Boogie Mites Intergenerational Music Programme

Final Evaluation Report

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Acknowledgements

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Summary

Background

- Boogie Mites Intergenerational began in Portsmouth in 2018, and the specific programme being evaluated was developed in response to the original initiative.

- Boogie Mites Intergenerational is based on the 'Boogie Mites Minis' programme, which is designed for children who aged between 1 and 2.5/3 years old, and includes a lot of well-known traditional nursery rhymes which Boogie Mites have adapted and modernised. It is a 6-session programme including lesson plans and musical extension activities relating to the theme of each session.

Aims

- The Boogie Mites Intergenerational project aims were established as:
  - To increase the wellbeing of participants
  - To increase community cohesion

- An additional evaluation aim was:
  - To gain an understanding of Boogie Mites practitioner's perspective in establishing and delivering Boogie Mites Intergenerational Projects

Evaluation Framework

- Three 6-week projects were trialled in 3 different settings:
  - **Setting 1**: A day centre for older adults living with dementia and a nursery for children aged 3 months – 5 years. The children attending the project were aged 3-4 years.

  - **Setting 2**: A residential care home for people over 65 and those living with dementia and a nursery for children aged 3 months to 5 years. The children attending the project were aged 3-4 years.

  - **Setting 3**: A nursing home for people with nursing needs, both longer term and palliative. This was not paired with another institution; instead, Boogie Mites was already running a weekly intergenerational session open to families with under 5s in this setting, and the evaluation took place as part of this regular group. However, for the 6 sessions being evaluated, the leader followed the draft intergenerational programme as opposed to their usual sessions.

- Two Boogie Mites leaders were involved in the delivery of the three projects. They worked individually in the settings

- Collection methods included: questionnaires, observations using the ArtsObs scale, pre- and post- session self-reported mood, interviews, Boogie Mites practitioner written reflections

- The aggregate self-reported mood ratings from all three projects show an overall decrease in lower mood ratings, and a solid increase in elevated mood ratings.
- However, there was a polarisation in mood in setting 2, with both the highest and lowest mood options increasing immediately after the sessions compared to before the sessions.
- Participants observed using the ArtsObs scale displayed either an increase in mood immediately after the session, or were static in their mood (although they were relatively high to begin with).
- Overall themes emerging from the questionnaires regarding wellbeing revealed participants felt 'happy', 'energised' and 'uplifted' in particular.
- The effect on wellbeing for participants is multifaceted, and there are many reasons why this occurred, including: the music itself, the interactions taking place and the role of the Boogie Mites leader.
- In addition, the staff and older adults working in the care homes and day centre cited the presence of the children as a factor in their increased wellbeing.
- Other unexpected outcomes in relation to wellbeing was the development of confidence and social skills for all participants.
- There were also musical skills gained by both the children, nursery practitioners and the older adults.
- It is clear from the observations that positive relationships within the sessions had been developed to varying levels, and the beginnings of increased community cohesion at an institutional level could be seen, particularly in setting 1. This could be due to the fact this setting had run intergenerational projects previously and therefore intergenerational work did not have to be advocated for through the Boogie Mites projects. However, there were also initial glimpses of community cohesion in the other two settings, with setting 3 inviting parents to an event and setting 2 meeting on a monthly basis to take part in other intergenerational activities.
- The key elements of establishing and delivering an intergenerational music project, as defined by the Boogie Mites leaders were: partnership working, careful arrangement of the room/environment, working with individuals in the group, leaving time and space for connections to flourish, the enhanced role of props for intergenerational connection and Being brave about trying new ideas.
- In summary, it can be suggested that the project saw an increase in participant wellbeing relating to mood across the three different intergenerational projects. However, it is necessary to recognise that it was only possible to evaluate the immediate impact of Boogie Mites Intergenerational music on participants, and not longer-term impact on wellbeing. In terms of community cohesion, it is too difficult to make any firm statements on the enduring impact of Boogie Mites intergenerational music in this area. Early indications suggest that there is potential for projects to facilitate community cohesion and co-operation between organisations and institutions, but more longitudinal research is needed in this area.

Recommendations

- For intergenerational music practice:
    - **Partnership working – ensuring the host setting is well-prepared and supportive**
    Whether intergenerational work is being approached on a grassroots, individual level, or an organisational level, partnership working and being clear in respective roles are central to the success of the project.

    - **Environment/layout of room**
    Every environment is different and there needs to be collaboration between the music leader and setting to enable the optimum environment for participants. There is no specific way to set out the room as individual needs will vary widely.

    - **Role of facilitator**
    The facilitator is key to encouraging the tone of the sessions. It is a skilled balance between leading specific activities and knowing when to step back to encourage connections to flourish. Training in both early years music, early years development and working with older people (especially in care settings) is desirable as it is a complex task bringing the two generations together.

    - **Time and space for connections**
    The facilitator needs to leave time for people to become familiar with each other. This takes time in terms of the number of sessions, and also within each session. At first the connections may need to be actively encouraged, but eventually they may occur regularly and spontaneously in the session.

    - **Flexibility to respond in the moment and to the individuals in the room**
    The Boogie Mites programme is pre-planned, but only is as much as it is giving a framework from which to base sessions. Boogie Mites is very clear that there is a need to remain flexible and responsive to the participants in the sessions, and it was apparent in the leader's reflections, interviews and thoughts on the written programme.

    - **Be brave! This work is unchartered territory – there is no pedagogy**
    There is very little written on the pedagogy of intergenerational music-making (in comparison to Early Childhood music, for example). Therefore experimentation is the key to develop intergenerational music making.

    - **There is scope for Boogie Mites to develop their intergenerational programme to include more music options for specific children's age groups and specific care settings**

- For future evaluation:
    - Future evaluation aims could assess the specific roles of Boogie Mites music and the facilitators on the impact on wellbeing and sense of community cohesion of participants

    - Future evaluations could look more broadly at wellbeing to include other indicators such as confidence and social skills.

    - It is recommended that future evaluation could assess the longer-term impact on wellbeing and community cohesion

    - Future evaluations could include a bigger sample size and a control group for comparison

Background and Context

Boogie Mites

Boogie Mites UK Ltd is an organisation that provides music for the under 5s, their parents and practitioners. Established in 2007, Boogie Mites creates original music and songs with the aim of engaging and enthusing the adults as much as the children. They also promote the use of homemade props and instruments to reduce any perceived barriers to music-making.

Boogie Mites currently offers resources and services to parents, practitioners, childcare settings and Local Authorities in a variety of formats including workshops, parent education courses, practitioner training, supporting licensees to run their own business and providing downloadable resources to parents and practitioners in the form of songs, workshops and accompanying notes.

Currently, there are six music programmes (available in practitioner and parent versions), two song collections and three workshops for practitioners and settings, plus fourteen 'Boogie Mites At Home' collections aimed at parents.

In 2013, Boogie Mites commissioned Chichester University[1] to undertake a research project on the impact of the Boogie Mites Music Education Programmes, with a particular focus on parent and practitioner perspectives.

The concept of intergenerational work

Descriptions and expressions of intergenerational programmes can take many forms and the field itself is still emergent. However, for clarity and ease of understanding, the evaluation will adopt the three minimum elements posited by Sánchez and Díaz (2009) as a way of understanding 'Intergenerational Programmes (IPs).' These are:

- **Organisation, length and goals**

   This refers to "actions that are organised in time, and that seek to achieve certain specific goals" (p. 7)

- **Participants from several generations**

   Participants in the programme are people from different generations, with the term 'generation' taken to refer to age or family position. There is no agreement whether this could include participants from the same family, and Sánchez and Díaz conclude that "Despite the fact that IPs traditionally focus on programmes whose participants do not have a family relationship or who belong to distant (not contiguous) generations in the life cycle, nothing impedes us from continuing to refer to them as IPs, even when these last two conditions are not met" (p. 7)

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[1] http://eprints.chi.ac.uk/1100/

- **Ongoing exchange**

  The key idea is that relationships between the generations are based on reciprocity and the "ongoing exchange of resources between participants" That is to say, "each participant feels that s/he needs the others and that they, in turn, need her or him" (p. 7)

It is therefore fair to conclude that Boogie Mites Intergenerational music programme satisfies these three main elements as it is an action that is organised in time, it is designed to include participants from several generations, and foster the exchange of resources between them. In this case, we take resources to mean musical and social interactions within the context of the organised activity rather than anything physical.

