong as a result of the nature of the program.

Providing a safe space for the learners includes being a guide for other potential sources of support. When learners come to the MusicWorks staff about their concerns, the staff are able to point the students towards a resource they could further confide in. 57.1% of MusicWorks staff explicitly stated that the program aimed to encourage students to seek out additional support, such as school teachers, the police, or a trusted adult. The staff have to be cautious though, Music Therapist 1 stated, as they do not have the full context of the learner's specific situation and do not know who the student could specifically reach out to. For example, not all school teachers have the capacity to help every specific issue a learner has. Nevertheless, the creation of a safe space through the CRP enables the music facilitators to provide resources of support to their learners. The program also aims to teach the learners to consider other aspects of their life that they could apply the skills that they learn to. Community Musician 1 shared the importance of encouraging learners to use these skills throughout their lives, saying, "*If the program just stays here, and we just talk about here, sometimes they don't make the link that what we're doing here. It's a link with your life. It's a link to your school.*" The MusicWorks team wants the learners to recognize the safe space that is provided to them during the CRP's lessons and connect those concepts to their home lives or other environments. The constant support from the MusicWorks staff contributes to the learner's ability to feel comfortable during lessons.

4.3.2 Students can Participate Hands-On

The CRP is a unique part of the school week for learners. Unlike their academic classes, in which they must be focused and studious, in the CRP's sessions, we observed that they were able to be expressive and loud and interact directly with the instruments and music. The

program provides them with an outlet to be creative and express their emotions through sounds.

After observing the CRP in person, learners' engagement was vividly clear. The pure energy in the classroom radiated throughout the room, affecting everyone in attendance. The program incorporated many musical elements into the lessons, most commonly singing, dancing, and drumming. Throughout the lesson, the MusicWorks staff and learners had wide grins on their faces during the musical acts they performed—the joy and happiness in these activities were felt even from the outside perspective of our observations. The children expressed their interest in these lessons through their drawings, writing notes such as, "*the best part is when we sing and beat drums,*" or saying that they are "*happy to sing*," in big, bubble lettering. They drew music notes with hearts, classmates dancing and singing, and many images of drums (see Figure 20). Many of them also referenced the songs that they learned in class, such as *Molweni Nonke*, the welcome song previously mentioned. From our observations, it was apparent that the learners enjoyed singing and dancing in class. Most of them knew every word of each song, as well as the dance moves to go along with them. From the survey questions, 70.8% of the learners strongly agreed or agreed that they liked singing, and 72.5% of them liked dancing. Having singing and dancing activities in lessons is a strength to the program, as the majority of the learners enjoy participating in these activities.

The teachers at the primary schools, too, have expressed that the CRP's hands-on activities are beneficial to the students. In their other classes during the day, the learners are expected to be quiet and serious. However, in the CRP, they are able to be louder and play with the instruments without being told to be quiet. It is a very different environment than the normal school classroom, one that allows them to take a break from academic topics and interact more freely with musical instruments and activities. When asked to answer the prompt "this class lets me be creative," 90.3% of the learners agreed that this was true for them. Additionally, a teacher from St. Vincent RC Primary spoke about the need for a program like this, expressing that "*as a child, you cannot sit in [an] environment where you [are] gonna spend lot[s] of hours serious, trying to do this maths, trying to do this science*" (School Teacher 2). The teacher reflected on the program, repeating that the CRP helps learners by experiencing something different and fun, letting them get hands-on experience with the musical instruments.

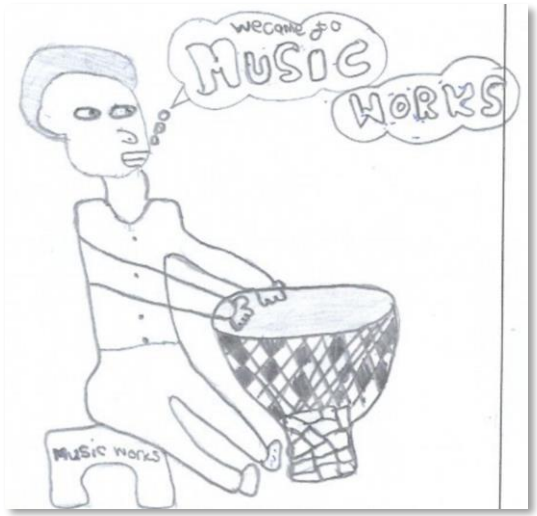

Figure 20. A drawing by a student of a learner playing the African drum in class

Along with giving the learners opportunities to engage with music and dance through the MusicWorks lessons, music is also a way for them to connect with their ancestry. Principals stated they appreciated this aspect of the program as it provides a sense of healing for the students. Many of the learners have an important connection to their family past and one way they connect with their ancestors is through expression via music. This artistic expression and connection is worked into the MusicWorks lessons. The songs, dances, and African drumming that MusicWorks incorporates into their program are not just for enjoyment, but they also have a deeper meaning to many of the students. As mentioned in the beginning of the report, traditional African singing and drumming is used in healing rituals within Black and Coloured communities. The CRP's students grow up in these communities, explaining their personal

connection to the music. From singing in their native languages and participating in African drumming, engaging in these musical activities is meaningful and connects the learners to their ancestry.

4.3.3 Learners can Better Regulate Emotions

While part of the CRP is to provide a space for learners to be happy, it is also important that the CRP provides a space for learners to feel a full range of emotions. MusicWorks tries to provide its learners with ways to manage their own emotions, whether positive or negative. As Music Therapist 2 described it, "*We target a lot of kind of emotional regulation… skills… [such as] awareness of oneself and… emotional literacy… how to… modify your mood, how to manage stressful situations.*" Music Therapist 2 also explained the importance of teaching children the ability to regulate their emotions, as children who have not been taught how to manage their emotions are less likely to be motivated to put effort into their academics and themselves.

The emotional regulation skills that MusicWorks taught appeared to affect and be understood by the learners. When asked to respond to the statement "I feel better after class," 82.8% of students answered either agree or strongly agree. Figure 21 details how one learner was able to use the CRP to manage their stress and other negative emotions, showing that they experience times when they are happy, sad, or even just normal, also adding on that music helps them to relieve their stress. The drawing depicts students openly sharing how they are feeling, even if what they are feeling is not positive. Similar sentiments can be seen in other drawings, in which students wrote things like, "*MusicWorks helped me deal with my anger problems so I say thank you MusicWorks*," and "*When I am sad and I would change my feelings and be happy or in between*." In all of these examples, learners demonstrate an ability to recognize their emotions, and even if they are not able to entirely cheer themselves up, use techniques to manage and improve their negative emotions.

Figure 21. A drawing by a learner of them being happy, sad, and normal

4.3.4 Positive Affirmations help with the Learners' Self-Confidence

One aspect of the CRP that was prevalent in all of the lessons we observed was the inclusion of positive affirmations. The music therapists, especially, proactively incorporated affirmations into their lessons through creative activities and singing. An activity that the students participated in was writing their own affirmations and pasting them on the walls of the classroom. The learners each wrote their own affirmations, including notes such as, "I will never give up" and "I can be everything I want to be," (see Figure 22). Music Therapist 1 talked about the intention behind this activity, saying that "*sticking [their affirmation] on the wall [was] a form of ownership of their affirmation and ownership of the space.*" From our observation of the affirmation wall, it was obvious that the students had unique affirmations that applied to each of them. Some affirmations were more emotional-based, some were family-based, and some contained dreams about the future. Whatever the learners wrote, all of the affirmations on the wall showed the learners' ability to believe in themselves.

