

# Music, Development, and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka



## A report on the work of the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation

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# Executive Summary

This research report into **Music, Development, and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka** offers a detailed examination of the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation, focusing on the ways in which the activities of the Music Cooperation are impacting reconciliation between the nation's people in the post-civil war period. It presents both qualitative and quantitative data gathered during three months of fieldwork in Sri Lanka, and contextualizes this with reference to literature from the fields of peacebuilding and social psychology. Prior to this research, an empirical or theoretically-informed understanding of how (if at all) the music development activities of the Music Cooperation might be supporting reconciliation had not been developed. This research engages with that task and offers some answers, and recommendations for future action.

**Section 1: Introduction** sets the context for the inquiry. It reviews literature relating to reconciliation, arts-based peacebuilding, and intergroup contact. It proposes a narrowed scope for considering reconciliation related to the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation, framing it as an interpersonal (rather than structural) process, and one where experiences relating to cultural learning, formation of social bonds, and capacity building are of particular interest. This survey of relevant literature concludes with a conceptual framework for the research project:

Generating reconciliation between divided peoples is a process of relationship building. This happens in part through bottom-up **interpersonal** processes, which most effectively impact reconciliation on the individual and community levels, complementing top-down work that is more political and structural in nature. As a reconciliation program, the Music Cooperation engages in tasks generating and nurturing **affective ties** (social bonds), and **cultural learning** (inter- and intra-cultural), two important tasks in interpersonal reconciliation and peacebuilding. Both processes are supported through **building capacity** in the music sector for high-quality performances as this provides a level 'playing field' for forming meaningful social ties and engagement in cultural learning.

The research project uses mixed methods (interviews, focus groups, and participant surveys). It follows an inductive and iterative path, with the findings in each stage determining the focus of inquiry in the subsequent stages, each of which is outlined in **Section 2: Methods**.

## Findings – artist and audience experiences

Section 3 presents **findings on reconciliation outcomes** as experienced by artists and audiences in Music Cooperation activities. Artists from past Festivals shared their experiences in relation to cultural learning, generation of new friendships and bonds, and capacity building. These are interwoven with outcomes of audience and performer surveys at the 2016 Galle Music Festival.

*Cultural learning* was strongly indicated across both the qualitative and quantitative data sets. Among artists, learning was primarily experienced as exposure to new things – instruments, music, folk forms, and artists from other parts of the country. Artists also noted the importance of their own folk forms gaining recognition among other folk artists. Cultural learning occurred in both inter- and intra-cultural domains, with the latter being of particular importance to artists from war-affected regions. They found that the experience of protracted violence and multiple forced displacements had severely depleted their communities’ familiarity with their own cultural traditions, with a corresponding weakening of shared identity and capacity to express and celebrate culture.

Artists described great potential for the formation of *affective ties and friendships* across different artist groups through the festivals, but they also noted many barriers to this. These included:

- The lack of time available during Music Cooperation events for artists to meet, socialize, and move the acquaintance beyond superficial territory to something deeper
- Communication barriers, in particular the lack of shared language for artists from different regions and ethnic groups
- Financial barriers, which limited groups’ capacity to continue their contact and meetings outside Music Cooperation timeframes (due to costs associated with transport, accommodation, lost earnings, etc)
- A disinterest among ‘professional’ musicians to engage in the social aspects of events like Festivals. In contrast, community-based musicians described the opportunities to meet other artists as being among the significant benefits of the experience.
- Political barriers (perceived as well as actual) to travelling to other parts of the country (particularly for those from war-affected areas)
- Shyness and natural inhibitions making it difficult to break the ice and build intimacy. Here, facilitated ‘warm-up’ and performance preparation activities that got groups interacting and communicating in light-hearted and non-verbal ways were identified as useful mechanisms.

Artists felt that the opportunities they had to *build capacity* through skills and experience as a result of their Music Cooperation participation had been very valuable for their artform development, increased confidence, and agency. Supports received included:

- Material support for instruments, costumes and scripts
- Psychological and emotional benefit through external validation, encouragement and recognition following their Festival performances, from audiences, fellow artists, and members of their own communities

These led to a shift towards future-oriented thinking and planning, and an increased sense of agency in determining the parameters of their performance work. Further analysis of artists' experiences also suggested that capacity building has an important role to play in counteracting feelings of inferiority or comparison anxiety among those artists whose practices had been severely disrupted during the war years. Here, capacity building helped to build feelings of equality (and the *perception* of equality) among intergroup contact participants, which were essential to building meaningful friendships.

### **Considerations for organizers and planners**

The analysis of the findings revealed many issues that have implications for organizers of these kinds of reconciliation-focused activities and programs. Section 4 addresses some key areas of consideration for those **organizing and planning music for reconciliation programs**. The outcomes of this analysis are strongly informed by Intergroup Contact Theory, and include:

- Identifying and planning for the points of diversion that differentiate Music Development from Music for Reconciliation approaches.
- The importance of maintaining focus on the key reconciliation processes across all programming and coordination decisions; for the Music Cooperation these are cultural learning, generation of affective ties and friendships, and capacity-building.
- Programming activities for repeated and prolonged engagements between artist groups. The research found that reconciliation processes do not take place during performance times, but during *down-time* – occasions where artists are together but not engaged in structured activities. Programming and scheduling needs to strategically plan for and accommodate repeated and (when possible) prolonged opportunities for artists to mix and interact informally.
- Focusing efforts on the *micro* and *meso* societal levels, as this is where interpersonal reconciliation takes place and where change is most likely to be observable.

- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of festivals as reconciliation vehicles, and differentiating between community, regional and national events as potential locations. Festivals work best as reconciliation vehicles when conceived as part of a larger trajectory of consecutive events.
- The importance of making an initial assessment of the field, in order to target efforts towards particular groups, or where there is strong affirmative support for reconciliation work already present.
- Including artist collaborations within programming but recognizing the complex ways that representation and equality may play out in these projects. Reconciliation is predicated on a shared sense of equal group status, and this can be inadvertently undermined through decisions such as venues, authority roles, group numbers, and social norms of interaction.
- Communication challenges need to be anticipated and planned for. Pro-active interpreters who are focused on facilitating dialogue between artist groups (rather than merely transmitting messages in summary form) play a critical role.
- Organisers also need to identify mechanisms and indicators of change specific to each project. Reconciliation outcomes will be indicated more by social processes and experiential changes rather than simply by the presence or participation of different ethnic groups.

Each of these areas of strategic priority and planning are presented in general terms, with the Music Cooperation providing useful illustration of how each situation may work in practice. **Section 5: Next steps, recommendations, and conclusions** then concludes the report. It continues the action-oriented focus of Section 4, and proposes several program modifications to help strengthen the work of the Music Cooperation in achieving its reconciliation objectives.

### **Recommendations**

1. Tighten the programmatic focus towards Music for Reconciliation (as opposed to Music Development)
2. Identify artists and sites for Music Cooperation activities more strategically, including an initial field analysis and using an artist selection tool or similar to guide decision-making.
3. Reconceptualise activities so that they take place within a trajectory of artist opportunities and experiences.
4. Introduce technical support and funding provision for artist-led inter-communal initiatives.

The research also developed a number of tools and templates to support programming decisions and planning processes. One of these, the Artist Selection Tool, is included as an appendix at the end of the report.