In the UK, there has been a recent increase of interest in bringing together the Under 5s and older people in different ways, including music-making. This could be influenced by the success of television shows such as *Older People's Home for 4 year olds* (Channel 4, 2017) and *The Toddlers who took on Dementia* (BBC 2, 2018) and also in response to specific community needs, such as the establishment of Apples and Honey Nightingale, the UK's first intergenerational co-located nursery[2].

Intergenerational Music Making

The concept of intergenerational music-making could be considered a logical step for early years organisations who work with children and parents, as there is a ready-made multi-generational starting point from which to build a programme.

There has been a recent growth of other music projects that bring together under 5s and older people, for example The Together Project Smiles and Songs, Singing Social, North Tyneside Age UK with Jo Jingles, and Making Bridges with Music, as well as individual practitioners offering this work on a regular basis as an extension of their early years music work.

As yet, there is no defined or agreed pedagogy or approach to intergenerational music making involving children in the early years, or even general intergenerational practice. One Australian study (Cartmel et al. 2018) has offered an Intergenerational Model of Practice Framework based on the Early Years Learning Framework, but it is seemingly alone in this endeavour. It is therefore challenging to make comparisons between intergenerational music programmes because there is no fundamental agreed musical approach or institutional or community setting.

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[2] https://www.applesandhoneynightingale.com

Intergenerational projects in Portsmouth

Locally in Portsmouth, there is a fairly strong and established tradition of intergenerational work: the Hampshire Council-developed Intergenerational toolkit[3], the Portsmouth Diocese-established The Gift of Years Project[4], The Portsmouth City Council Generations Together project (2011)[5], however recent years has seen a decline in large-scale intergenerational projects, with the focus on smaller, more community-led initiatives, for example there is a monthly networking group (Coffee, Cake and Creativity[6]) that brings together representatives from the voluntary sector to discuss new ways of partnership working; this has included discussions on intergenerational working.

Boogie Mites Intergenerational

Portsmouth Boogie Mites licensee, Nicole Heard, began pioneering intergenerational workshops and projects in 2018 after a conversation with a local vicar, who invited Boogie Mites to be run in the church café. From this, Boogie Mites Intergenerational originated, with regular sessions delivered initially at Age Uk Day Centre and from then in conjunction with local organisations, nursery schools and care-homes across the city.

The specific 'Boogie Mites Intergenerational' programme was developed in response to the original initiative, and is the programme being evaluated in this report. It is based on the 'Boogie Mites Minis' programme, which is designed for children who aged between 1 and 2.5/3 years old and includes a lot of well-known traditional nursery rhymes which have been adapted, modernised and recorded in a Boogie Mites style. It is a 6-session programme including lesson plans and musical extension activities relating to the theme of each session.

The rationale behind using the Boogie Mites Minis programme as the basis for intergenerational sessions is the use of so many well-known songs, thus providing a more familiar musical entry point for the older generation to engage with. It also includes some original songs that would be new to the older people taking part – presenting them with a new learning challenge.

Outside of the projects being evaluated, Boogie Mites practitioners run intergenerational sessions drawing on songs and activities from the other Boogie Mites collections.

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[3] http://www.hants.gov.uk/rh/comm/intergenerational-toolkit.pdf

[4] https://www.annachaplaincy.org.uk/intergenerational-projects

[5] https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet%20Member%20for%20Health%20&%20Social%20Care%20Decision%20Meeting/20110222/Agenda/hcs20110222r9.pdf

[6] https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/community/hive/coffee-cake-and-creativity

Evaluation Framework

Evaluation Aims

The evaluation aim is to assess to what extent the projects met the programme aims, plus explore the Boogie Mites leader's experiences of establishing and delivering intergenerational projects.

The Boogie Mites Intergenerational project aims were established as:

1) To increase the wellbeing of participants
2) To increase community cohesion

An additional evaluation aim was:

3) To gain an understanding of Boogie Mites practitioner's perspective in establishing and delivering Boogie Mites Intergenerational Projects

Definitions and understandings

Defining terms is challenging, but for evaluation purposes, it is necessary to place an understanding on what is being evaluated.

The term *community cohesion* in its broadest sense emerged as a policy direction in the UK following a number of public disturbances and riots in 2001. There are multiple definitions of community cohesion, with three being most regularly used in terms of the UK (see Beider 2011). It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to address the lasting impact of the Boogie Mites Intergenerational music programme, there will be a focus on one aspect of community cohesion, the development of positive relationships:

> *"Positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, schools and other institutions."* Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007: 40) [7]

> *"Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods."* Local Government Association (2002: 69) [8]

Community cohesion in this evaluation context is being framed as the development of positive relationships. Therefore, this will consider the relationships on a group level *within* the sessions, but will also briefly consider the development of positive relationships between participating institutions, and between participating individuals and institutions.

The term *wellbeing* is a broad, multifaceted term with multiple and often contested definitions across disciplines (see Blandon 2017, p. 11; Dodge et al. 2012). This evaluation report will understand wellbeing in the same way as Blandon (2017) understands it in the Making Bridges with Music evaluation: "associated with changes in mood (levels of happiness and relaxation) as described in the ArtsObs scale [Arts Observational Scale]" (p. 11). After taking into consideration other possible evaluation measures, it was clear that the Boogie Mites Intergenerational music programme was working in similar settings and with a similar demographic to the Making Bridges with Music project, and therefore measuring wellbeing in terms of mood would be appropriate, and the ArtsObs scale would be the most useful tool.

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[7]
http://www.tedcantle.co.uk/publications/024%20Our%20shared%20future%20final%20report%20of%20the%20Commission%20on%20Inte.pdf
[8] http://www.tedcantle.co.uk/publications/006%20Guidance%20on%20Community%20Cohesion%20LGA%202002.pdf

The Settings

Setting 1: A day centre for older adults living with dementia. It provides activities and a lunchtime meal for attendees and is open five days a week. This setting paired with a charity local to the day centre that provides many different services, including a day nursery. The nursery provides care for children aged birth to 5. It is open 5 days a week, 51 weeks a year. The children who attended the project were aged 3-4 years.

Setting 2: A residential care home for people over 65 and those living with dementia. It is registered to provide care for up to 35 people; it is all on one level with four units. This setting paired with a local nursery that provides care for children from 3 months to 5 years old. It is open 5 days a week and 52 week a year. The children who attended the project were aged 3-4 years.

Setting 3: A nursing home for people with nursing needs, both longer term and palliative. It offers care for 29 people. This setting did not pair with another institution; instead Boogie Mites was already running a weekly intergenerational session open to families with under 5s in this setting. The evaluation took place as part of this regular group. However, for the 6 sessions being evaluated, the leader followed the draft intergenerational programme as opposed to their usual sessions.

Evaluation Timeline

December 2018	Initial meeting to discuss focus of evaluation
January 2019	Evaluation methods proposed
February 2019	Projects & data gathering start
March 2019	Projects end
April 2019	Data gathering ends
May/June 2019	Evaluation report written
July 2019 onwards	Findings disseminated

Collection Methods

Questionnaires	Staff of nurseries, day centres and care homes, plus parent participants completed questionnaires at the end of the projects.
Observations	The ArtsObs scale was used across the 3 projects at 1 session per project. However, the Boogie Mites leader could not attend one planned observation session due to injury. Therefore, the observation is only to note any obvious fundamental differences that could be useful in comparing projects, and speaking to staff members about the project as a whole.
Pre- and post- session self-reported mood	A physical and representative likert scale for participants to rate their mood was used. This involved participants placing a specific shape of pasta in a pot with an emoji face before and

	after each session. When assigning numerical data to the scale, it was numbered from -2 to 2, with 0 being a neutral score.
Interviews	1 face to face interview with an older adult and 1 skype interview with Boogie Mites leaders. Phone interviews with 2 staff members and 1 parent were carried out, but due to time constraints, they were not included in the final data analysis (because they were able to answer via questionnaire and had their voice included in this way).
Boogie Mites Practitioner Reflections	Written reflections were completed by Boogie Mites leaders after each session

The questionnaires developed were bespoke questionnaires designed to capture mainly qualitative feedback around the impact on participant mood and their sense of connectedness to others taking part in the project. They are to supplement the observations and give a more personal perspective on wellbeing and community cohesion.