Affirmations in the form of songs was another way that MusicWorks helped build the students' self-confidence. One song, which talked about people trying to bring you down, reminded students what to do in that situation: "I remember these three things: I am magical, I am magnificent, and I know I'm amazing." These simple affirmations, sang as a catchy tune, had the students singing and dancing along to its encouraging words. One student, in their drawing, drew a strong figure with the word "*Amazing*" written boldly under the person. Another showed the confidence that the MusicWorks lessons gave him, writing that "*MusicWorks allwos [sic] make me feel like a champion*" and drawing a person holding a trophy. Students remember the affirmations that they learn in these activities and the songs.

Additionally, in their grade-wide performance at the end of the year, the students sang a song that they had created using positive affirmations in one of their CRP lessons. Each class made their own unique song and showed everyone else what they had created (see Figure 23). These songs contained affirmations such as "I am strong," "I forgive myself for my mistakes," and "I have faith in myself." The learners got to choose which affirmations they wanted to use in their

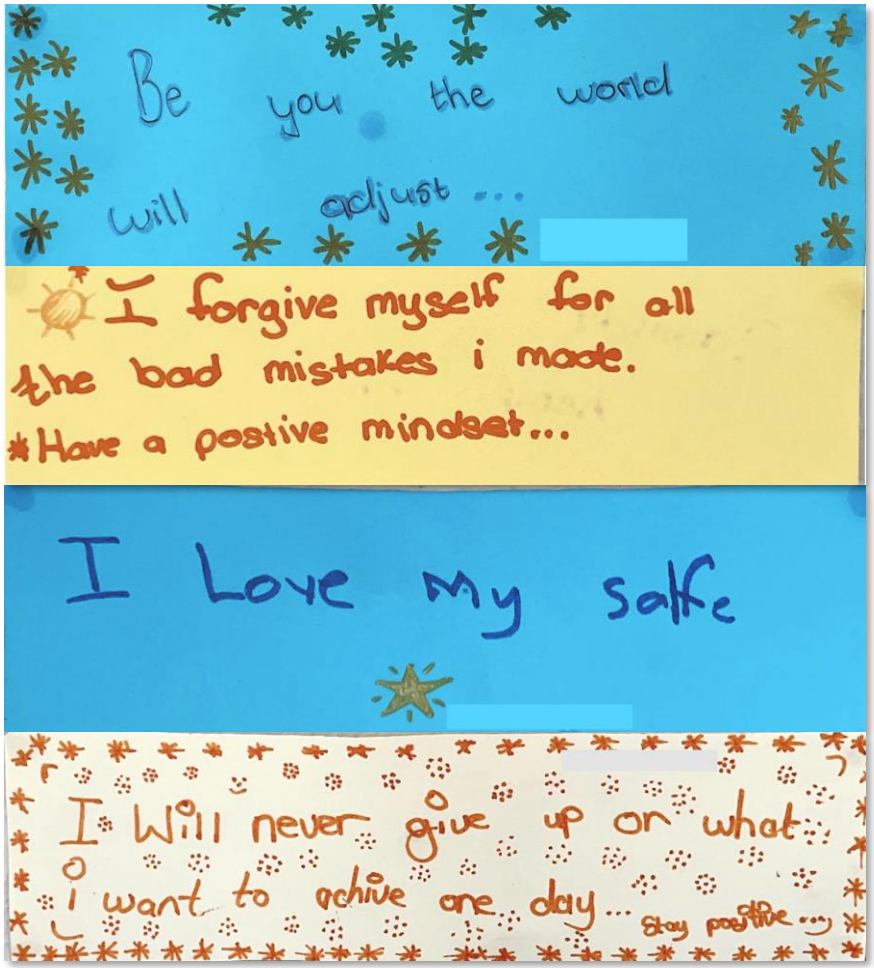

Figure 22. Learners' positive affirmations on the wall at Woodlands Primary School

song, allowing them to connect deeply with them. Music Therapist 2 expressed that at the start of the school year when they had just begun the lessons, most of the students were unable to answer a simple question like "What do you like about yourselves?" However, by the end of the year, she noted that "*just the way that they reflect is very different,*" and she was able to really see it in the session through their words and body language. The affirmations helped support the learners' self-confidence and reminded them that they were all worthy and capable of achieving their goals.

Figure 23. Learners singing their affirmation song at Woodlands Primary School

4.3.5 Learners are Better Disciplined

In addition to increasing the students' self-confidence, the program helps with the children's discipline. Principal 3 noted a time when students were acting naughty during a school presentation and noticed that after their involvement in the program, they were better behaved. In addition, Teacher 2 believed that the children benefit from getting a break from academic learning when participating in the CRP. Teachers have also found it helpful to apply the methods that the MusicWorks staff use to get students to be quiet.

This has also been seen in the responses from the MusicWorks Evaluation Survey and in the student drawings conducted in class. Some students' drawings mentioned feeling respected and having respect for others. Moreover, 80.6% of the students from St. Vincent and Woodlands combined either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I feel motivated after class." The students from Woodlands particularly agreed with this statement, as 89.0% of them either strongly agreed or agreed, compared to St. Vincent's 72.4%.

4.3.6 Learners Enjoy Class and Working with Staff Members

One aspect that is abundantly clear is that the learners enjoy attending the CRP, the MusicWorks staff, principals, and teachers observe as well. For example, Principal 3 stated "*...they really love it. I'm telling you, they really enjoy the programs very well [sic].*" During observation and participant observation, many children were seen to be smiling throughout each session. Most of the learners actively participated in the lessons, seeming to enjoy the musical activities that the MusicWorks staff led. 81.8% of interviewees noted the students' energy and smiles during class. Additionally, as if they could not get enough of the program, students would sometimes sing songs performed in the CRP's sessions on their way to and from sessions.

In addition to staff observation, as well as our own, many responses to the drawings and the feedback survey showed that most students enjoyed attending the CRP. It was found that 92.6% of students from Woodlands and St. Vincent combined either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I like coming to class." Furthermore, 88.6% of students from Woodlands and St. Vincent combined strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I feel happy during lessons," and 88.0% of students from Woodlands and St. Vincent combined strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I wish we had

more classes like this one." In corroboration, many of the responses to the drawing prompt "Draw what MusicWorks means to YOU" included positive symbols and statements. For example, drawings of smiley faces and hearts, and phrases like "I love MusicWorks" and "I am happy" were a common feature of the students' responses (see Figure 24).