**Picture 1: Young people rehearse in a 2016 Musical Meeting Spaces workshop**



**Picture 2: Drummers from Kilinochchi and Colombo rehearse the 2016 Drumming Collaboration**

# Section 1: Introduction to the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation

How does a country rebuild after the destruction and devastation of war? Moreover, *what* does it rebuild? Much of the aftermath of war is visible—buildings and other infrastructure rendered unusable, key edifices of cultural, social, economic, and political significance now in ruins or rubble. Institutions and systems of state, security, economic development, and civil society—including systems for the education, health and care of members of society—will also have been damaged, and their reconstruction is also a priority in recovery and reconstruction processes.

Invisible damage is far more challenging to address. The damage that war inflicts upon social and cultural fabric is just as pervasive and multi-faceted as large-scale physical destruction, but is far less tangible, and far more complex a reconstruction task. War disrupts and often destroys the norms and patterns of stable and functional social life. It necessitates a reordering of values to ensure survival in an unstable, unpredictable environment, and these new norms and patterns can then become privileged and entrenched in the militarized and hierarchical cultures that invariably linger in post-war societies (Enloe, 2004; Niner, 2011). Geographically and psychologically, people’s sense of ‘life-space’ is dramatically transformed (Howell, 2015), so that the worlds they inhabit are suffused with markers and memorials denoting danger, safety, loss, return, home, and not-home. Displacement, division, and loss of the community’s cultural custodians can rapidly erode the sustainability of folk traditions that once strongly connected people to specific places. Key skills cannot be passed on. And when the war is over, culture is rarely a priority in the face of competing and urgent survival needs and complex political agendas.

Such was the context in which the Music Cooperation between Sri Lanka and Norway began in 2009. That year brought about the cessation of 30 years of war and extreme violence between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE), and marked the activation of the complex machinery of international help that heaved into action following the end of the civil war, as the country began the long process of post-war reconstruction and recovery.

The Music Cooperation is an effort to use music and performing arts as a platform to bring divided and wounded people together into cooperation and dialogue, connecting through a shared desire to revive and celebrate the diverse folk performance traditions of modern Sri Lanka. It built upon the strengths of the two implementing organizations – the strong social trust and extensive geographical reach of community development organization Sevalanka Foundation, and the music development and capacity-building experiences of the International Department of Rikskonsertene (Concerts Norway). It has been funded throughout by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Sri Lanka.

Its overall objective is “to strengthen reconciliation through music activities, creating meeting spaces for audiences across religious and ethnic boundaries, [and] capacity building programs for professional musicians”<sup>1</sup>. It aims to achieve this broad reconciliation objective through music development work: programs and activities that build capacity and experience in Sri Lanka’s music sector, with a particular focus on revitalising the country’s folk traditions as these arguably hold the seeds of the Sri Lankan people’s shared nationhood and commonalities, as well as the diversity of the people. However, delineating the contributions of development work to reconciliation goals has not always been a clear-cut task, and this research report responds in part to that gap.

Its programming has evolved over the years, with the following components scheduled in 2016:

- The Galle Music Festival (morning and evening program)
- Musical Meeting Spaces (collaboration between students and faculty of three state universities)
- Folk Music Library (supporting development of the national folk music archive and production of a new bilingual radio program on the national broadcaster)
- A Children’s Festival
- Training program for sound and lighting technicians
- Training program for talented young musicians performing folk traditions

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<sup>1</sup> Proposal to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 2015

The Music Cooperation also provides support to three established ensembles in Colombo – the Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka, the Oriental Chamber Orchestra, and the Junior Symphony Orchestra. These ensembles run their programs autonomously of Sevalanka and are funded partners of the Music Cooperation rather than facilitated programs within it.

### **The relationship between Music Development and Music for Reconciliation**

The twinning of Music Development and Music for Reconciliation in the Music Cooperation has heralded new challenges for the organizations involved. For both implementing partners, the reconciliation agenda<sup>2</sup> risked adding an overt political element to their work. Both parties were aware of the loaded and highly contentious nature of reconciliation work in Sri Lanka (often assumed by target communities to be politically tainted and therefore serving political rather than community goals)<sup>3</sup> and looked to find a ‘third way’ that kept the development of performance capacities (particularly Sri Lanka’s folk traditions) and production skills (audio, lighting, and event management) in the foreground of their work. Reconciliation was therefore less a strategic course of action than an anticipated by-product of music activities that would bring ethnically diverse performers together on a range of shared platforms.

While music development activities may bear some relationship to reconciliation and peacebuilding (for the sense of healing they can create, the potential for shared platforms of mutual interest and skills exchange, a meeting space through which dialogue can grow, and other potential “local capacities for peace” (Anderson, 1999, p. 24)), these relationships are more often assumed and anecdotal than supported through more critical assessment processes, and (as is the case for the Music Cooperation), tend to occur organically rather than through substantive conceptual and analytical programming decisions. Furthermore, there can be a tacit assumption among organisers that music is always beneficial, despite recognition of the way that music serves as a tool for expression and instrument of identity. It can just as easily be mobilized as a source of alienation or stereotyping for members of other groups (Kent, 2008; Odena, 2010).

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<sup>2</sup> Reconciliation was included as a specific program goal from 2011 (see Evaluation Report, Fernando & Rambukwella, Sept-Oct 2014)

<sup>3</sup> Such a view seems to have been particularly prevalent during the Rajapaksa regime. The change of government to the more progressive Sirisena government in 2015 is seen by many commentators and ‘people on the street’ as a decisive choice by the people towards a more peaceful and socially-cohesive future. See <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/12/19/sri-lankas-year-of-democracy-reconciliation-and-rebalancing/> and <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/in-sri-lanka-an-opportunity-for-national-reconciliation/>.

## **Research question and aims**

Thus, the relationship between music development activities and reconciliation requires further examination and this gap has prompted the central research question for this study:

*How does the music development work of the Sri Lanka Norway  
Music Cooperation support reconciliation in Sri Lanka?*

This will be answered through examination of the Music Cooperation's development of the traditional (folk) music and performance sector in Sri Lanka, a sector that primarily exists at the community level, with skills being passed down through generations via oral transmission.

The research aims to serve two purposes: to improve understanding of how (if at all) the music development activities of the Music Cooperation are contributing to reconciliation in Sri Lanka; and to recommend future actions based on the empirical findings of the program's outcomes thus far.

## **This research report**

This research report has been written by an independent researcher embedded within Sevalanka (February-May 2016) and Concerts Norway (June-July 2016) for a period of five months. It is written with a wide audience in mind, in recognition of growing interest in the use of music and other creative arts to address the harmful social cleavages that can persist in post-war landscapes. There is a corresponding interest among scholars and practitioners to learn from the work of others, and while every case study presents characteristics that are specific to its context, patterns that are common to all also emerge, and these are central to the development of deeper knowledge and more effective practices. This report intends to contribute to this growing and important field of scholarship and practice.

The remainder of this first section of the report addresses the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. It establishes a working definition of reconciliation that is suitable in scope for the work of the Music Cooperation, and outlines the theoretical framework informed by Intergroup Contact Theory that has guided the research conclusions. Following this exposition, the report outlines the research methods used (Section Two). Section Three shares findings from the data gathered, with a focus on the experiences of participants in the Music Cooperation's activities. These participant perspectives lead to a more general discussion of some of the critical elements in planning for and organizing 'Music for Reconciliation' activities (Section Four). The final section of the report, *Next steps, Recommendations, and Conclusions*, brings the focus back to the Music

Cooperation and offers recommendations for future action based on the research findings (Section Five).

### **Reconciliation – narrowing the scope**

Reconciliation is a heavily loaded word, complex and contested in both its definition and scope. When a music project purports to be making a contribution towards “reconciliation” in Sri Lanka, it automatically enters into this contested domain, replete with dramatically contrasting perspectives and lived experiences of what reconciliation is, should be, and needs to provide. With such diversity of viewpoints on the word itself, assessing the success of a program towards reconciliation goals, outcomes or experiences is a similarly discordant and debated task.