The main benefits of the ArtsObs Scale are that it is non-intrusive and "can be completed by an observer without requiring patients to fill in any paperwork, making it a time-efficient and non-intrusive process" Fancourt & Poon (2015, p. 3), which is particularly appropriate considering the ages and health conditions of the participants; it can gather both qualitative and quantitative data, and enables the observer to "focus on the direct effect that the arts activities are having on a range of measures" (Blandon, 2017 p. 16).

Due to time constraints, it was planned that one session from each project would be observed using the ArtsObs Scale.

In addition to the observations, there would be a simple self-report 'mood chart' for participants to complete before and after each session. A similar method was used for an Action Research project researching Library Rhyme Times and Maternal Mental Health in Essex (Boulton et al. 2018) and could be deemed as successful in being able to capture mood in the moment. However, for this project, all participants were asked to complete the mood score, including the pre-school aged children and older adults, not just the mothers. The method was considered accessible to most participants apart from the very young children, but then parents completed it on their behalf.

Interviews were used to supplement the questionnaires and observations, but due to time constraints, the main interview that the evaluation focused on was with the Boogie Mites leaders. This was a semi-structured interview focusing on their experiences of establishing and delivering the projects.

Written reflections by the Boogie Mites music leaders delivering the projects were used to gain an understanding of their experiences delivering the programme. The prompt questions were taken from the Gibbs Reflective cycle[9], which supports practitioners to reflect on their work (learning by doing), including how they felt about particular elements.

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[9] https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle

Limitations

The projects involved many different people, from the very young to people in their 80s and 90s. Understanding and interpretation of the evaluation methods were sometimes not exactly as the evaluator intended, for example some of the children did not always relate their mood directly to the session, choosing instead to relate it to something that had occurred earlier in the day such as falling in the playground. Therefore, some of the responses may not a be true reflection of how they were feeling 'in the moment' and directly attributable to the Boogie Mites Intergenerational project. Also, it was reported by the Boogie Mites leaders that some from the older generation initially struggled with understanding the self-reported mood scales, which may have affected the scores received.

Additionally, the self-report mood was completed in front of other participants and the Boogie Mites leader, which could have influenced the results; that is, participants not stating their true mood due to a normative bias, or giving an answer perceived as 'helpful' for the programme. Indeed, the mood scores overall were presenting as particularly high after the sessions, which may suggest that this was the case.

The self-report mood scores were not associated to individuals and the 'before' and 'after' scores were not connected in relation to each other. Therefore, it was not possible to ascertain the direct impact of the session on specific individuals' moods; it is only useful for telling us the general mood of the group before and after the session.

Although there were broadly similar levels of responses for the 'before' and 'after' mood scores, due to the nature of the settings, a session may not start or finish with the same number of participants which means it is challenging to establish a direct comparison of mood.

The questionnaires used were only given to practitioners and parents to complete, thus leaving only observation and mood self-report as the only tool to ascertain impact on older and younger generation.

The ArtsObs Scale itself was designed for 'healthcare' settings. Care homes and day centres are not technically healthcare settings and fall under a social care umbrella. Therefore, it is not an ideal match for the settings the projects took place in. However, it seemed the best tool available to support the observation of the sessions and ascertain the direct influence of an arts-based activity on participant mood, especially with such a wide age and ability range.

There is only one evaluator-observer, which is a limitation of the evaluation as results cannot be verified with other evaluators. However, using a validated tool such as ArtsObs Scale, ensures a more robust measure.

It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to ascertain the longer-term impact on wellbeing and community cohesion, and therefore the evaluation is only addressing the immediate impact of the sessions and the sense of community cohesion during the projects themselves.
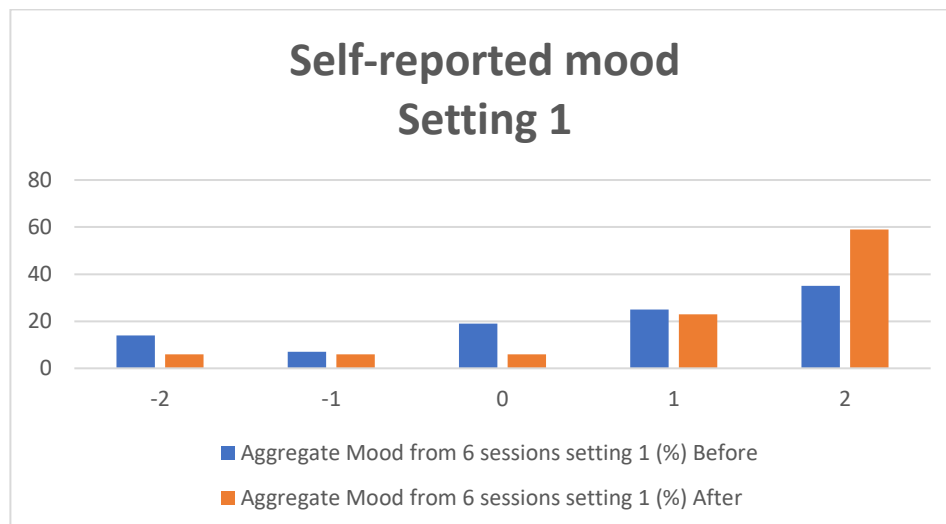
Findings

Findings have been grouped under the three main areas of the project aims.

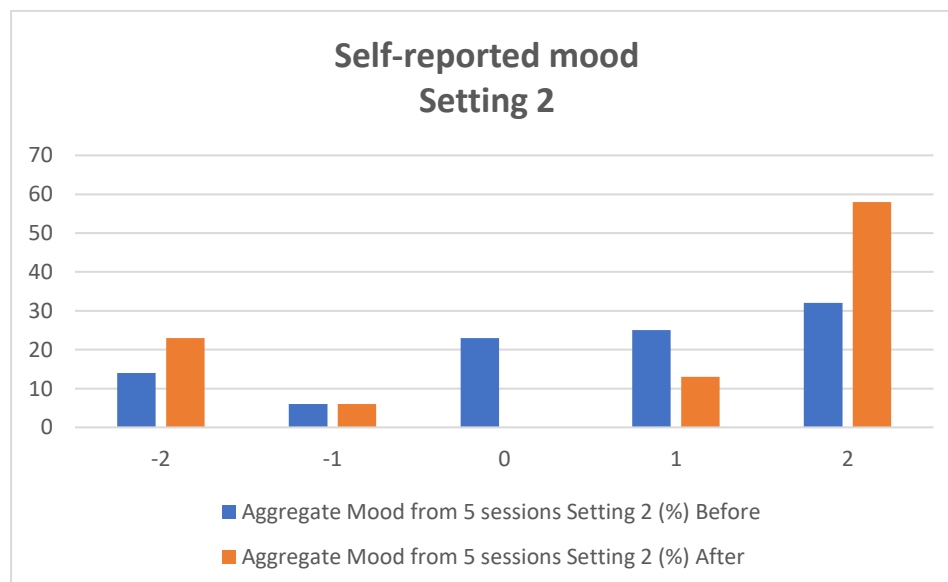**Aim One: To increase the wellbeing of participants**
The findings on the impact on participant wellbeing come from the self-report mood scores, the observations using the ArtsObs scale and the end of project questionnaire and the Boogie Mites leaders' interview. Longer term wellbeing was not assessed.