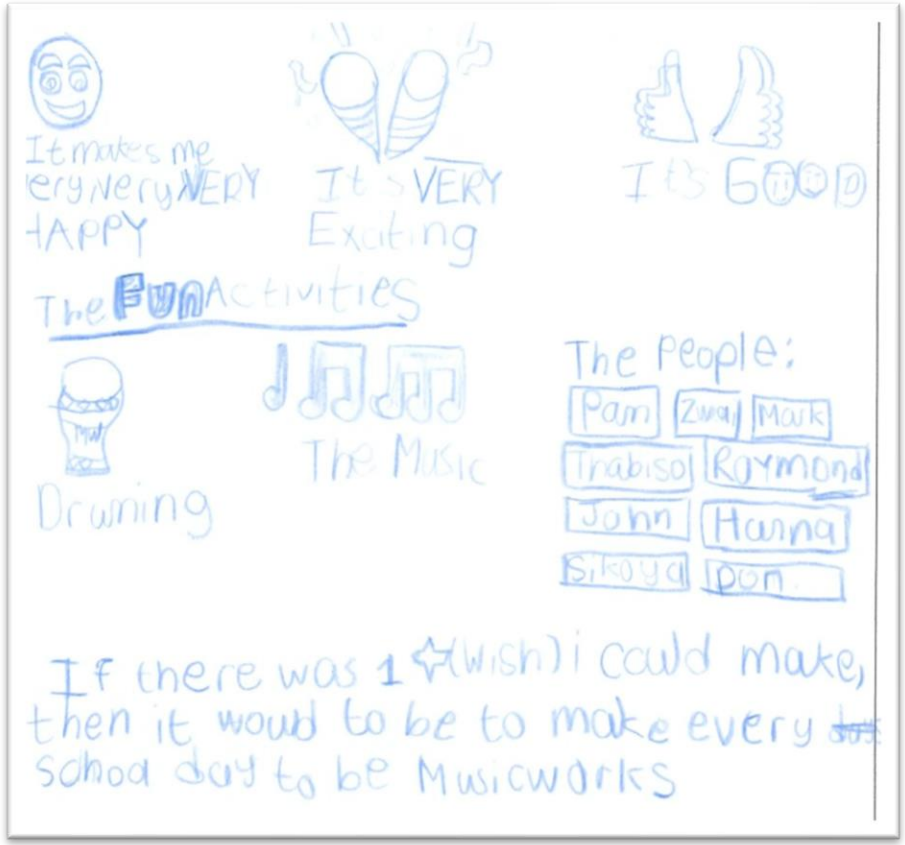

Figure 24. A student's drawing in response to the prompt

4.3.7 Encouraging Learners' Future Aspirations

A lesson that the CRP works towards is helping the Grade 6 students think about their futures. Due to growing up in townships and with stressful living conditions, students sometimes do not think they can make it out. However, the MusicWorks program attempted to show the learners that they could. One way that MusicWorks achieved this was by bringing in positive role models to speak to the students. For example, Requel Nel, founder of The Leaky Shack Foundation, came to speak with the learners during a class. Ms. Nel had a similar background to many of the students, growing up in poverty and with difficult living situations—something many of the learners could relate to. However, because she had worked hard and did not give up on her dream, she became successful. Her story resonated with the primary school students—when asked, weeks later, by session facilitators about her story, they remembered most of her life story, taking away the big lesson that they learned: if you did not give up, you could achieve your dream. This story was especially important because it helped the students see someone who was in a similar circumstance to them, yet still was able to succeed; The story showed them that it was possible.

Creating vision boards during class was another activity that helped expand the learners' perspectives of what they could achieve. Session facilitators brought in magazines and newspapers that the students cut photos from and pasted onto their boards. The goal of the vision boards was to help the students visualize what they could do or be when they were older, and allowed them to dream big. Some chose to paste fancy cars or shiny things, while others chose jobs that they wanted. One MusicWorks staff member noted that some of the students wanted to go into professions that helped others, such as doctors or teachers. This was shown in the drawings too; for example, a student drew a photo of "*my future being a doctor*" (see Figure 25). Although there were not many people in their lives with occupations like doctors or nurses, the students were able to envision themselves in

these roles. They were allowed to dream big and think about the better life they would have when they finished school.

Figure 25. A student's drawing of their future as a doctor

4.3.8 MusicWorks Staff are Open-Minded and Highly Invested in the Program

The CRP is the organization's newest program which requires the MusicWorks staff to proactively work to improve the program. After each completion of the CRP, the team has a strategic retreat to discuss improvements they could make to the program. Their commitment to improving the program together demonstrates a strength of the CRP. The team is in constant communication about how to structure the program and each team member shares their opinion based on their own backgrounds.

The team's communication extends beyond yearly meetings as they also discuss how to run each lesson the day of. The program itself follows a framework with certain goals and outcomes, but the day-to-day lessons are often planned to go with the flow of the students' current situations. All of the MusicWorks staff, from the directors to the music facilitators, expressed their understanding of being flexible with daily lessons. Community Musician 1 shared how the music facilitators are attuned to the student's concerns saying, "*We [are] also learning the life of the kids, because we're not kids. We don't know what they're going through every single day but when we open [these] spaces, you will hear kids speaking about [what is happening in their lives].*" This allows them to be aware of changes to the students' environments and be able to improvise the lesson to reflect those changes. An example of the staff's strong ability to adapt is when a situation occurred where the learners at Holy Cross experienced struggles with bullying. The staff expressed how they did not currently have any lessons that incorporated bullying so they created a lesson around the topic to process the situation with their learners.

The strength of their flexibility also lies in their ability to adapt if one of their co-workers cannot show up to work. Each of the music facilitators are aware of how to run the lesson, even if one of them is absent. Our team also observed their flexibility during our observation. There was a lesson when the learners were less energized than normal so the facilitators used a specific drumming activity to engage the students. Another example is when one of the schools had a wellness day and did not alert the MusicWorks staff they would not be able to hold a lesson that day. The facilitators planned out how to sufficiently complete the rest of lessons based on the time they had left in the program. The MusicWorks staff work together to share their ideas on how to adapt to new circumstances to sufficiently run the program.

The MusicWorks staff try to understand the learner's backgrounds and intentionally create lessons that are sensitive to that knowledge. They understand that their communities are often different

from the students; thus, they may need to act with more intention so as not to offend their learners. This includes being professional and not raising their voices at the learners. Executive Director, Raymond Schuller, points out the staff's awareness that the students already possess resilience. They know the students come from communities in which they become resilient to. Schuller uses the word "nurturing" to describe how they work with the kids, saying, "*I use the word nurturing purposefully because…nurturing just means that self-esteem and resilience exist at some level. It's just not conscious.*" In the interviews, three of the seven MusicWorks staff that were interviewed explicitly said how they were conscious of the students' backgrounds and used that knowledge when they facilitated lessons.

Another strength of the program stems from the staff's open-mindedness with each other. The CRP is the first program in the MusicWorks organization that combines music therapists and community musicians together in lessons. For many of the community musicians, it is their first time working with a music therapist. The knowledge from both the music therapists and the community musicians are valuable to the success of the CRP. Music therapists bring the academic elements of human nature, while the community musicians bring the experiential part of it. At the beginning of the program, there were times where it was difficult to understand each other's expertise (Raymond Schuller). Despite those difficulties, however, the community musicians worked with the therapists to understand the music therapist side of things. They all were patient, which allowed the development of the program to be organic. In our interviews, all of the community musicians shared how they were open to learning about the music therapy methods. Community Musician 2 even shared how they were able to apply the social-emotional skills to their own life with their family. They are all able to work together because they are open-minded and willing to learn about each other's professions.

The staff's open-minded dynamic comes from their ability to see each other as family. Each team member shared that they are able to discuss challenges they face at work and challenges that they are facing outside of the work environment. Community Musician 2 remembers the moment they joined the organization and had trouble adjusting to the computer equipment, but received help from the rest of the team, stating, "*everyone was always there for me, if I needed help, they [were] always there*." Our team also witnessed through our observations how close the staff are with each other and how they use effective communication to facilitate the program (see Figure 26).