For this research then, an initial scoping exercise was undertaken, examining international and Sri Lankan literature on reconciliation, and on reconciliation, peacebuilding, and the arts, in order to build a conceptual framework that could focus the scope of what ‘reconciliation’ should and can encompass in the context of the Music Cooperation and its activities.

A major point of difference in definitions of reconciliation is whether the word refers to a process or an endpoint (or indeed, both). This research employs the perspective of Bloomfield (2006) that proposes that reconciliation be understood as a process, and an umbrella term comprising multiple complementary (rather than contradictory) instruments towards an end goal of peace and acceptance.

Bloomfield also distinguishes between the interpersonal and political or structural processes of reconciliation. He proposes a framework that unpacks the differences in the two processes, summarized in the table below:

<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>National/Societal/Political</b>
Emotion, acknowledgment, hearing, forging personal bonds, building understanding and reflexivity	‘thin’ or ‘thick’ co-existence, civic trust, democratic reconciliation, development of workable political cooperation and minimal tolerance
Bottom-up	Top-down
Cultural, social	Structural

**Table 1: Summary of Bloomfield’s delineation of interpersonal and structural reconciliation processes**

Bloomfield highlights the complementary nature of these processes, and observes that each requires its own set of tools and locus of activity. Interpersonal processes are at the individual and relational level, and focused on emotional and psychosocial transformations; thus, they require tools that can

directly impact the micro and meso levels of change. Reconciliation processes at the societal, political, and structural levels require tools designed for macro change and timeframes. Both are vital and therefore interlinked, but the tools of one cannot be effectively used to instigate change within the other. In other words, interpersonal reconciliation is a central part of a reconciliation process, but to anticipate its simultaneous impact at the societal level is unrealistic.

Where Bloomfield's (2006) framework focuses on the qualities and characteristics of these two broad approaches, Cohen (2005) examines further the *processes* of interpersonal reconciliation. Her theoretical framework identifies seven key culturally-inflected learning tasks that will be undertaken by former adversaries. Of the seven, the first two are particularly salient for the Music Cooperation activities and the learning potential they engender:

- 1) Appreciating each other's humanity and respecting each other's culture;
- 2) Telling and listening to each other's stories, and developing more complex narratives and more nuanced understandings of identity (Cohen, 2005, pp. 10-11)

These two can be summarized as processes of *cultural* learning, leading to deeper understanding of the out-group<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, Bloomfield's work recognizes and validates interpersonal processes of reconciliation as playing an essential role (particularly towards change at the *micro* and *meso* level) and Cohen's work illuminates the actions and outcomes that lead to more nuanced cultural learning.

A third theoretical framework that informs this research and underpins many of its subsequent recommendations is that of Intergroup Contact Theory, from the field of social psychology. This enduring theory, first proposed by Allport in 1954, developed further by Pettigrew and others (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), and used effectively as an evaluation tool for music and conflict transformation projects (Bergh, 2010), holds that contact between divided or segregated groups is more likely to result in a reduction of prejudice if groups meet under particular conditions. Allport's research proposed that when the contact situation featured a number of essential conditions (equal status between participant groups, a common goal or objective, where intergroup cooperation is required, and where the contact has the support of authorities or leaders) then the contact had a stronger likelihood of reducing prejudice between groups. Other scholars have extended his ideas further since then (see Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011 for a detailed review). Intergroup Contact Theory also proposes important mediators (which function in the same

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<sup>4</sup> 'In-group' and 'out-group' are terms used in social psychology when discussing social divisions. They offer a nimble way to discuss group identification (from the perspective of group members) that sidesteps the need to apply specific ethno-religious labels.

way as ‘mechanisms’ in international development planning), and moderators (which indicate *when* contact is most likely to have its positive effects).

Table 2, below, summarises the main points of the theory:

<i>If contact takes place between two (conflicting) groups in situations where</i>	
<b>CONDITIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is equal status between groups</li> <li>▪ The situation is one where stereotypes are likely to be disconfirmed</li> <li>▪ The group members share a common goal or objective for the contact</li> <li>▪ Intergroup cooperation is required</li> <li>▪ They have the opportunity to get to know each other properly</li> <li>▪ The contact has the support of authorities or leaders, and wider social norms support contact and equality</li> </ul>
<i>And there are opportunities for group members to be engaged in</i>	
<b>MEDIATORS (MECHANISMS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learning about the out-group</li> <li>▪ Behaviour-driven attitude change (e.g. forming more positive attitude towards out-group members through being involved in a cooperative learning task with them)</li> <li>▪ In-group re-appraisal, and</li> <li>▪ Generating affective ties and forming friendships</li> </ul>
<i>And if</i>	
<b>MODERATORS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The intergroup contact is meaningful to the involved parties, rather than superficial;</li> <li>▪ There is strong group salience (meaning that it is evident which group each participant belongs to); and</li> <li>▪ The contact has been entered into voluntarily by all parties</li> </ul>
<i>Then the contact is more likely to result in “more positive, or at least less negative, outgroup attitudes” (Hewstone, 2003, p. 352)</i>	

**Table 2: Summary of Intergroup Contact Theory, after Pettigrew et al (2011) and Hewstone (2003)**

Of each of the mediators/mechanisms nominated in the middle step, the last one is of the greatest importance (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Intergroup contact that affords repeated opportunities or extended periods for bonds to form and deepen, in varied settings, has been shown to result in various factors related to prejudice reduction, including the facilitation of self-disclosure, increased

empathy and more nuanced perspectives on the other group, and reduced anxiety (Hewstone, 2003; Pettigrew et al., 2011). Intergroup friendships also increase knowledge about the other group, enhancing the potential for cultural learning.

Intergroup Contact Theory also offers some indication of how the effects of contact could generalize out to include members of the out-group community that have not been directly involved in the contact. Some studies indicate a strong potential for prejudice to be reduced among those whose *friends* are known to have friends in the out-group (Hewstone, 2003, citing Wright et al, 1997; Pettigrew et al., 2011). This is significant as it suggests ways that the impact of intergroup contact has the potential to spread beyond those directly involved, and thus effect change at the community and societal levels in the longer term.

Despite its endurance as a theory (consistently in use since its first introduction in 1954), Intergroup Contact Theory continues to be the subject of contestation. The conditions it proposes do little to offer solutions to highly entrenched and intractable social divisions, such as those found in highly segregated societies, where what contact occurs is often superficial and frequently reinforces rather than reduces prejudices (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005). Some scholars observe that if contact reduces prejudice among the less powerful, then this may delay necessary social change and weaken the desire to protest. Pettigrew (2011) counters this by pointing out that contact's effects are typically "far greater for majorities than minorities—which mitigates this phenomenon" (p. 278; see Pettigrew, 2011, for an overview of the criticisms).

These contestations are important, and remind us that contact should not be seen to be a panacea for intergroup conflict (Hewstone, 2003). Nevertheless, it is also clear that strict segregation does not work. Cross-group interaction is "an essential, if insufficient, component for lasting remedies" (Pettigrew, 2011, p. 278). Intergroup Contact Theory remains compelling as a useful framework to apply to the Music Cooperation, because many of the conditions and moderating factors that signal a likelihood of positive effects are present in the Music Cooperation activities, in particular the voluntary and eager nature of participation among all groups, the highly meaningful nature of the music work, and the shared interests and goals around which the contact occurs. Alongside the empirical data from this research, Intergroup Contact Theory provides a framework for critical programming decisions, strategic priorities, and identification of suitable milestones and indicators of progress towards desired change.