- **For each project, self-reported mood of participants was higher overall immediately following the sessions**
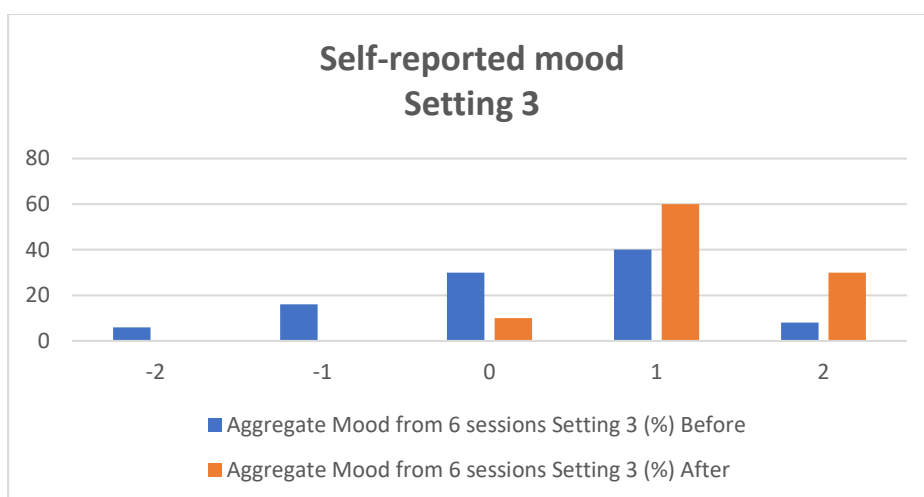
Aggregate before/after mood scale from each project:

Self-reported mood Setting 1
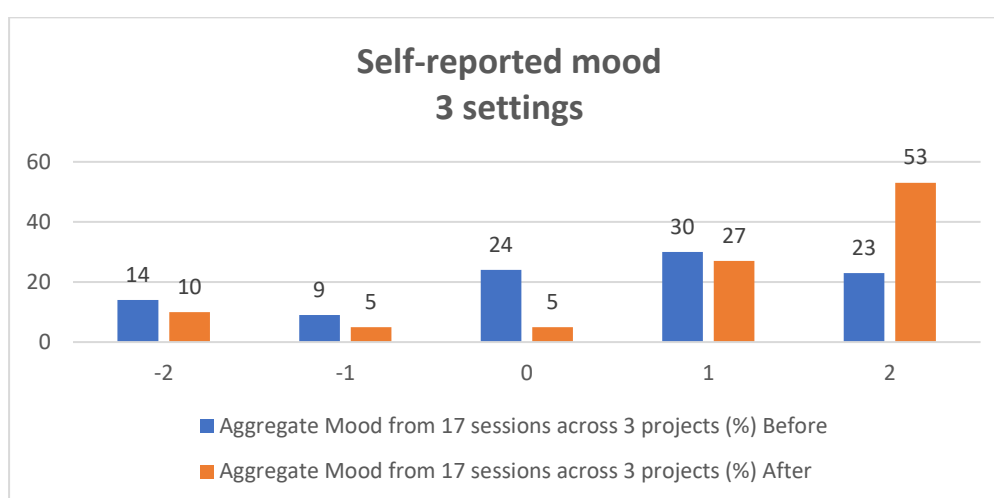
Before (n=105) After (n=110)

Self-reported mood Setting 2

Before (n=71) After (n=78)

**Self-reported mood
Setting 3**

Before (n=50) After (n=50)

Aggregate mood from 17 sessions across 3 settings:
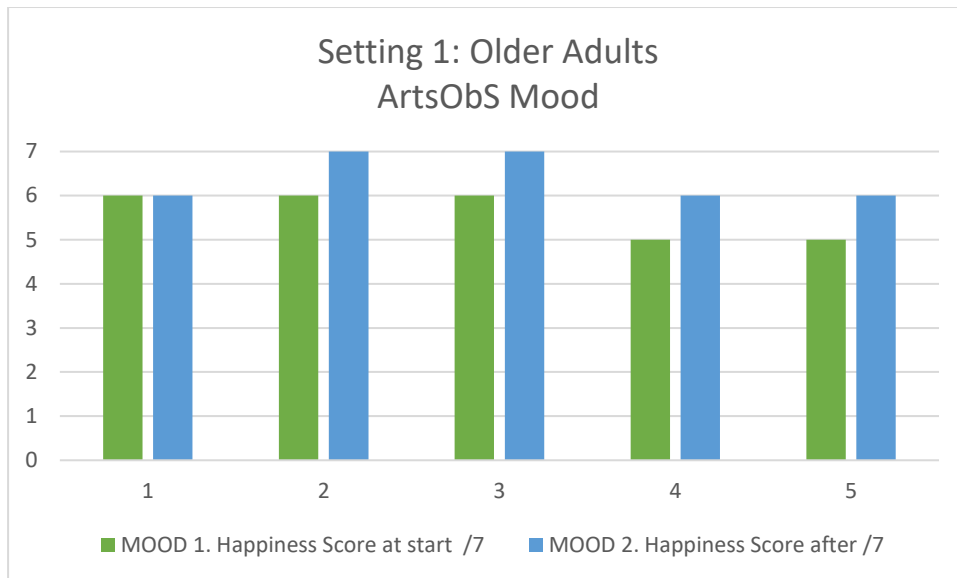

**Self-reported mood
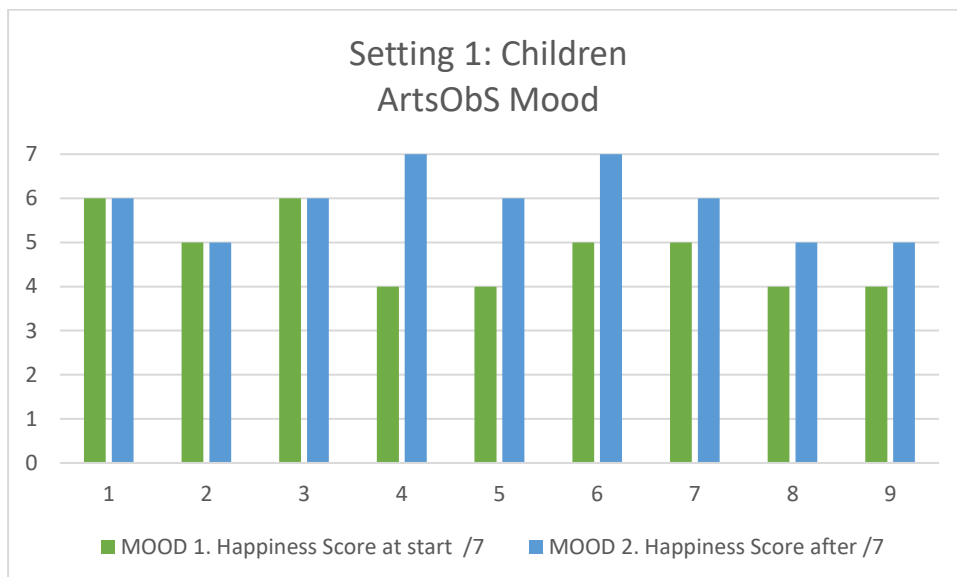3 settings**

Before (n=219) After (n=238)

There was more of a polarisation in mood in setting 2, with both the highest and lowest mood options increasing immediately after the sessions compared to before the sessions. In the other two settings, there was a strong pattern of elevated mood immediately following the sessions, with a decrease in lower mood compared to before the sessions. However, the aggregate self-reported mood ratings from all three projects show an overall decrease in lower mood ratings and a solid increase in elevated mood ratings.

- **Observation (using the ArtsObs scale) of two sessions found either no change or an increase in mood for observed participants**.

The session observed in the first setting (Setting 1) was session 5 of 6 and the following observations were made in the different groups of participants:
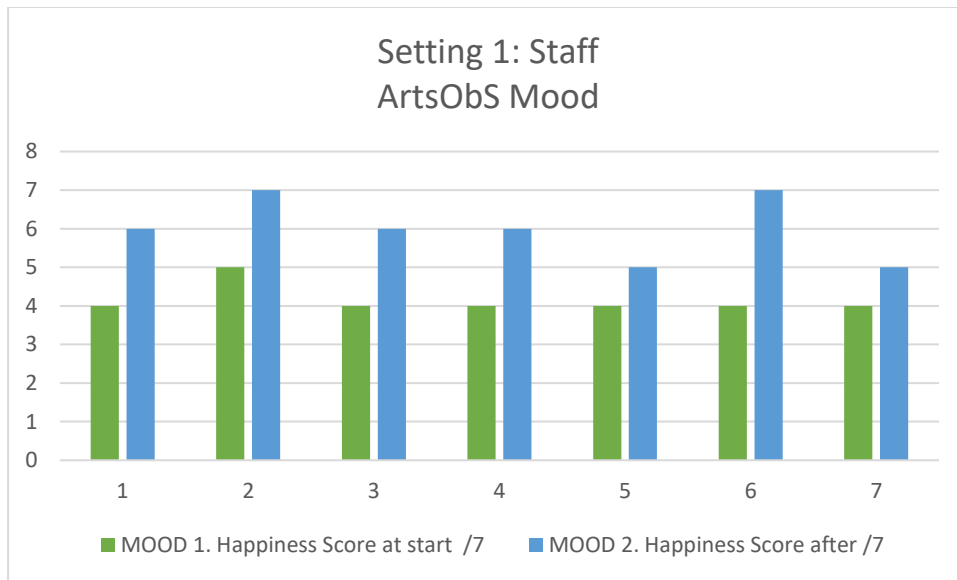
Setting 1: Older Adults
ArtsObS Mood

Older People n=5

Setting 1: Children
ArtsObS Mood

Children n= 9

Setting 1: Staff
ArtsObS Mood

Staff n=7

In addition, 6 people looked in on the session as it was taking place, and the observer rated the positive effect on the room as the highest possible score (3). This scale was 1 – 3 where 1= not at all, 2 = Yes, a little and 3 = Very much so.