Figure 26. MusicWorks staff chatting after the end-of-year concert at Woodlands Primary School

4.3.9 MusicWorks Staff See the Vision of the Program

During our interviews, we asked MusicWorks' directors, music therapists, and community musicians what they believed the purpose of the CRP to be—all shared similar themes. Both the Operations Director of MusicWorks and Music Therapist 1 stressed how the CRP is not about creating resilience, but rather is about recognizing and strengthening the resilience that already exists within their learners (see Figure 27). Music Therapist 1 also discussed how the CRP builds off of the foundations of the Circle of Courage. Specifically, they explained how drumming as a group activity creates a sense of Belonging, Mastery, and Independence all at the same time, sentiments echoed by Community Musicians 1 and 2. More broadly, these stakeholders mentioned the importance of providing a safe space for learners to express themselves creatively. All of these responses being so closely related demonstrates how MusicWorks effectively communicates within the organization in order to fully realize the potential of their programs.

Figure 27. Executive Director of MusicWorks explaining the purpose of the program to Woodlands Primary Grade 6 learners at their end of-year concert

4.4 Key Weaknesses of the CRP

This section describes the areas of the CRP that could be improved to increase its effectiveness. These weaknesses were found by analyzing the evidence collected from interviews, feedback surveys, student drawings, and observations. The areas mentioned were either said by multiple interviewees or were included in multiple methodologies, increasing the likelihood of the areas of improvement being necessary.

4.4.1 CRP is Currently Only Offered to Grade 6 Learners

When the program began in 2020, it was intended for both Grade 6 and Grade 7 learners. However, because the curriculum was the same for both Grade 6 and 7 learners, the program was not as beneficial to the Grade 7 learners as it could have been. By the time the students were in Grade 7, their last year before high school, the students had so much going on that it would have been more difficult for the students to implement what the CRP was teaching them. With Grade 6, on the other hand, MusicWorks would be able to make a greater impact on the learners. The MusicWorks team felt that focusing on one grade would be more beneficial, and thus, decided to work with Grade 6 learners only.

For reasons similar to why the CRP is provided to Grade 6 learners, rather than 7, interviewees from various positions believe that the CRP should be provided for even younger learners. Teacher 2 believes that the program "*...must be catered for all learners…*" and that it should "*...find a way of also coming to the little ones…*" because if the students are prepared to deal with challenges at a young age, they may be better prepared to deal with the issues that they experience growing up. Also, Principal 1 said that they "*...would have loved the whole school to be part of the [MusicWorks] program, but their program is not designed to service a whole school,*" referring to the CRP, which is currently designed for Grade 6 learners only. In addition, multiple MusicWorks staff noted that by the time some of the more reserved

students began to open up, it was almost at the end of their involvement in the program. If MusicWorks could reach children at a younger age, the concepts taught would be more deeply ingrained in the learners' minds.

4.4.2 Limited Human Resources

Due to MusicWorks' smaller team size, as seen in Figure 28, they are limited in the number of schools in which they are able to implement the Creative Resilience Program. Battling the short amount of time they are able to teach at the school as well as the busy schedules of the community musicians and music therapists, the team is often only able to attend one school each day, and thus, only meet with the learners once a week. Sometimes, too, music therapists are not able to attend all CRP sessions because of private practice sessions. This reduces the music therapy and social-emotional lessons of the CRP that benefit the learners. With a larger staff, MusicWorks may be able to attend multiple schools in one day, allowing a greater outreach of the CRP and a music therapist at each site.

Figure 28. About half of MusicWorks' team members before the St. Vincent concert

4.4.3 Time Constraint on CRP Session Length

At the beginning of each year, the MusicWorks staff work with the school to agree on a time for them to come in. This time shifts from year to year and depends on the school, but often, is less than a 60-minute session. At some schools, MusicWorks is only given half an hour. There is difficulty within the school as well, as the music lessons need to fit into the school day, which has a tight schedule. With exams and assessments during the last few weeks of the year, CRP lessons are even more limited. From the interviews conducted, this limitation in time seems to be one of the greatest challenges of implementing the CRP, because there is just "*not quite enough time to fit in everything that we want to fit in*" (Music Therapist 1).

Having longer lessons would allow the learners to engage more meaningfully with the lessons. As one of the community musicians said, "*when we're in there it feels like they're growing. And then we stop. And then we have to take another class*" (Community Musician 1). The CRP has to be adjusted to fit the time frame that they are given. With shorter classes, MusicWorks staff is able to shift activities and lessons around to ensure the learners are gaining these learnings, but, it comes with an expense as other teachings have to be taken away.

Some of the students, too, hope that classes are longer than they currently are. When given the statement, "I want class to be longer," 74.8% of the learners from the schools combined strongly agreed or agreed with this declaration.

The short lesson time also causes more difficulty in connecting with the CRP's learners. Since the MusicWorks staff work with many students each week, some have found it difficult to learn all of the students' names. MusicWorks tried name badges in the past, but had to abandon them because it took too much time out of the session. Several staff members are saddened by this, as they stressed the stronger personal connection that they would have with the students if they were to know their names. It establishes something more special and makes the learner feel more seen. With the current time allotted for the program, taking time to learn everyone's name is, unfortunately, something that cannot be included into the lessons.

It is also hard to figure out if a student needs help during the short sessions. One of MusicWorks' teachers wishes they had more time to understand the learners' backgrounds better, which would allow them to know if the child needs help or intervention. With the 30-40-minute sessions, it is difficult to tell if a learner is going through a tough time. However, if there was ample time to have deeper conversations in class, the staff would be able to help the students better. If a MusicWorks staff member is able to create a deep connection with a student, they would be limited by the time constraint of the year-long program as the CRP would work with the next year's Grade 6 learners, see Figure 29.

Figure 29. Grade 5 learners at Woodlands Primary watching the CRP's Grade 6 learners' end-of-year concert

4.4.4 MusicWorks can Only Help to an Extent

One important aspect of MusicWorks' CRP that is important to remember is that it is intended to help nurture its learners' existing resilience rather than create resilience. According to the Operation Director of MusicWorks, "*...the children that we work with, despite the circumstances and conditions, are naturally resilient. So for us it's about increasing that level of resilience. Recognizing it within themselves...*" While the children that participate in the CRP are naturally resilient, many of their families do not provide them with the emotional support needed to encourage their children such as what to do when they are overwhelmed, or to explain that the student is loved.

Similarly, as mentioned by Community Musician 2, the CRP can only guide and empower the learners, as it is up to the learners to actually implement what they are taught. The MusicWorks staff cannot control whether the students do the right thing outside of class. On a related note, Community Musician 2 thinks that it would be helpful to take the students out of their typical environments. By taking learners to places that they are unfamiliar with, like other districts or soccer games, the children will be able to learn important concepts that others may use in their daily lives.

It was also recognized by multiple interviewees that some students may need professional help, beyond what the program can offer. As Music Therapist 2 says, "*I think a lot of these kids really could benefit from a proper therapeutic process*." MusicWorks' CRP is not designed to give students individual professional help, which, unfortunately, many students may not have access to.