## Conceptual framework for reconciliation in the Music Cooperation

The study design for this research positions the work of the Music Cooperation firmly in *interpersonal reconciliation* approaches, as distinguished by Bloomfield. It thus does not attempt to assess the Music Cooperation's impact on structural-political reconciliation, considering this to be inappropriate given the programmatic focus of the Music Cooperation. From that stance, Cohen's framework for 'Creative approaches to reconciliation' and the identified conditions and mediators of Intergroup Contact Theory have pinpointed the two central processes in the Music Cooperation's reconciliation outputs as follows: the generating and strengthening of intergroup **affective ties and friendships**, and **cultural learning**, where groups can develop more nuanced understanding of their own culture and that of 'the other', through appreciation and deeper first-hand knowledge of the traditions, mythologies, and points of commonality and diversion. Both of these processes are supported and enabled through **building the capacity** of artists and producers in the sector, a key finding from this research project that will be expanded upon in the 'Findings' section of this report. These three processes cut across all program strands of the Music Cooperation.

The conceptual framework underpinning the research design can be summarized as follows:

Generating reconciliation between divided peoples is a process of relationship building. This happens in part through bottom-up **interpersonal processes**, which most effectively impact reconciliation on the **individual and community** levels, complementing top-down work that is more political and structural in nature. As a reconciliation program, the Music Cooperation engages in tasks generating and nurturing **affective ties** (social bonds), and **cultural learning** (inter- and intra-cultural), two important tasks in interpersonal reconciliation and peacebuilding. Both processes are supported through **building capacity** in the music sector for high-quality performances as this provides a level 'playing field' for forming meaningful social ties and engagement in cultural learning.

This framework guides the research design and approach to data gathering and analysis for this research into the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation. It may also find broader application across other creative arts projects seeking to impact reconciliation in conflict-affected settings. Its purpose

is to focus attention on the ways that key reconciliation processes may be occurring, and help shape corresponding efforts to monitor and evaluate these.

## Section 2: Methodology

The research design has followed an inductive and iterative path, with the findings in each stage determining the focus of inquiry in the subsequent stages.

### **Data Gathering**

#### **Stage 1: Desk review of reconciliation concepts and Music Cooperation activities**

This stage involved a review of reconciliation theory and analysis as it pertains generally and to music and arts work specifically. Interviews with Sevalanka staff about where they felt the reconciliation outcomes of the Music Cooperation could be seen most strongly spotlighted social processes that were consistent with those proposed in the reconciliation literature. A representative from the donor corroborated these findings, and confirmed that a conceptual framework focused on interpersonal reconciliation processes was an appropriate lens through which to view the Music Cooperation activities.

The conceptual framework described in Section 1 was developed following the Stage 1 review, and provides a more tightly contained definition of ‘reconciliation’ to inform the data gathering process. An analysis of the Music Cooperation activities according to this conceptual framework highlighted the activities most useful to examine in subsequent stages of the research.

#### **Stage 2: Data collection (interviews and focus groups) with artists from previous festivals, and participant observation**

The analysis of reconciliation outputs (Stage 1) indicated that activities that involved diverse artists meeting and having opportunities to (a) exchange knowledge about each other’s artforms and interests and (b) to make friends, were the most likely producers of reconciliation outcomes within the Music Cooperation.

This proposition was tested in Stage 2 with interviews with previous festival artists. Emphasis was placed on those artists that had been involved in two or more festivals, as this increased the

likelihood (without guaranteeing it) that they might have had repeated meetings with artists from other parts of the country. It was considered important to get artists' perspectives (rather than only organisers' perspectives) as they are the 'first line' targets and key agents of change in terms of reconciliation through the Music Cooperation.

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were held with five artist groups and one local artist coordinator from Northern, Eastern, and North-Western Provinces. The interviews sought to learn:

- To what extent are festivals (and other Music Cooperation activities) providing opportunities for sustained friendships, exchanges and intercultural learning? and
- What are the limitations or boundaries affecting these?
- What other changes have been significant for artists as a result of their SLNMC experiences?

Interview participants were interviewed in their preferred language, and interpreters translated the conversations as they progressed. The interviews were recorded and transcribed prior to analysis (see Appendix A: Interview guide for previous Festival artists).

Stage 2 also involved participant observation of two collaborative projects in which the researcher was both researcher and occasional participant. An observation journal was kept for both projects; in one (Musical Meeting Spaces), one of the participants was also asked to keep an observation log of different kinds of intergroup interactions, with particular attention given to cultural learning, and informal socialising.

### **Stage 3: Surveys of Audience and Performers at the 2016 Galle Music Festival**

Stage 3 consisted of administration of surveys to performers and audiences at the 2016 Galle Music Festival. The questions responded directly to the barriers and limitations to maintaining new friendships or deepening the cultural learning that could occur within the Music Cooperation, as revealed in Stage 2.

Surveys were translated into Tamil, Sinhala, and English. They were completed by a random sample of audience members (n=71) and performers (n=60) on the day and evening of the Galle Music Festival (14<sup>th</sup> May 2016), administered by a team of 4 volunteers (audience survey) and the lead researcher (performer survey). Surveys were completed anonymously (see Appendix B: Audience and Performer survey).

### *Limitations*

Survey distribution and completion took place within a very small timeframe and with limited personnel. As a result, the performers completing the performer survey had had prior interactions with the lead researcher that approached them to participate in the survey, and had experienced her as the leader of an earlier invigorating and inspiring training workshop, whom they liked and found friendly and approachable. This increased the possibility that they may have given survey responses that they felt the researcher wished to read, rather than that accurately reflected their feelings about the festival experience.

Furthermore, survey data gathered in the context of the immediate post-festival ‘buzz’ and euphoria could also have skewed responses towards the positive. If the same questions had been asked at a time more removed from the event under discussion, the responses may have been more circumspect. With these caveats in mind, the survey outcomes, woven throughout this report, nevertheless offer an additional dimension of the performer experience of the reconciliation potential of the event, complementing data from the more detailed and nuanced qualitative interviews.

As an anonymous survey, it offers no opportunity to track any further changes that take place in people’s lives as a result of this festival, and therefore its main utility in relation to future changes is to offer a snapshot in time of audience and performer perspectives, and a guide of what is possible, rather than a definitive indicator of sustained change. Furthermore, the findings will provide a baseline for future events of similar nature in relation to specific reconciliation goals and outcomes, and a snapshot of what stood out most strongly for participants in the immediate context of the 2016 festival.

### **Analysis**

The conceptual framework determined the broad categories of analysis related to reconciliation that were of primary interest – *generation of affective ties*, and the different ways that *cultural learning* was experienced. *Barriers* to the continued growth of friendships and learning formed an important sub-category of analysis.

A third category of analysis that emerged in the data was that of *capacity building*. This area of activity was of considerable importance to the artists and a foundational pillar of the Music Cooperation’s work. In this research, ‘capacity-building’ incorporates performance and artform development, as well as esteem, empowerment, and vitality, and is understood to be an important contributor to reconciliation processes at the micro and meso levels. Within the ‘Capacity building’

theme, subcategories captured several contrasting and connected types of change and development reported by artists because of SLNMC input.

External demographics specialists analysed the survey data from the 2016 Galle Music Festival using SPSS software in order to generate initial tables of response frequency. The researcher then extracted the key points for discussion from these and developed the resulting discussion.