The observation in setting 3 took place on session 5 of 6. The following observations were made in the participant groups:

Setting 3:Older Adults
ArtsObs Mood

Older adults n=2

Setting 3: Children
ArtsObs Mood

MOOD 1. Happiness Score at start /7 | MOOD 2. Happiness Score after /7

Children n=3

Setting 3: Parents
ArtsObs Mood

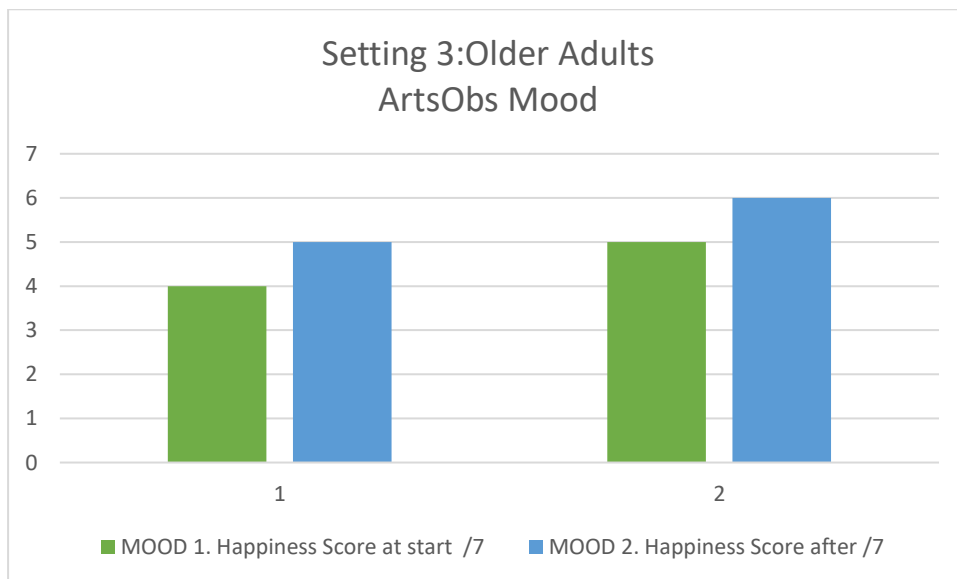MOOD 1. Happiness Score at start /7 | MOOD 2. Happiness Score after /7

Parents n=3
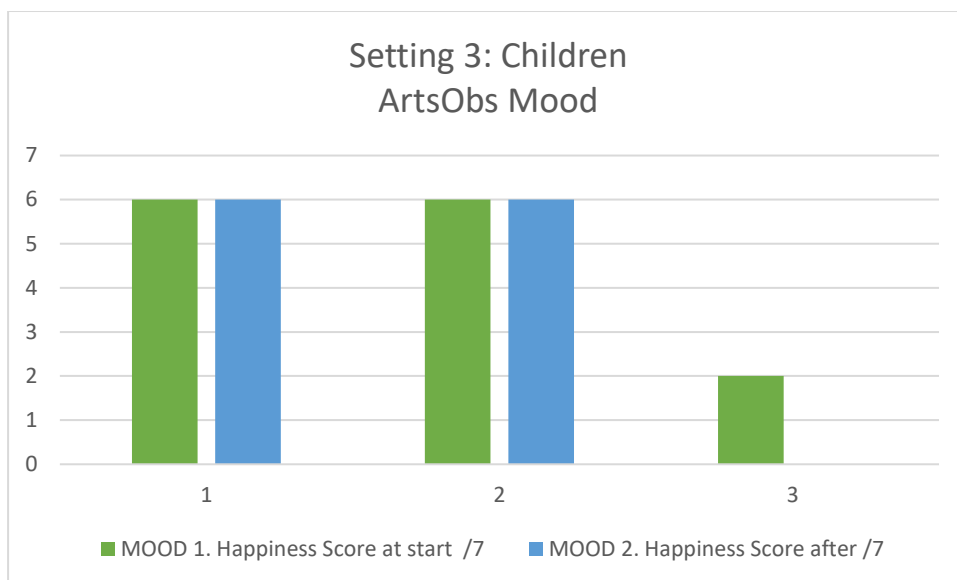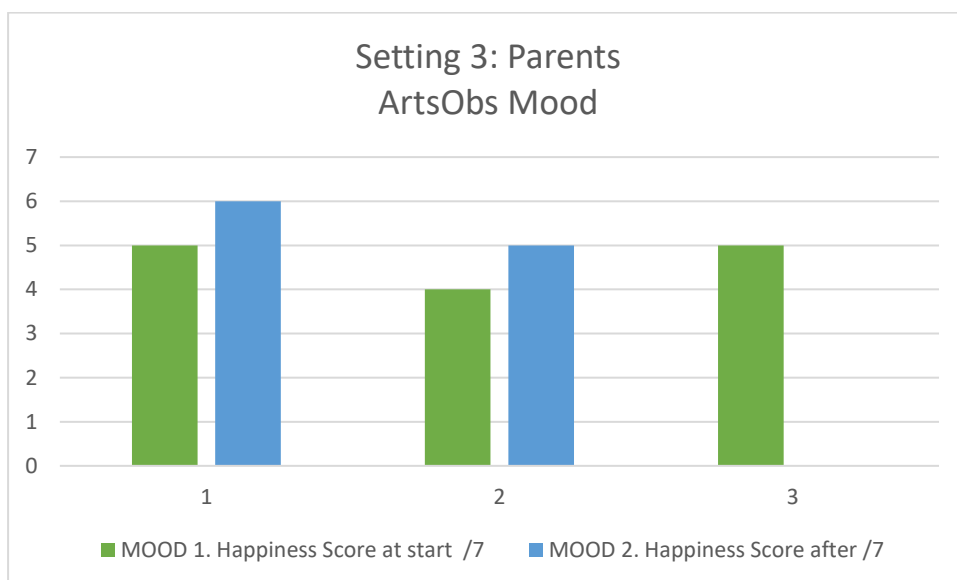
In addition, 0 people looked in on the session as it was taking place, and the observer rated the positive effect on the room as a 2. This scale was 1 – 3 where 1= not at all, 2 = Yes, a little and 3 = Very much so.

- **Overall themes emerging from the questionnaires regarding wellbeing revealed participants felt 'happy', 'energised' and 'uplifted' in particular**

When asked how they felt after a Boogie Mites session in general, 'happy', 'energised' and 'uplifted' recurred across adult participants – this included nursery practitioners, care and support staff and parents (older people and children did not complete questionnaires). In addition, words such as 'motivated', 'good' and 'ready for rest' also appeared. Answers given were positive in nature.

- **The effect on wellbeing for participants is multifaceted**

Even though the mood charts, observations and questionnaires showed a great impact on wellbeing directly following the sessions, the reasons for this impact are many. In addition, some responders answered for themselves and some answered for either the children or older adults (depending on where they worked). It is therefore challenging to try and define fully the reasons as to why there was a strong and immediate effect on wellbeing.