4.4.5 Language Barrier may Hinder Learners' Engagement

South Africa has 11 official languages, creating the potential to cause language barriers in school. In the CRP, the language primarily used for speaking is English, while songs are sung in both isiXhosa and Afrikaans. However, as one of the community musicians discussed, some students may not fully understand the language(s) of the program, causing them to become disinterested and disengaged. The learners speak to each other in the language(s) they are most comfortable in, but sometimes, this is not the same language that the MusicWorks staff speak. In one of the lessons that our team observed, the students were chatting about something among themselves, but the staff were confused as to what they were talking about. They asked the students to explain what they were saying, in English, so that they

were able to understand. Thus, this language barrier may go both ways, from the teachers to the learners, as well as from the learners to the teachers.

4.4.6 Space Constraint as a Concern in Some Schools

In some of the schools, such as Woodlands Primary and St. Vincent RC Primary, there is a designated room that the CRP is held in. This room contains storage for MusicWorks' African drums, as well as enough chairs for all of the learners (see Figures 30 and 31). The students come to the MusicWorks room for their lesson, and then return back to their classrooms afterwards.

MusicWorks' Operations Director emphasizes the importance of having a separate room away from the classrooms, saying that since the students do not associate the lessons with academics, they have a mind shift when entering the room. This may help the students to be more attentive and engaged with the CRP's lessons.

However, in a few of the other schools that the CRP runs at, such as Holy Cross and Walmer Estate, there is not this luxury of a separate room for the MusicWorks lessons. When the school cannot provide a separate room for the CRP lessons, they just occur in the classrooms, making space a concern at these schools. One of the principals states that although they understand what the program is about, there is simply not enough space to keep the drums safe there, or for the program to run in a different classroom. Subsequently, the CRP lessons take place in the classrooms.

Figure 30. The room designated for CRP lessons at St. Vincent's RC Primary

Figure 31. MusicWorks' African drums stored at St. Vincents RC Primary

4.4.7 African Drums are the Sole Instrument that Learners Try

The CRP incorporates singing, dancing, and drumming into its lessons. The instrument choice of African drums is an intentional one by MusicWorks. According to Alexanne Tingley, the drum is a very accessible instrument, meaning that everyone and anyone can learn to drum. You do not need prior experience to play the drum, and for the most part, learners can follow along easily. From attending the classes, our team could see how much the learners enjoyed hitting the drums. Some were very confident in their playing and would create unique rhythms on the drums, while others followed the community musician's

instructions more closely. Wherever the student's abilities were at, all of them were able to play the drum.

However, during a few of the lessons, members of our team observed some learners covering their ears during the singing and drumming portions of the class. We are unable to make any conclusions as to why these students were covering their ears, but when the students from St. Vincent and Woodlands were asked to respond to the statement, "I wish the class was quieter," slightly over half, 53.8%, of the students strongly agreed or agreed. It seems for some of the learners, the noise level is a bit louder than they prefer.

Interestingly, when a guitar was brought in for one of the lessons, the learners were very intrigued by it. They wanted to know how it sounded, and reached out to touch it, hold it, and strum its strings. In the drawings, one student even drew an image of a guitar next to the drums. This interest in the guitar could imply an interest in instruments besides the drum.

4.4.8 Unenthusiastic Participation of Some Students in Class

Our team observed that some students were reluctant to participate in the program. During an activity that asked learners to stand, these students would remain seated and often did not join the rest of the class until one of their classmates or a facilitator encouraged them to stand. There were also moments in which some learners covered their ears in response to a sudden increase in the volume of the class, which occurred during drumming activities or activities that encouraged students to be loud. This action of covering their ears prevented students from participating in those activities. The facilitators also recognized the times when students passively participated in the class. Some students were shy and found it difficult to participate when asked to share something with the entire class. The facilitators encouraged every learner to share as much as they desired in order to ease a student's shyness, but it was difficult to have each student fully participate in the lesson. Students have the option to stay in class if they do not want to go to the CRP lesson, giving each child the choice to participate or not. The facilitators shared that they saw what those students were missing out on and how the students did not see how the program could help them. One student out of the 109 drawing responses expressed their disinterest in the program through the drawing activity. Figure 32 depicts a learner's response to the prompt "Draw What MusicWorks Means to You". Other drawings were returned blank. The CRP attends to large groups of students and the activities may not be for every learner.

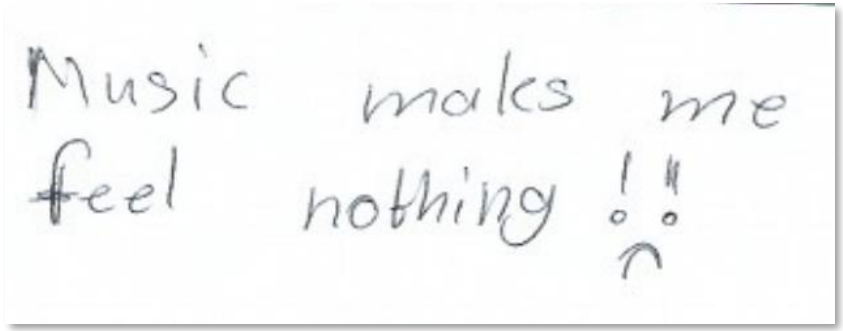

Figure 32. A learner's response to the drawing activity

4.4.9 Lack of Gender-Specific Teaching Methods

The nature of the program is that they teach large sections of Grade 6 learners at a time. This is in part due to time constraints and staff resources. Teaching large sections of learners at a time leads to the challenge of catering the lessons to the needs of each individual. The music facilitators expressed the differences between teaching boy vs girl learners. They noticed that boy learners tend to be rowdier, which negatively affects the participation level of girl learners. To test a different method of teaching, the music facilitators split up one section of the learners into boys and girls and taught them as separate sections.

The motivation to do this was the recognition that there was a need to have a different teaching approach with the boys than with the

girls. The facilitators observed that the girls were more mature than the boys and became more comfortable with participating during lessons. Boy learners were found to be less serious about the lessons. A teacher of that class noticed the change in behavior in the girl learners saying, "*The girls like it when it's just them. I think the boys are a bit too noisy for them.*" During our team's observations, we felt the positive energy during the girls-only lessons. The girl learners were more vocal during song activities and often initiated songs they wanted to sing during the lessons. Each section had a slightly different dynamic depending on students' behaviors, but it was evident through observations and interviews that there was some success in conducting lessons separated by gender. Community Musician 1 shared that in some cases it is helpful to conduct separate lessons with the boys and girls depending on the content of the class.

Gangsterism is a large portion of the culture in the communities of the learners and many young boys often search for recognition from gangs (Community Musician 1). It would be effective to have a lesson targeted for the boy learners about gangsterism as it does not apply to the girls as much. Although separate lessons may be helpful in some cases, it is still important to have both groups interact with each other to become comfortable and respectful with each other.