## **Section 3: Findings on reconciliation outcomes from the artists' and audience perspectives**

Following the conceptual framework, data from the stage 2 interviews and focus groups with former festival artists, and the stage 3 audience and artist surveys were analysed for experiences of Cultural Learning, Generation of affective ties, and Capacity building. This section shares findings from each of these in turn.

### **Cultural Learning**

The term 'Cultural learning' is used in this report to denote the first and second of Cohen's seven tasks of reconciliation, "Appreciating each other's humanity and respecting each other's culture" and "Telling and listening to each other's stories, and developing more complex narratives and more nuanced understandings of identity" (Cohen, 2005, p. 10).

A focus on cultural learning as a reconciliation process should not be understood as implying that the cause of earlier conflict was cultural ignorance or misunderstanding. Indeed, the people of Sri Lanka had co-existed peacefully for many centuries prior to the outbreak of civil war. Rather, the work of cultural learning is necessary to help repair the prolonged damage to the country's social fabric caused by three decades of war, severe disruption to important markers of tradition and identity, and a sustained political discourse of division and difference that created stereotypes and stigma. Cultural learning also works to counter the segregation that exists among institutions such

as schools, resulting in current generations growing up without opportunities to meet or form nuanced understandings of the different cultural groups that make up the Sri Lankan nation.

As a reconciliation outcome of the Music Cooperation, ‘cultural learning’ takes place through performances, collaborations, and broadcasts, but also through informal and unstructured conversations that happen simply through diverse groups being in close proximity and with a shared interest in music as the starting point for engagement. It is most effective when it corresponds with the conditions, mediators and moderators proposed by the Contact Hypothesis of equal group status, cooperative work towards a common goal, the disconfirmation of stereotypes, and support for reconciliatory work by leaders and authorities.

### **Cultural Learning outcomes**

Cultural learning is evident as a strategic priority in many decisions around content and artist selection in the Music Cooperation, particularly in the desire to showcase as many different artists as possible. Festivals at the national and village level, radio broadcasts by the Folk Music Conservation Library<sup>5</sup>, the Musical Meeting Spaces collaborations between universities, and the training programs for young talents all have cultural learning at the centre of their goals. The learning recipients are both audiences and artists.

*Audiences* attending the annual Jaffna/Galle Music festival event have opportunities for inter-cultural learning through being exposed to performances of new folk forms from different cultural groups. These performance exposures can help to challenge pre-existing cultural stereotypes, offer insights into the stories and myths that are central to the performers’ culture, and give the audience members a sense of all that is shared between Sri Lanka’s different cultural groups.

For example, the vast majority of the audiences at the 2016 Galle Music Festival (89%) reported seeing folk forms at the festival that were new to them. A similar number of people (87%) strongly agreed that they felt a greater appreciation for Sri Lanka’s cultural traditions following their festival attendance.

*Artists* from previous festivals described their cultural learning in terms of seeing the performances of international and Sri Lankan artists from other cultural backgrounds for the first time (and so broadening their cultural knowledge), as well as specific things they had learned through having opportunities to interact with other artists.

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<sup>5</sup> Planned for broadcast from June 2016

For the Kali Kambatam group<sup>6</sup> the latter included building knowledge (“I learned the names of the instruments”), experimenting and ‘tasting’ other sounds (“I was playing their instruments”), and exchanges of knowledge (“I taught them how we are dancing”).

The different instruments that performers played generated curiosity among the Sri Lankan artists.

For the Sinhalese, our *parai* drum was something very interesting. It’s an original Tamil instrument and a very energetic musical instrument that was not at all well-known at that time. And then for we Tamil performers, to see their *bera* drum was also interesting.

(Kovalan Koothu focus group)<sup>7</sup>

Having the aesthetic and artistic value of their folk forms acknowledged and appreciated by others was also an important cultural learning aspect.

During the festival many in the audience (Tamil and Sinhalese) were hearing the *parai* for the first time as an art form and in its aesthetic value. And it was also the first time many of them were seeing the Koothu performances, because they are traditionally performed in the night but we lost the night during the war. (Navardashani, Jaffna Music Festival consultant<sup>8</sup>)

In Jaffna Festival, the other artists and audience wondered how the Muslims are having such a cultural dance. Everyone thinks that the Muslims don’t dance. All of them. Never. They think that it’s *haram* [forbidden] for us. That was why they came to see our performance. They were curious and wanted to know. Also, our dance is not only beautiful – it is like a martial art and is almost dangerous. They liked this. (Kali Kambatam focus group).

Cultural learning in the Music Cooperation was described as both *intra-* and *inter-*cultural.

Research participants, particularly artists from the war-affected areas, emphasised the former as an essential first step in appreciating the culture and identity markers of others. Culture is not static, and there can be a great need to remember and revive cultural traditions so that those born during the time of war when practices were disrupted can learn them.

People wanted to show their children, “This is Koothu, this is Parai”. They wanted to show their children the traditional decorations that we made, like the *sigiram* decorative structure that we made, which is what you normally find at the temple entrance. And yes, many of our

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<sup>6</sup> A Muslim music and dance group from Akkaraipattu, Eastern Province (JMF 2013, GMF 2014)

<sup>7</sup> Kovalan Koothu folk theatre group, Mulliyawalai village, Mullaitivu district (JMF 2011, GMF 2012)

<sup>8</sup> Navadharshani is a professor in performing arts at Jaffna University and played a key role in selecting and preparing local artists in the first two Jaffna Music Festivals, 2011 and 2013.

[Tamil] artists had never seen the Sinhalese artists, it was the first time they met them and saw their performances. But even the Vanni people had never met the Jaffna people. We don't have connections with others, we are all isolated. And the people in the diaspora, when they come back to visit, they also ask where they can go to see *Koothu* and the other traditions. They want their children to see them. (Navadarshani, Jaffna Music Festival consultant).

In the experience of many artists, deep *inter-cultural learning and understanding* benefits from a sturdy *intra-cultural* base. In this way, the Galle and Jaffna Music Festivals have supported artist groups to revive and celebrate their performance traditions with their own communities, as well as with artists from other ethnic groups. They extend the work of the village-level festivals (which are focused on a single performance tradition belonging to that village, and presented to an audience that is primarily of people from that village or area).

One artist and festival advisor proposed an underlying Theory of Change that links cultural learning to reconciliation, suggesting that the key lay in aesthetic representations of the deep myths and narratives that explain *who people are*. She saw the traditional stories that are the heart of Sri Lanka's folk traditions almost as akin to the DNA of the people that perform them.

If a group from the North goes to perform, say, in the South, the people can come and see them from all over the area. They express the stories, these traditional stories. It's about them – their story, their own life. And in the audience we can ask, "What is it about, this story? Why do they perform it?" And then the performers can see a performance by another group that performs their stories, and asks the same questions. I think it starts a discussion, and leads to understanding. Through these myths and legends you can create more understanding than other mediums. (Navadarshani, Jaffna Music Festival consultant)

In summary, cultural learning is facilitated and supported by the Music Cooperation through the presentation of local musics and diverse folk performance traditions. These opportunities for sharing and learning were of great importance to the artists interviewed, but were limited to the timeframe of the festival event itself, which had implications for depth of learning. This is discussed in Section 4, where implications of these findings for the organizers are examined.

### **Generating and strengthening affective ties**

In Intergroup Contact Theory, one of the most powerful mechanisms through which intergroup contact can result in reduced prejudice and racial hostility is through people making friends with each other. As a possible outcome of affective ties (social ties that are connected with the emotions)

friendship is a far more intimate and trust-based form of contact than the more superficial contact that could take place through fleeting, perfunctory, and random interactions.