However, themes that emerged regarding the reasons for increased participant wellbeing were:

Music	
Participating in music	*Because we have enjoyed joining in with dancing and singing and making other people happy* (Nursery Practitioner) *Singing always makes me feel happy* (Nursery Practitioner)
The Boogie Mites music	*And they just can't resist tapping their foot! Yeah, that's what you notice, you look around the room and you just see little toes twitching. And even the ones that say 'I can't do anything at all!'... "I don't wanna do this raa raa raa!" and they'll sit there and their little foot will go! Because Boogie Mites has, it's got a ...'boomph' to it, hasn't it?* (from an interview with Boogie Mites leaders) *More Confident. Knowing Boogie Mites song more and wanting to join in at nursery* (Nursery Practitioner)
Interactions	
Watching interactions	*Seeing the enjoyment that the children and older people get from interacting with each other and making friends.* (Nursery practitioner) *Fun watching children and older people interact* (Nursery Practitioner) *It's heartwarming seeing all the enjoyment created in the sessions* (Older adult staff) *The integration and interaction between the elderly residents & children promote positive relationships & provide a sense of wellbeing & cognitive stimulation* (Older adult staff)
Experiencing interactions	*It's really nice to mix with everyone, and all this socialising wears us out :)* (Parent) *Because we have enjoyed joining in with dancing and singing and making other people happy* (Nursery Practitioner)

	I can see an improvement in mood & active participation with certain residents. I feel that the project & my active encouragement to enable & support residents participation has had a positive impact on general wellbeing (Older adult staff)
Role of the Boogie Mites leader	
Qualities of the Boogie Mites leader	*Nicole is very upbeat, which residents like and enjoy* (Older adult staff)
	She's a nice lady, this one too, she's one of us…she's a nice lady, she gets on with everybody (Older adult)
	[Leader's name] made both the children and the older people at ease and help them to share and make it fun (Nursery practitioner)
Children	
The presence of the children in the sessions (for the adults and staff)	*Children singing and playing and mixing in with everyone* (Older adult staff)
	Lovely seeing children in our home (Older adult staff)
	Oh lovely, I like the kids anyway. Yeah, I think when your own children are grown up, which mine are now, I've got 4, but they've all grown up. I love the kids that's why I still come… Oh I don't think I'd come if there wasn't any! (Older adult)
	"It's the change on their, on the old people's faces and the whole room changes, including for staff, when they, when a child walks in. It doesn't seem to matter whether it's one child or 10, 20 children, it's their whole…persona of the place changes. The mood, everybody lightens up, everything lifts, people start to talk and communicate and interact with each other. And, I don't know why…I suppose I do know why children make that difference because they break those barriers down, but I didn't really realise just how large an effect that had until I did it once. And once I did it once, that's it. It's like, actually, I want to do this everywhere. I think everybody in Portsmouth who lives in a care home should have access to Boogie Mites music." (From an interview with Boogie Mites Leaders)
	"I think we had one gentleman [who said] "I can't even get out of my chair, I can't do anything" last group I had, pottered down the hall, found a load of balloons, walked into the middle of the room and gave them all out to the children. This is a guy that can't walk,

Interestingly, other benefits related to wellbeing emerged in the evaluation process, although they were not explicitly sought. These indicators of wellbeing are in line with Daykin et. al's (2018) categorisations of subjective wellbeing (which include personal aspects such as confidence, mood, self-awareness and self-esteem; musical and cultural dimensions such as confidence and achievement; and social dimensions such as group dynamic, relationships and connections with others).

Other indicators of wellbeing that were particularly strong themes were:

Confidence

- *Some have gained more confidence to talk to other people* (Nursery Practitioner)
- *More confidence and talking. Extra social skills and talking a lot to their parents about how much they enjoy the sessions and what happens when they are there* (Nursery Practitioner)

Social skills

- *Quicker to interact with other people* (Parent)
- *She really enjoys it, and I can see her engaging with everyone more each week, it's lovely to see!* (Parent)
- *Some service users who would't normally participate are interacting more and asking to be in the activity group* (Older adult staff)
- *Some will show other children how to play instruments* (Nursery Practitioner)
- *Socialising and singing more* (Older adult staff)

There were also musical skills gained by both the children, nursery practitioners and the older adults:

She has been playing drums at home and really engages with music

Parent of young child

Bangs drum at home and shaker

Parent

They are learning new songs, and have made some friendships

Older adult staff

More confident knowing Boogie Mites songs more and wanting to join in at nursery

Nursery Practitioner (referring to themselves)

Introducing more singing/dancing

Nursery Practitioner (referring to themselves)

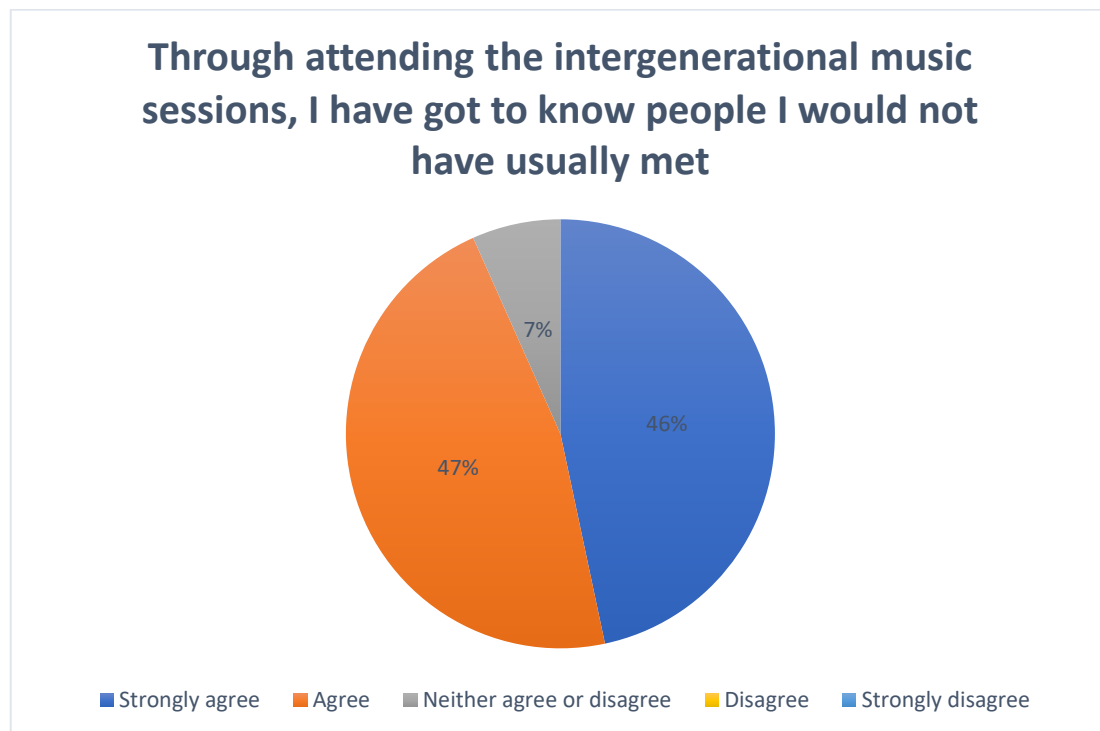*More Boogie Mites within nursery. More confident in moves*

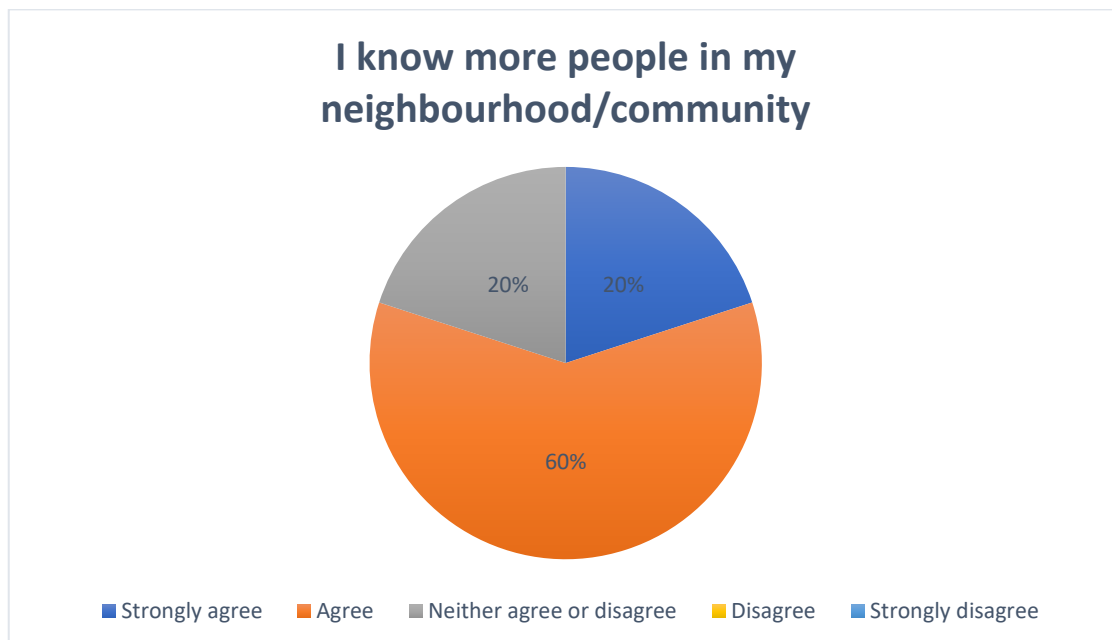Nursery Practitioner (referring to themselves)

Aim Two: To increase community cohesion

It is clear from the observations that positive relationships within the sessions had been developed to varying levels.