4.4.10 Lack of Clarity of the Purpose of CRP Among School Stakeholders

While those working within MusicWorks have a clear understanding of the Creative Resilience Program and its purpose, as previously described, many of MusicWorks' partners seem to lack the same understanding. In our interviews, many teachers and principals said that the main purpose of the CRP was to provide a music class for students, to blow off steam, or to connect with one's ancestry through drumming. While these are all aspects of the CRP, the vast majority of these school stakeholders did not mention social-emotional learning or psychosocial benefits (see Figure 33). It is important for the key staff of each school to be informed of the primary purpose of the CRP, as more informed teachers would be able to strengthen themes of self-confidence within other aspects of school. Alternatively, if a student were to be told that they are a "problem child" by their teachers outside of MusicWorks, then the lessons taught during the CRP would be severely hindered. The latter seems to be what is currently being enforced, as the Executive Director of MusicWorks told us that undisciplined students are treated as "problem children." This lack of understanding of the true purpose of the CRP also leads to schools not giving MusicWorks adequate resources, which the Executive Director of MusicWorks further explained, "*because the schools don't understand… what we're trying to achieve, they want to just say, 'No, you have to do it within a period: in 30-35 minutes.' You can't do it [in that time].*" There is also a lack of communication between MusicWorks and school staff. Schools will sometimes sacrifice the time given to MusicWorks for other activities. Schools will often do this without letting the MusicWorks staff know until they arrive that day, something mentioned by Community Musician 3 as well as observed by us on-site. Overall, school staff should be more informed of the purpose of the CRP. Not only would this increase the effectiveness of the CRP, but it would also improve the communication between MusicWorks and schools, allowing MusicWorks to more efficiently plan their lessons.

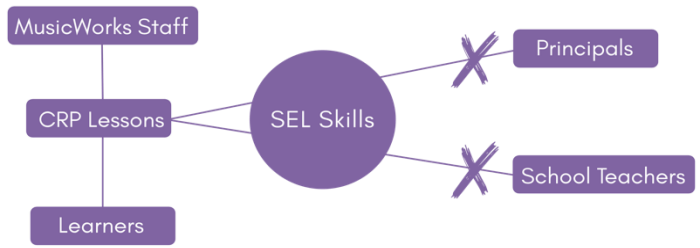

Figure 33. Visual showing the disconnect between school stakeholders understanding the importance of SEL teachings in the CRP lessons

4.5 Opportunities and Threats

To provide holistic recommendations to MusicWorks, our team generated ideas of opportunities and threats to the program based on the above findings (see Figure 34). The opportunities reflect external aspects that the organization can take advantage of. Meanwhile, threats reflect external aspects that can negatively impact the organization. These ideas are used to provide recommendations to the organization.

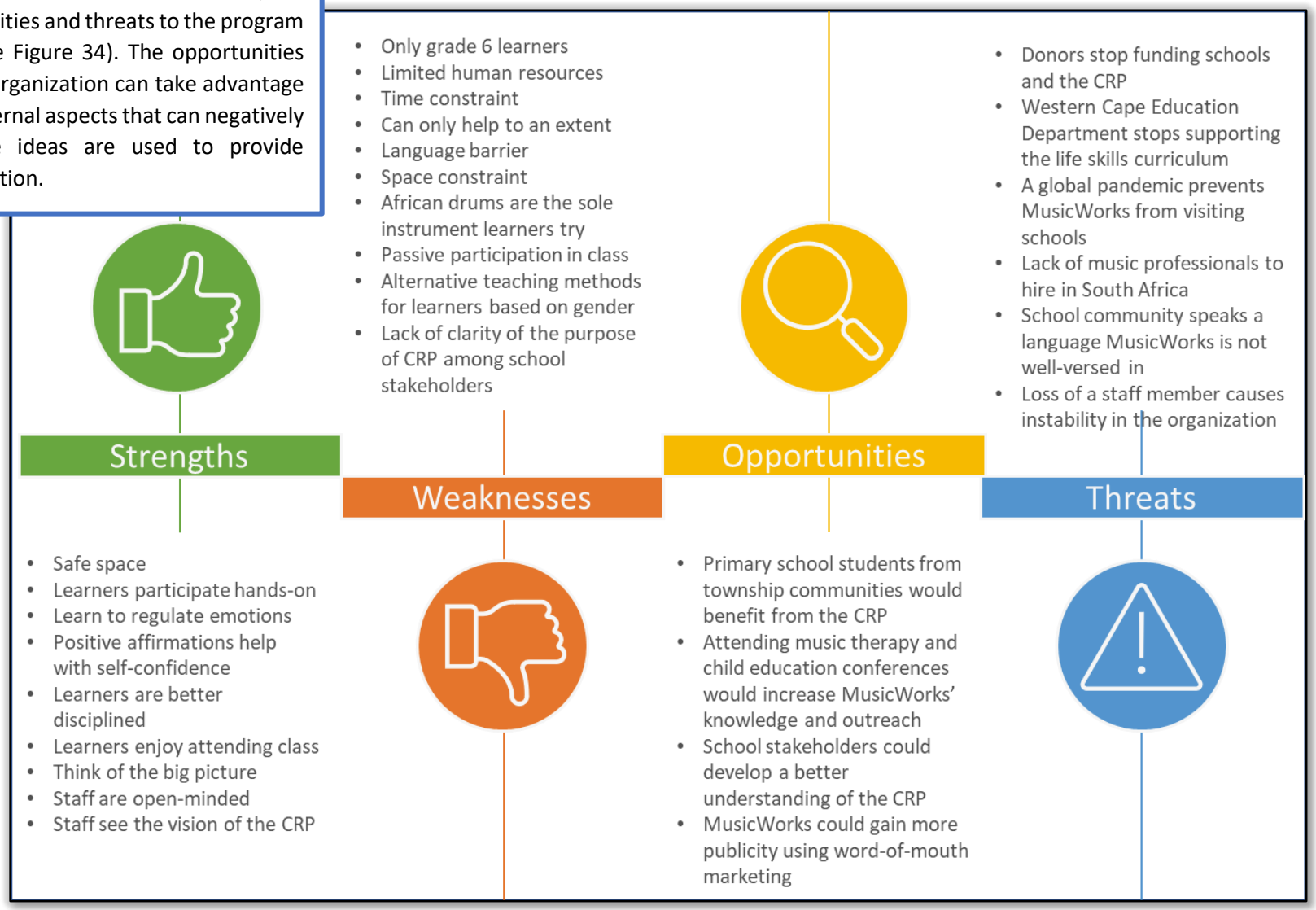

Figure 34. SWOT Analysis

4.5.1 Opportunities

After compiling the results from our analysis, our team identified opportunities that MusicWorks has available to them. Opportunities are factors that are external to MusicWorks, meaning that they do not have control over them; however, these factors could benefit the CRP. Based on what we learned from our interviews, there is a large number of children that grow up in townships in and around Cape Town that would benefit from MusicWorks' CRP. We have been told that there is a need for younger students to attend the CRP, and that other schools are interested in holding the program. As long as the children from these townships are raised in similar circumstances, there will be a need for the CRP.

We were also made aware that some staff have limited experience with SEL and/or music therapy, and that Community Musician 1 had recently attended a conference in Germany. The MusicWorks staff are already great at working with the children, and they have the potential to use their skills more effectively through the utilization of conferences for music therapy, SEL, and child education. In addition, MusicWorks would be able to increase their exposure if their staff members attended conferences, which could result in more funding or new hires.

From our interviews, we also found that some principals and teachers could be more knowledgeable about MusicWorks' CRP. If principals and teachers had a better understanding of the program and how it works, they may show stronger support for the program. Teachers could also be able to incorporate some of the CRP's concepts into their own classes. Furthermore, we think MusicWorks' idea of running an example session of the CRP for the teachers and principals to attend would help them gain a deeper understanding of what the program will do for the children.

Additionally, we found that all of the principals and teachers that we interviewed had a positive view of MusicWorks. This means that there is the opportunity for these teachers and principals to spread good word about MusicWorks, specifically their CRP, which could result in finding more donors, staff members, or schools who would like to work with MusicWorks.