What does it take to form a new friendship? The gradual process of generating affective ties (and subsequent social bonds) between people meeting for the first time is a complex one that necessarily involves a raft of environmental and social conditions. This complexity notwithstanding, some key steps and facilitating conditions are evident. There needs to be:

- The chance to meet, ideally on multiple occasions where the contact can be somewhat unhurried or unpressured
- The chance (and capacity) to exchange views and move from superficial to more meaningful exchanges
- The mutual desire to continue the contact voluntarily, and the capacity to do this
- A capacity for equality, reciprocity and mutual benefit in the continued relationship

It is also likely that the friendship will be nurtured by common interests, common experiences, and (potentially) common goals.

### **Generation of affective ties**

Reports from the earliest Jaffna and Galle Music Festivals suggested that the Festival space could be a natural facilitator of new friendships between people from different parts of the country, divided after 30 years of civil war. A report written by Sevalanka described the way that,

For most of the artists coming from the North and East, it was a first time experience to interact with artists of from the south and other parts of the country. They lived together for three days and shared the same resources and got the opportunity to be with each other and learn not only the music but also the culture and traditions of each other. You could see new friendships built among them. Some even had tears in their eyes when they departed.<sup>9</sup>

These observations were corroborated by the artists interviewed:

The performance gave us a chance for other people to come, other performers, the Sinhalese people, to come and talk to us. And they had a kind of passion to learn more about our artform. And we have time to learn that too. We had time to talk with these people.

(Kovolana Koothu focus group)

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<sup>9</sup> Excerpt from an In-house report entitled “Music and the Role it can play in Conflict Transformation and Peace Reconciliation – through Sevalanka’s work: a Sri Lankan Norwegian Experience”, describing the social experience of the 2012 Galle Music Festival.

However, only the 2011 and 2012 Festivals lasted for three days and built an environment in which artists were able to interact and socialize in unscheduled, organic ways. The 2013 Festival lasted for 2 days, and 2014 comprised a Children's Festival (1 day), Music Festival (1 day), and Colombo Festival (international artists and some local artists performing in Colombo, also for 1 day).

There were many positive reports of new friendships in the data. Some groups (e.g. Kali Kambatam, Kaffer Manja) reported meeting artists they had met at the Galle or Jaffna Music Festival at later events organized by third parties, such as the Government of Sri Lanka's festivities for Independence Day, or the cultural program for the CHOGM meeting<sup>10</sup>. Music Cooperation participation therefore helped artists to become part of a network of recognized folk performers, and some were able to build on the ties they made through subsequent events. However, this depended on seeing the same artists on repeated occasions.

The Kovalan Koothu artists (Tamil, from Mullaitivu) formed a friendship with a group of Sinhalese performers (from Kurunegala). They first met at the 2011 Jaffna Festival, and met again at the 2012 Galle Festival.

Researcher – When you saw them again, did you all remember each other?

Artist – Oh **yes** [*emphatic*]. We had a very good acquaintance and interaction with them.

They came to our performance and when it finished we had a good intimacy again. Some of the performers came from Kurunegala – I'm not sure exactly where – and we would send cards to each other for Sinhalese and Tamil New Year. At that time we were talking about learning to play [our respective] types of music and theatre forms ... even then, we talked about how the Sinhala people wanted to perform here in the Tamil area. That is an indicator of how strong the relationship between us was at that time. (Kovalan Koothu focus group)

Connections with other artists also included meeting and forming (loose) ties with performers from their own ethnic group. Many of the Tamil artists interviewed, for example, were grateful for the opportunity to build relationships with other Tamil artists, as the three decades of war had isolated many groups from each other.

There is no doubt there is great potential for social connections to be formed through the Music Cooperation activities. In the 2016 Festival artist survey, 92% of artists agreed that they had "met new artist colleagues and made new friends" through being part of the Galle Music Festival. 85% hoped to continue it into the future, although nearly all respondents declined to answer a question

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<sup>10</sup> Organised by Sevalanka but not part of the SLNMC

that invited them to speculate on likely barriers to the friendship continuing.<sup>11</sup> Audience members also described meeting people from other cultural groups. 85% of audience members at the Galle Music Festival reported interacting with people they might not otherwise have met, and noted things such as language barriers (25%), geographical distance (27%), having different lifestyles (17%), and coming from different ethnic groups (15%) made these interactions less likely in their normal lives.

Furthermore, several previous Festival artists observed that the Festival was a space where artists could engage with each other as musicians and artists, rather than as representatives of their ethnic group. Musicians reported that they “didn’t feel any difficulties” and that they tended to meet each other as fellow musicians, rather than as Tamil or Sinhala, Southerners or Northerners or Easterners, and representatives of formerly hostile entities.

We were Tamils and they were Sinhalese but when we came on the stage and started grabbing everyone’s attention with our music, instruments and performance, some bonds had already started to form. We had so many political problems going on at that time [2011] but we were together in that moment because we were all folk artists there. No race was looked at. (Kovolun Koothu focus group)

The question therefore is around the extent to which the Festival (and other activities) provide sufficient space and time for strong ties to be formed that can endure beyond the timeframe of the Music Cooperation activity. This is a question about barriers, and the next sub-section summarises the artists’ experiences.

### **Barriers to forming affective ties**

Despite such substantial potential for forming meaningful friendships, the main finding from the data was that while new friendships were formed between artists in the festivals, multiple barriers made them difficult to maintain.

#### *Lack of time*

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<sup>11</sup> It was not possible to identify the reason(s) why this question was unanswered by the survey respondents. Possible reasons include: question placement (coming immediately after a question about new friendships formed, the suggestion that such friendships could be difficult to maintain may have been a dissonant one); post-performance euphoria (performers completed the survey minutes after finishing their festival performance and were still on a ‘performance high’); and optimism (the question was asked in response to previous Festival artists’ experiences of friendships being difficult to maintain, however, the 2016 cohort may have had no specific reasons or prior experience at that point to imagine the friendships they had made *not* lasting).

During the most recent festivals (2014-2016), artists reported that there was limited time in their festival schedules to meet other artists and engage in meaningful conversations. They were fully occupied with moving between rehearsals, soundchecks and performances. This was evident at 2016 Galle Festival, where artists' schedules had them staying in different hotels, never had them all in the same place at the same time, and required many of them to leave the festival immediately after their performances, meaning that they didn't get the chance to view other performances.

In contrast, artists that were part of the 2011 Jaffna Music Festival recalled great camaraderie and interaction. This festival lasted for 3 consecutive days, and included small purpose-built 'villages' or 'markets', where artists were based and could wander around and visit each other, and "[talk] about positive things, and also about difficult things that we had in our lives" (Kovalan Koothu focus group). This proximity meant that impromptu jams and musical exchanges were a regular feature, and many artists recalled conversations they'd had.

Furthermore, if artists only took part in one Festival or SLNMC event, then they did not have the opportunity to further nurture the seeds of friendship planted during their first meeting, by sharing a performance platform for a second or subsequent time.

The best way to converse is through [sharing] performance. But we have only had limited opportunities to perform. Often a group comes [to the Festival] for the first time, and then for the second time we don't see the same group. I don't know why the selection committee rejects them or whatever it is. But for our folk traditions to be kept in good form [and concurrently the social bonds] then the same groups should be selected for the next program. (Kovalan Koothu focus group)

These testimonies correspond with the importance that Intergroup Contact Theory places on ensuring that groups have ample time to socialise, cooperate on a shared task or common goal, and engage in conversations that are meaningful, if new affective ties are to be formed. Contact opportunities should be repeated and prolonged, and planned to accommodate this.