Participants (parents, nursery practitioners and older adult staff) were asked whether through their attendance at Boogie Mites Intergenerational sessions they had got to know people outside of their usual social groups. The responses ranged from neutral to positive for all aspects:

Through attending the intergenerational music sessions, I have got to know people I would not have usually met

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

n=15

I know more people in my neighbourhood/community

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

n=15

24

I know more people outside of my immediate age group

Pie chart legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree or disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Segments: 40%, 53%, 7%

n=15

As the evaluator's observations reveal, there were very active levels of interaction and positive relationships throughout the sessions:

In Setting 3, the evaluator noted: *Parents very proactive in taking their children round to see the older people, thus sharing in musical activities. When music started, there was more focus and energy in the room - older people woke and looked around. Leader working very hard to engage and interact with everyone. 1/2 of room (approx) copy actions, the others seem to just like to watch. Older people very quiet, but seem very focused on the children. When families pair up with older adults, the interaction between them is very focused and reactive.*

In setting 1: *Most children giving out instruments and props, but one boy in particular was making sure everyone (including me) had instruments and props for the songs. Another child then (later on in session) took a cuddly sheep prop from me at tidy up time… 2 other older people took on more of a caregiver role; (that is, make sure children were ok, kind of 'looking after' them during the session… 1 older person and girl in particular have created a very strong bond. Older person sings to girl in between songs (at one point, tapping and singing Twinkle Twinkle and also saying Peter and Paul rhyme).*

Contrasted with the brief observations of the sessions at setting 2 (without the Boogie Mites leader), it was clear that there was a need for a leader and well-thought out and pre-planned session format to facilitate positive relationships between the groups: *There were some nice interactions within the group, but they weren't as strong compared to the structure Boogie Mites format. The more free-flowing atmosphere was interesting to watch as it gave way to a more fluid sense of connection. Relationships were more momentary, although the older adults were still mesmerised by the children, as they have been in the other settings.*

One project in particular had increased institutional community cohesion. The nursery attending Setting 1 had arranged for the children to make Easter cards for the adults at the day centre to mark the celebration. The children made cards especially for named individuals in the group, which delighted the older adults. The day centre also donated a bag of craft materials to the nursery. There is a reciprocal relationship developing between the two places and they will continuing the weekly sessions post the initial 6-week project: "So we were all saying, you know 'this one's carrying on'…otherwise we would have all been in tears, the thought of it stopping…the children can't wait to go and the grownups can't wait for them to arrive. And I think that's it." (Boogie Mites leader)

The beginnings of wider partnership work between Boogie Mites and the two settings involved in this particular project have also evolved, with discussions around future opportunities such as working with a mobility bikes scheme and organising a picnic with the families.

Another example of the beginnings of increased community cohesion outside of the sessions is with setting 3. The care home organised a visit from ZooLab[10] and invited the families along, which indicates a move towards engaging the wider community as a result of the Boogie Mites intergenerational project.

In setting 2, the nursery carries out a separate regular visit to the home, but we are unaware at the time of writing whether anything extra has developed as a result of the Boogie Mites Intergenerational project.

Aim Three: To gain an understanding of Boogie Mites practitioner's perspective in establishing and delivering Boogie Mites Intergenerational Projects

An interview with two Boogie Mites leaders delivering the three projects as part of this evaluation study revealed several key elements regarding establishing and delivering Boogie Mites Intergenerational Projects. They are:

- Partnership working
  Taking time to get to know the care or community setting before delivering a project (especially the Activities Coordinator if there is one); agreeing clear goals for the project; deciding who is responsible for what, and discussing any challenges regarding Health and Safety and Risk Assessment.

  One of the issues that came up in the Boogie Mites leaders' interview was the need for a written agreement in the future. This would not necessarily take the form of a formal contract, but a document outlining the responsibilities agreed before the project starts.

  Taking time to have meetings with the settings helps to ensure a 'buy-in' into the project, and is more likely to result in staff from the setting supporting the session directly.

- Arranging the environment
  Ensuring the space is clear beforehand (and no tables or hot drinks during the sessions if possible); having chairs out for everyone (including children) encouraged a sense of being more equal and also ensured the children could move around from chair to chair and maintain spatial flexibility.

- Working with the individuals in your group
  There is a huge mix of people of all ages and abilities, and all of these elements must be taken into consideration when planning the sessions.

I've got one lady in one of my regular groups and she's virtually blind. So she's always going 'oh I can't see, I can't do it' and I'm like 'oh you don't need to see to do it' and…I guide her with my hands and things like that

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[10] https://www.zoolabuk.com

- Time and space for connections to flourish

  Examples of this are not singing while giving out props and instruments, and enabling the participants to connect; allowing spontaneous moments to happen. Reading the group and going with spontaneous moments are also important. For example, if someone starts singing, then having the confidence as leader to go with that moment and forget about the session plan at that moment! It is also about knowing when to 'actively' facilitate the session, and when to take more of a passive role to encourage connections and enabling participants to self-direct at that point.

- Enhanced role of props for intergenerational connection

  Both Boogie Mites leaders felt the role of props (such as instruments, scarves and teddies) was very important as they helped to facilitate a very practical level of connection – children giving out props to adults (encouraging communication and conversation, saying please and thank you to encourage language development), but then also a musical connection too.

  "I did I Hear Thunder with sticks and I did this with a nursery group, they were older, and all my children went up and did the thunder on the chairs and they loved it and the residents started, like, copying them, and doing it together and it really, really worked. So, the more interactive it is, the more enjoyable it is for everybody in that room" (Boogie Mites leader)

  "They like giving out the props. It's also about, I know in some of the plans it's about singing whilst you're giving the props out...you don't, that's when the interaction happens. That's when they talk, that's then they share, that's when the barriers are start to break down. Because the children are focusing in on errrm...the...giving something out. They're talking, say for example if they're giving the scarves out, you say "would you like...?" and then they, some of the grown-ups you can encourage them to say "oh I'd like a pink scarf please" if they've got, if they're quite verbal, and the children can go off to find a pink scarf. You can get all of that sort of interaction without you actually doing very much, really."

  (Boogie Mites leader)

- Being brave about trying new ideas

  Intergenerational work is still very new in terms of music practice, and to develop this area of musical pedagogy, the Boogie Mites tutors felt they needed to be brave in trying out ideas.

  "At the beginning we were very much, like, look, we're learning, we're still trying, and we're still, we're still learning now. We're still trying new things out and sometimes they go horribly wrong and sometimes they go brilliantly. And we learn from it. And it's just, you know, we sort of say to them, it's like, we are trialling things, we are seeing if it works, we do want to know if you like things or don't like things. I'd like to do a baby programme. We get a lot of babies." (Boogie Mites Leader)

Discussion

Through the data gathered, it can be suggested that the project saw an increase in participant wellbeing relating to mood across the three different intergenerational projects. It was expected that there would be an impact on wellbeing (see Blandon 2017, Clift et al. 2010, Clift, Manship & Stephens 2017, Sixsmith and Gibson 2007, Klopper 2008,) and the results suggested that wellbeing was either static or increased comparing the beginning and end of sessions.

However, it is necessary to recognise that it was only possible to evaluate the immediate impact of Boogie Mites Intergenerational music on participants, the sample size was small and not all participants completed mood measurements both before and after (some may have come late or left early, or just forgot to do them). In addition, not everyone in all the sessions were taking part in the evaluation, so the mood score might not be representative of the overall mood of groups.