4.5.2 Threats

The organization also faces threats that could negatively impact the CRP. These threats were generated based on the above findings and observations made by our team throughout our time on-site. We found that many of the schools receive funding for the program from external donors. Should these donors suddenly be unable to donate funds, the schools could choose to no longer work with MusicWorks because of the lack of funding. Walmer Estate Primary and Holy Cross Primary, for example, receive funding from a donor who is invested in that specific community. If something happened to that donor, the communities would no longer have the funds to support the CRP at those schools.

Another threat is the authority that the Western Cape Education Department has on school regulations and curriculums. The CRP works directly in schools and is limited by the rules of the school. Some of the schools use the CRP to fulfill the life skills curriculum, which is enforced by the Western Cape Education Department. If the department does not support the curriculum, then it would impact the CRP's ability to integrate into the schools' schedule. COVID-19 is another example of how school regulations can drastically change. If another global pandemic occurs that impacts school, the CRP would be affected in its ability to run. There are threats that affect the organization itself as well. MusicWorks staff shared the challenge of finding music therapists and community musicians in South Africa, which highlights the potential threat of the lack of new talent to hire. As mentioned above in section 4.4.2, the staff size is limited, so the lack of music professionals in the area could negatively impact the future of the program.

The small staff size leads to a limited amount of knowledge available among the team including knowledge of languages. In South

Africa, there are multiple languages popular among the different communities. Currently, the program works with communities that primarily speak isiXhosa or Afrikaans. If a school from a non-isiXhosa or non-Afrikaans speaking community wanted to implement the CRP at their school, MusicWorks would not be able to fully accommodate those learners.

Another threat our team observed is the potential loss of a MusicWorks staff member. In this year of the CRP, a community musician on the MusicWorks staff passed away, which created a potential opening for the program to weaken. The MusicWorks staff honored their team member's loss and were able to continue the program for their learners without any large complications. However, any loss or resignation of a staff member poses a threat to the program, but our team observed the organization is able to continue their work through the difficulty.

Chapter 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The experiences of learners at home and in their communities have great power to impact the students' learning and daily life. Many of the challenges that they face require their personal resilience in order to work through these adversities. Students are exposed to various hardships growing up and often are expected to take care of themselves. Adult figures in their lives are scarce, and living in poverty contributes to a variety of difficulties like hunger and an unreliable commute to school. Exposure to gang violence, drugs, and abuse, as well, can have a lasting negative impact on learners, who are doing their best to cope with their circumstances using the knowledge and resilience that they have.

The CRP aims to support these students and their emotional well-being by nurturing their inherent self-resilience. The goal of the project was to assess the CRP's impact on nurturing its learners' resilience and individual growth. Our data and analysis showed that most CRP learners, despite their traumatic life backgrounds, had self-esteem scores between 15 and 22, indicating that many of them are relatively happy or satisfied with who they are. However, more research is needed to prove the cause and effect relationship between participating in the CRP and improved self-esteem.

Students, teachers, and principals all have very positive perceptions of the CRP. Not only have we found that the students enjoy participating in the program by singing, dancing, and drumming, but the school administration has positive opinions about it too, saying that it helps with the learners' discipline and outlook on their futures. The CRP encourages its learners to be their best selves, enforcing these teachings through social-emotional learning techniques that help to improve learners' self-confidence and ability to regulate emotions. MusicWorks prioritizes giving the learners a safe space to be themselves, an important part of their practice that makes their students feel valued and included. Their program also works well because of their staff. MusicWorks' community musicians and music therapists are sincerely supportive of the CRP and its learners. They consistently look for ways to make the program better, and their bond and care for one another is a reason why the CRP is able to run smoothly.

Even with all of the positive aspects of the CRP, there is always room for improvement to make the program better. From our interviews, some of the big struggles of the program are the time and space constraints. With the busy academic curriculum required for Grade 6 learners, the CRP is only able to spend between 30-60 minutes per session- a short time frame to cover all of the material and connect with the learners. We found that this time constraint, in conjunction with the program solely teaching Grade 6 students, caused some interviewees to feel as if the students would benefit from an extra year of MusicWorks, to allow the program's teachings to reside with the learners more. However, with MusicWorks' small staff size, this may be difficult to implement due to limited human resources. Some of the other areas of improvement for the CRP include expanding into different instruments, such as more melodic instruments to have learners experience different emotions, as well as clarifying the purpose of the CRP among school stakeholders to increase their priority of the program. Overall, those involved in the CRP mainly had positive opinions to voice. The program is enjoyed by many, and consistently works to support its learners' emotional well-being.

5.2 Recommendations

Using the findings from the SWOT analysis, we developed a list of recommendations for MusicWorks to implement to improve the efficacy of the program and provided the team a visual deliverable, as seen in Figure 35. The recommendations are separated into the five categories listed in this section.

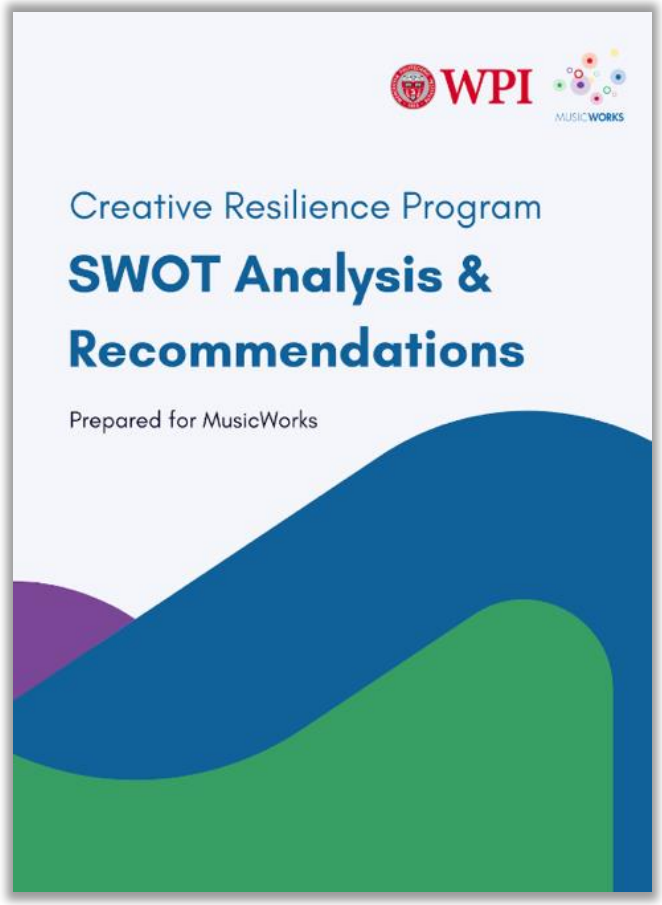

Figure 35. The title page of the deliverable sent to MusicWorks

1) Increase Fundraising Efforts

MusicWorks cannot expand their program to younger grades or schools because they have limited human resources, mainly due to a lack of funding. As a result, we recommend that MusicWorks increases their fundraising efforts and reaches out to more potential donors. MusicWorks should also emphasize that donors see the program in person, as attending the lesson in action makes it clear as to why there is a need for the program and why it is beneficial to the learners. It should also be stressed that there is a great need for the program and for it to expand, which requires more funding. There are many young learners from townships across South Africa that the CRP does not currently reach but who experience similar adversities as the program's learners. Furthermore, many stakeholders involved with the CRP enjoy the program and find it positively affecting their learners, as identified in our interviews. MusicWorks should encourage these stakeholders to share their enthusiasm with other professionals in their community to spread the word about the program.