### *Communication barriers*

All the artists interviewed agreed that "language was the biggest barrier" (this quote is attributed to the Thappu drumming focus group, with many other artists making similar observations<sup>12</sup>) to forming deeper links with other artists in the Festivals. Only one or two artists described having the

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<sup>12</sup> The Thappu drumming group is a mostly-female group from Kilinochchi in the Northern Province. They perform music and Playback Theatre as a community development tool, supporting their community to recover emotionally from the war.

bilingual skills to speak to artists of other language groups in their (the other artists') own tongue<sup>13</sup>. Artists that knew some English used this as a *lingua franca*, but apart from this, the absence of a common language through which to have meaningful conversations was a barrier to friendships forming that could be sustained beyond the Festival period.

Language was the first and most prominent barrier. If we know the language then lots of things become easier. We used a little English when we could, and some people were translating for other people. Each group has got a translator with them so they helped us too. But we also tried to speak in English. (Kali Kabatam focus group)

This was also the case for those artists involved in more extensive collaborations, where they had spent 2-3 days working together. One group of young women drummers interviewed after the closure of the 2016 Festival described the way they had had positive and friendly relations with their collaborators from the North, but when pressed for details of the extent of these, admitted that for those present, the only phone number they had taken was that of the group's Sevalanka-employed translator, rather than contact details of the performers themselves<sup>14</sup>.

For those that had the language skills to maintain contact, finding an appropriate communication method for continued contact was also a barrier.

Especially now, people keep relationships through email and we don't have such a facility. Therefore we can't keep contact with [the South African musicians we met]. We travelled to South Africa for one week and we got all the contacts, but we don't have internet and email facilities, so that also stopped at that time. (Kaffer Manja focus group)

For younger musicians and those involved in more recent festivals, such as the Kali Kambatam performers, a greater variety of means for maintaining contact were available. They spoke of being contacted by artists they had met through the Festival, and immediately nominated Viber and WhatsApp<sup>15</sup> as the best mechanisms for keeping in contact.

### *Financial barriers*

For those artists that formed friendships and hoped to continue some kind of independent and ongoing exchange, financial barriers quickly arose. Embedded within these were concerns about

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<sup>13</sup> Bilingualism in Tamil and Sinhala remains uncommon in Sri Lanka, and has only recently been included in the national curriculum. It is more common to speak Sinhala and English, or Tamil and English, than to speak Tamil and Sinhala.

<sup>14</sup> Sandesi Beat Drummers, Colombo, interviewed 27 May 2016. They suggested that others in their group might have taken other phone numbers, but none of those present had.

<sup>15</sup> Online platforms for phone calls and social media

how to create and value exchanges and skills when no one is in a strong financial position. Earlier in this section, the friendship formed between two artist groups from Mullaitivu and Kurunegala was described. After meeting first at the 2011 Jaffna Music Festival and again at the 2012 Galle Festival, the two groups formed a friendship, and discussed a plan for a skills exchange between their groups. The hope was that the Kandyan group would travel to Mullaitivu in order to learn the Kovalan Koothu folk theatre form. In exchange, they would teach the Mullaitivu artists their wood-carving skills. They offered to do this for free.

However, even if payment for the artists involved was not required, other financial barriers remained.

Most of those [folk] artists need to do something else to earn a living. Many of them do coolie work<sup>16</sup> or are in the paddy field each day. For those Kandyan craftsmen that wanted to come here for 6 months, they would still have to support their families on their own, and no-one is going to pay us or them in that time. So most of the problems are financial.

(Kovalan Koothu focus group)

What is more, beyond these pragmatic considerations was the desire to respect and place a value on the skills being taught.

We would want to pay them. We *should* pay them, because it is what they do for a living and even if they agree to come here and do all those things for free, it's not the way it should happen. (Kovalan Koothu focus group)

These comments allude to some of the complicating factors that the financial realities of daily life, and the complexities around relationships between traditional performance and payment, can raise. Note that it is not simply a discussion of 'requiring more money', but one of value, skills development, and an absence of models or frameworks for mutual exchange and continued lifelong learning. The community-based artists are given a glimpse of all the possibilities of the above when they take part in the Festivals, but greater attention needed to be paid to the practicalities and lack of acceptable models for continued exchanges of skills and cooperation, whether these were initiated independently of the Festival or organized as part of it.

#### *Professionalism vs. community musicians*

An unexpected finding was that the social aspects of the festival were very much outside the interest and focus of those musicians that could be considered 'professional' performing artists (in

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<sup>16</sup> 'Coolie' work refers to daily wage labour: low-status, irregular work on other people's land.

that they earn a regular income from performing and perform in response to invitations and paid bookings). One group, when asked about social connections that had developed through their Music Cooperation performances, replied:

Certainly we might meet other artists there, such as Sinhala artists, and that is interesting, but we are all just there performing our music, and when the concert is finished then everything gets finished. At the 2014 festival the connection with other artists was not anything special. We made their acquaintance, but it didn't progress from there. If there were a social meeting for the artists organized, we would be happy to be part of that, but if there was somewhere else we had to be, then that is what we would prioritise. (Mangala Isai group, Jaffna)<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, Festival artists that more commonly performed at the community level, repeatedly nominated the experience of meeting other performers, Sri Lankan and international, as one of the most important outcomes of their Festival experience.

I made friends there. I could ask them questions about their beliefs, things that I didn't understand, what is similar, what is different. So I could compare our religions. (Kali Kambatam focus group)

This suggests that the social aspects of the Festival were of far greater significance to the community-based performers, a finding that would correspond with the priorities of many professional musicians in other parts of the world. Therefore, in terms of reconciliation, investment in community artists is more likely to yield dividends than investment in professional artists.

#### *Political barriers to further travel*

As described already, artists experienced the SLNMC Festivals as events where they could be artists first, and representatives of an ethnic or religious group second. In an environment where cultural difference is often politicized, this was experienced with some relief by the artists. In this way, politics did not represent a particular barrier for friendships during the Festival timeframes. However, for those artists that hoped to maintain connections, and travel to meet their new friends, some problems could arise.

Mostly all the folk artists are not very much into politics. But the *not-artists* in charge, or the group leaders in the background are political. And because of this and of the financial problems, it is not easy to be able to go somewhere else and do a performance. If we Tamil

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<sup>17</sup> Mangala Isai is a Jaffna-based, professional ensemble of performers in the classical Tamil tradition.

artists want to go out of the north there are ethnic problems. Not from the performers but from those who could be behind them. The government, and some local leaders. (Kovalan Koothu group)

These comments referred to a period during the years 2011-2013 approximately (during the previous Rajapaksa government), and some of the restrictions they experienced may have eased with the election of a more progressive government in 2015. Nevertheless, actions respond to the *perception* of danger. The fear or avoidance of political or militarized exchanges such as those generated by travel restrictions for particular ethnic groups makes non-essential travel less likely, and perception of travel difficulties therefore creates a barrier regardless of whether or not that fear or avoidance is unfounded.

#### *Shyness and natural inhibitions*

A barrier to forming friendships that was noted during participant observation of two of the 2016 collaborative projects<sup>18</sup>, although not mentioned by any research participants in interviews, was that of shyness, or the natural inhibitions that make people reluctant to approach unfamiliar people and initiate conversations.

In the North-South drumming collaboration in particular, it was clear that for most participants, it was preferable to sit with those that they already knew during meal breaks and downtime. While *opportunities* for new conversations were ample, the skills (e.g. language), possible conversation-starters, and mindset (desire to connect) did not appear strong enough for the majority of people to initiate ‘breaking the ice’ for all but a few of the group members.