It is important to note that in one setting in particular, there was a polarisation in terms of self-reported mood scores. Although there was a substantial increase in positive mood immediately following sessions, there was also an increase in the lowest mood score being reported. The Boogie Mites leader highlighted the fact that participants who indicated this low mood score tended to clarify it as feeling sad the session was ending, therefore linking it to the ending of the sessions rather than the session as a whole.

It is also essential to recognise that very different demographics were involved in the three projects, so a direct comparison is challenging. The settings themselves could have an impact on wellbeing, and the level of support needed for people to access and participate fully in the sessions would vary from setting to setting. For example, in setting 3, the activities coordinator was on annual leave the week the session was observed and the Boogie Mites leader reflected that it had had a huge impact on the 'feel' and flow of the session. If these elements vary on a regular basis, then this could have a huge impact on participant wellbeing.
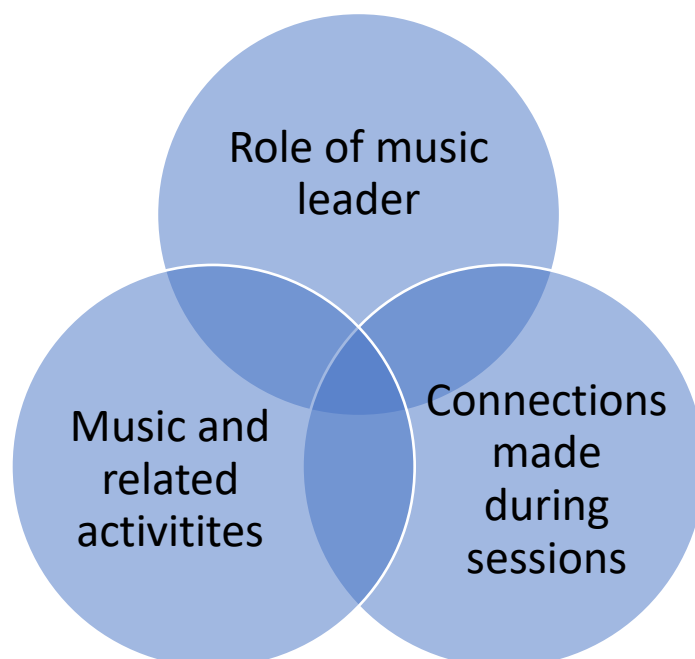
Setting 1 saw a greater aggregate increase in wellbeing, and this was also the host setting which seemed to have the greatest impact in terms of community cohesion. It is impossible to say if or how these are linked in some way as it is beyond the scope of the evaluation, but future evaluation and research could address this question. Elliot, Gale, Parsons and Kuh (2014) suggest that the two concepts are linked for older adults, and there is a case for studying the role of intergenerational music-making in creating the conditions in which wellbeing and community cohesion can flourish.

In terms of community cohesion, it is too difficult to make any firm statements on the enduring impact of Boogie Mites intergenerational music in this area. Early indications suggest that there is potential for projects to facilitate community cohesion and co-operation between organisations and institutions, but more longitudinal research is needed in this area. Springate, Atkinson and Martin (2008) in their literature review identified increased community cohesion from general intergenerational work, but there was no mention of intergenerational music work specifically.

It is clear that the settings involved in the projects increased their connections with the local community. For example, the two organisations involved in setting 2 meet on a monthly basis, setting 3 remains an ongoing project, but the nursing home is beginning to open up their doors to families on a more regular basis for specific events, and setting 1 continued to host the weekly sessions as a result of the 6-week project. Close links have been formed there, and they are expanding them to the families of the children, which implies the Boogie Mites project has been a catalyst for increased community connections.

One possible reason for such a marked success in setting 1 is the fact they have a history of intergenerational working already, so are more experienced in this area. The advocates are already there, so the project served as a catalyst to further initiatives, rather than as a way to convince practitioners and staff of the benefit of intergenerational work.

Wellbeing and community cohesion are influenced by a variety of aspects, and it is impossible to attribute one specific element to the increase in wellbeing shown directly following the sessions. Based on questionnaires and brief interviews, it is clear that the three most important elements for all participants relating to wellbeing and sense of community cohesion are: the role of the leader, the connections being made during the sessions, the music and related activities.

For the older participants and staff in those settings, the presence of the children was also an important element. This could be due to the fact that they have limited contact with that particular age group of children, or it reminds them of their own time as parents of young children. It could also bring an element of 'ordinariness', that is to say, lots of different generations interacting together as in a familial or community context, rather than just one generation separated from others.

It was also apparent that it was very important to have all the elements present, and if one was missing, or less prevalent in a session, it impacted the overall session. For example, in observing setting 2 when the Boogie Mites leader could not attend, the atmosphere was very different compared to other sessions observed. Without the Boogie Mites leader, there seemed to be less active encouragement for interactive activities, less defined structure, and an absence of props. This all illuminated the fact that the trained Boogie Mites facilitator is crucial to encouraging interactions and connections between the children and adults through the music and props and their role is to foster those connections as well as providing a high-quality musical session.

It was interesting that participation in the projects seemed to improve either confidence or social skills (and sometimes both) for all participants, regardless of age or role. Blandon (2017) found that the children were supported to work at a higher level, and the findings in this evaluation hint at children learning conversational and leadership skills through participating in the project. Indeed, a previous evaluation of Boogie Mites programmes (Fairchild and Karousou, 2013) saw parents reporting an increase in their children's communication and confidence, as well as an impact on their own confidence.

Conclusions and recommendations

It is apparent that the Boogie Mites Intergenerational music programme has the potential to increase participant mood as a direct result of attending sessions, and also facilitate an increased sense of community cohesion. However, it is also fair to say that it cannot be reduced to a singular element and the impact is a delicate balance of components, including the music itself, the specific people in the room participating, the commitment to the programme by all institutions or organisations involved, and the skill of the facilitator. Each element will resonate differently for individual participants, but one of the overriding themes was that people enjoyed just being together and interacting.

There is scope for Boogie Mites to develop this programme further, including the music, different age groups and settings.

On the basis of Boogie Mites Intergenerational success, Portsmouth City Council are now funding regular sessions with nurseries across Portsmouth over the next year.

Recommendations:

- For intergenerational music practice:
    - **Partnership working – ensuring the host setting is well-prepared and supportive**
      Whether intergenerational work is being approached on a grassroot, individual, or an organisational level, working as a partnership and being clear in respective roles are central to the success of the project.

    - **Environment/layout of room**
      Every environment is different and there needs to be collaboration between the music leader and setting to enable the optimum environment for participants. There is no specific way to set out the room as individual needs will vary widely.

    - **Role of facilitator**
      The facilitator is key to encouraging the tone of the sessions. It is a skilled balance between leading specific activities and knowing when to step back to encourage connections to flourish. Training in both early years music and working with older people (especially in care settings) is desirable as it is a complex task bringing the two generations together.

    - **Time and space for connections**
      The facilitator needs to leave time for people to become familiar with each other. This takes time in terms of the number of sessions, and also within each session. At first the connections may need to be actively encouraged, but eventually they may occur regularly and spontaneously in the session.

    - **Flexibility to respond in the moment and to the individuals in the room**
      The Boogie Mites programme is pre-planned, but only is as much as it is giving a framework from which to base sessions. Boogie Mites is very clear that there is a need to remain flexible and responsive to the participants in the sessions, and it was apparent in the leader's reflections, interviews and thoughts on the written programme.

    - **Be brave! This work is unchartered territory – there is no pedagogy**
      There is very little written on the pedagogy of intergenerational music-making (in comparison to Early Childhood music, for example). Therefore, experimentation is the key to develop intergenerational music making.

    - **There is scope for Boogie Mites to develop their intergenerational programme to include more music options for specific children's age groups and specific care settings**

- For future evaluation:
    - Future evaluation aims could assess the specific roles of Boogie Mites music and the facilitators on the impact on wellbeing and sense of community cohesion of participants.

    - Future evaluations could look more broadly at wellbeing to include other indicators such as confidence and social skills.

    - It is recommended that future evaluation could assess the longer-term impact on wellbeing and community cohesion.

    - Future evaluations could include a bigger sample size and a control group for comparison.

Conflicts of Interest

Olivia McLennan is a freelance musician and doctoral student who also carries out direct delivery and practitioner training for Boogie Mites UK. She was not involved with the delivery of the projects evaluated in this report.

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