2) Increase Stakeholders' Understanding of the Program

From our findings, we concluded that the CRP would benefit from school stakeholders having a better understanding of the program and its purpose. This would lead to stakeholders prioritizing the program more, as well as being able to reinforce the teachings in their classes. To achieve this, our team recommends that MusicWorks holds an example CRP lesson with principals and Grade 6 teachers of the schools. The example lesson would take the stakeholders through a typical lesson that the learners experience, including the singing, dancing, and drumming aspects of the program, as well as the social-emotional learning (SEL) exercises. With each activity, we encourage MusicWorks staff to explain the intention behind them, which would reinforce the ideas they are teaching and make the stakeholders aware of their purpose. It would also be beneficial to discuss how the teachers

could incorporate the SEL teachings, such as positive affirmations, in their classrooms. Furthermore, we recommend that MusicWorks works with school stakeholders, namely the principals, to create a contract for the CRP's schedule before the school year begins. From our data collection, we noticed a few miscommunications between both parties, such as lessons being canceled for the day without MusicWorks staff knowing. This contract would serve as a written document to better plan out the CRP lessons at the schools. This would include an understanding of the dates the CRP plans to run, making note of any conflicts that would affect the lesson occurring, the date and time of the end-of-year concert for the learners, as well as an agreement about clear communication if there is a change in the planned schedule. This would help MusicWorks better plan their lessons and work around potential obstacles.

3) Work Towards a More Well-Rounded Team

From our interviews, we found that some of the key staff members at MusicWorks do not have professional training in SEL as they come from a variety of backgrounds. These staff could benefit from workshop sessions led by SEL professionals due to the CRP's use of SEL techniques within its lessons. We also recommend that MusicWorks' community musicians and music therapists take advantage of available conferences in music therapy, social-emotional learning, and child education. By attending conferences like these, session facilitators could gain knowledge in these areas, which could increase the efficacy of the CRP. Attending conferences could also bring awareness to their organization and could result in staff meeting potential donors and hires within these fields. When considering new hires, it is important to consider what languages potential session facilitator hires speak in relation to what languages the CRP's learners speak in order to minimize the language barrier between the two.

4) Improve the CRP's Curriculum and Outcomes

Our next recommendation discusses changes to the CRP's curriculum that could benefit the success of the program. For Grade 6 learners, the Department of Basic Education's life skills curriculum covers personal and social wellbeing. This includes topics such as positive self-esteem, body image, peacekeeping skills such as acceptance of self and respect for others, bullying, and caring for people – topics that some lessons of the CRP already include (Department of Basic Education, 2021). If MusicWorks is able to align more of their CRP lessons with this curriculum, it may cause schools to be more inclined to hire them because the lessons would fulfill part of this requirement.

We also recommend that the CRP expands to Grade 5 learners once enough funding is received to expand their staff size. In the meantime, it would be helpful for MusicWorks to brainstorm what a Grade 5 curriculum would look like. By working with Grade 5 students, the CRP's benefits would reach children at a younger age, and would be reinforced by attending the CRP in Grade 6 again. We also recommend that the CRP holds a session with Grade 7 students at the start and end of each term so that program's concepts can be further promoted.
Additionally, we recommend that MusicWorks conducts the Modified Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey at the start and end of the CRP for sixth grade learners both enrolled and not enrolled in the program. Doing so will allow MusicWorks to compare the change in self-esteem of learners that attend and do not attend the CRP. MusicWorks will then be able to identify the impact that the CRP, alone, has on its learners. We also recommend that MusicWorks conducts the MusicWorks Evaluation Survey at the midpoint and end of the CRP. Conducting the survey in the middle of the term will give the students enough time to become familiar with the program, allowing them to effectively share their opinions on the class. This will also allow MusicWorks to adapt to any constructive criticism before the program concludes.

5) Connect to Other Student Support Systems at the Schools

Furthermore, MusicWorks may be able to collaborate with School Based Support Teams (SBST) to continue assisting their learners. A SBST is required in every South African public school, and aims to support the needs of the school, teachers, and learners. One of its responsibilities is providing individual support to learners whose teachers are concerned for. Through a process of teacher intervention and filling out Support Needs Assessment forms (SNA), learners may be able to get help from the SBST (Inclusive Education South Africa, 2018). We recommend MusicWorks inquire about their staff being able to fill out these forms to express concern about learners, as well as sharing with the SBST about what they've found the learners need. This way, the learners will be supported by someone outside of MusicWorks and the CRP. The SBST is mainly run by the principal of the school, but includes teachers, a representative from the School Management Team, and the SBST coordinator as well (Inclusive Education South Africa, 2018). However, due to "inadequate training and poor monitoring by SBST," the support that these teams provide can be weak (Nong, 2020). The SBST is able to bring in additional people, though, such as NGO members and professionals with counseling or life skills experience. If MusicWorks staff is looking for further ways to help the learners, potentially serving on the school's SBST could be beneficial.

5.3 Limitations

The nature of our evaluation had multiple limitations that may have affected our data analysis. The first limitation was the language barrier between our team, as English speakers, and the participants, who speak isiXhosa and/or Afrikaans. This barrier affected the possibility of misinterpretations of interviewee's statements and the learners' understanding of the feedback surveys and drawing activities. Another limitation was the time available to our team in conducting field work. The CRP is run throughout the school year, but our team was only able to be on-site from October to December. The timing of our arrival on-site was during the end of the learner's school year and therefore our team was not able to observe the program's dynamic during the beginning of the year. This meant we were limited to three weeks of conducting interviews, observations, and facilitating feedback surveys and drawings. Two of the four schools participating in the CRP had already concluded the program by this time as well, so we could not observe those locations and gather drawing and feedback survey data from those learners.

Another limitation to our evaluation was the way in which the self-esteem surveys were conducted. Our team modified the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey to accommodate the learners' English literacy level. However, they still may not have fully understood the survey questions. The surveys were facilitated by the MusicWorks staff during the lessons which may have also impacted the students' understanding of the survey questions. The results of the feedback surveys only reflect one snapshot of the students' self-esteem as we were not on-site to administer the surveys at the beginning of the program. Our conclusions may have been more effective if we were able to compare the self-esteem of CRP's learners before and after their involvement in the program. We also could not conduct any observations of students who were not in the CRP, preventing us from comparing self-esteem results of students who do not have access to the CRP versus students that do. Due to the restriction of working with students directly, our team was not able to interview the learners about their experiences and therefore we had to interpret their response to the surveys and drawings. We also recognize that our conclusions may not reflect every individual as we were only able to get the opinions of the learners from two of the four schools that participated in the CRP.

Additionally, a limitation we encountered was the possibility that we may have altered the student's behavior in class due to the culture shock of our role as foreign American students. Many of the students were excited to see the new faces from outside their community which may have impacted the typical dynamic of the

lessons. This impacted our initial observations as well as the drawings. The interviews conducted with the principals and teachers may have also been affected by this because we were introduced as students working with MusicWorks. There is a possibility they were not sharing their honest opinion in case it negatively affected their relationship with the organization.

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