Of the exchanges that did take place, they were facilitated by the presence of one or more characteristics:

- A modicum of confidence in another language (e.g. English) and the desire to attempt communication
- More extrovert, outgoing personalities
- Facilitated activities that encouraged verbal and non-verbal interaction in playful and ‘low-stakes’ ways

In the drumming collaboration, the most lively and spontaneous exchange grew from the break-time interactions of just three of the young women, when one (from the South) asked another (from the

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<sup>18</sup> The researcher was a participant observer in the North-South female drumming collaboration, and the Musical Meeting Spaces project.

North) to clarify how to perform a ritual *mudra* of Bharatanatyam dance. The girl showed her, and asked about the equivalent gesture in Kandyan dance. This evolved into a spontaneous jam and dance session, with more young women from both groups joining in, playing each other's instruments, and watching each other's dances (Picture 3, below, shows this in succession). But the key initiating factors were the English skills (despite being quite limited) of the three initial protagonists, a shared interest and opportunity for skills exchange, a willingness to approach the other, and a stretch of unstructured time with no teachers around.



**Picture 3: Members of both drumming groups jamming in the break (Photo by G. Howell)**

During a post-Festival focus group discussion, several members of the Colombo group also cited a short ice-breaking warm-up activity that began the second day of the collaboration as important. It showed them ways that “communication was possible without language” (Sandesi Beat Drummers post-Festival focus group). Eye contact, gesture, and humour were all important communication devices they found they could use following that activity.

Similarly, in the Musical Meeting Spaces project, it was the more extrovert students that facilitated the ‘breaking of ice’ between the three groups of students following the first day of workshops. The workshop took place over a weekend, and the three groups shared the same accommodation venue

for meals and sleeping. This created an informal, flexible space for socializing, longer conversations, and even spontaneous playing of music, late into the night.

These observations suggest three things – that inclusion of key individuals that are comfortable initiating conversations and building rapport with strangers is of critical importance in initiating interactions across group lines; that sharing of social time and space is a major mediator in building social bonds; and that there is much benefit to be gained from inclusion of facilitated, low-stakes activities designed to demonstrate ways to cooperate and communicate without relying on spoken language, and get people interacting less self-consciously.

## Capacity building

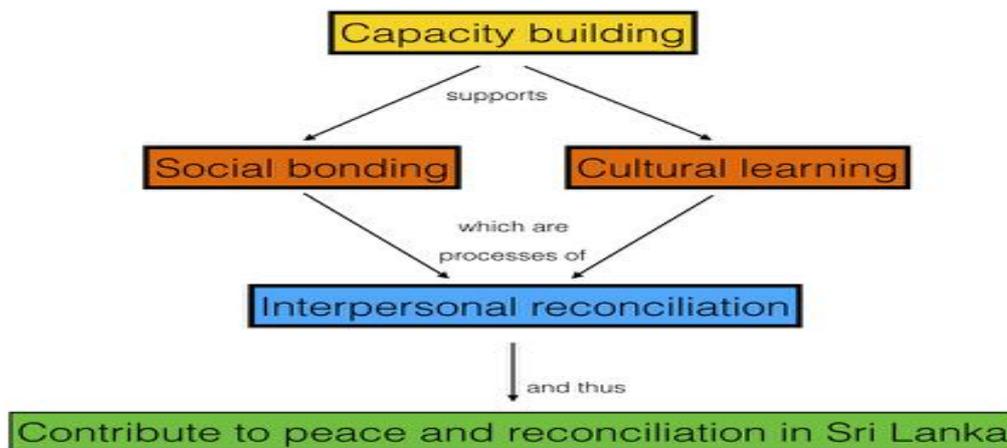
One of the widely agreed preconditions of Intergroup Contact Theory is that of ensuring ‘equal status between groups’, if the contact is to help reduce feelings of prejudice or hostility (Allport, 1954; Hewstone, 2003; Pettigrew et al., 2011). The data from artist interviews in this research has suggested that the capacity-building work that is such a mainstay of the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation has played a very useful role in establishing more equal status between groups – whether actual or perceived.

Reconciliation processes can be stymied if considerable power asymmetry exists between different social groups (Rouhana, 2004). Asymmetry of power in Sri Lanka may be experienced through being a member of the majority or minority ethnic group within a society, as well as through awareness of the precariousness of one’s financial and material situations in comparison to others, access to and support from authorities, support and encouragement from communities, and many other manifestations. Few artists spoke of power asymmetry as an issue of concern for them, but it can be assumed that the concerns around fair representation of minority concerns and interests that are present across the general population may also be playing out among artist communities and perceptions of how different artistic forms are valued across the country.

Therefore, ensuring equal status between groups (or at least, a *perception* of equality) is an important precondition for reconciliation processes to take place. This position is supported by statements from Sri Lanka scholars <sup>19</sup>, and was stressed by folk artists themselves in their interviews. Figure 1 shows how the artist experiences suggest that capacity building supports the two processes of reconciliation most salient to the Music Cooperation:

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<sup>19</sup> Øyvind Fuglerud, personal communication, 24/6/16



**Figure 1: Connecting the capacity-building work of SLNMC to peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka**

This subsection considers outcomes of capacity-building in terms of what was offered and experienced, but also in terms of how that input generated changes in the artists’ lives and their performance work. There has been the tangible, practical support, in the form of material goods and services, and the psychological and emotional benefit arising from increased esteem, confidence, and agency. These in turn have strengthened their future-oriented thinking. Each of these changes in capacity created more hospitable terrain for the important reconciliation processes of inter-ethnic social bonds and inter-cultural learning to occur, because they helped the artists to meet on a more level playing field, as the following descriptions attest.

### **Capacity building outcomes**

#### *Material support and provision*

Many of the cultural traditions in the war-affected areas suffered multiple negative impacts during the three decades of war, but one of the more tangible was the loss of the essential ‘tools’ of the work – instruments, costumes, and scripts. Repeated experiences of displacement had contributed to the loss of these. Support from Sevalanka enabled artists from the war-affected areas in particular to replace the instruments and costumes that were essential for the revival of their performance artforms.

In the displacement they lost *everything* to perform with, they don’t have anything even to *live* with! They had stopped imagining that they could have the chance to perform again, or that they could have a life like that. How could they come up with the things they need, like costumes and instruments? Then Sevalanka provided the essential things and they started to

perform. And it's very happy to talk about, because they are still performing now.

(Navadharshani, Jaffna Music Festival Consultant)

For some performers, the loss of instruments meant the loss of something central to their identity because of the way their performance traditions denoted their caste and position in the social hierarchy. For example:

In the hierarchy and order of society, the *Parayar* people are lower caste. They are very poor and they don't have any recognition without their *Parai* drums. Then they lost their drums in the war. And now [through the Festival] they got their drums and they have the chance to perform and they got the recognition. (Navadharshani, Jaffna Music Festival Consultant)

Therefore, the provision of replacement material goods was a critical first step in reviving the folk performance traditions, particularly in war-affected areas, as it made it possible for the artists to take part in national events like the Jaffna and Galle Music Festivals, and to revive their performance traditions in their home villages. This second revival was arguably the more important, particularly psychologically. Sri Lankan folk traditions are strongly connected to particular places, and successive violent, sudden displacements as a result of wartime events meant that many artists "had stopped imagining that they could have the chance to perform again, or that they could have a life like that" (Navadharshani, Jaffna Music Festival Consultant). The material goods provided in 2011 also coincided with the gradual re-opening of many of those territories from which they had been expelled. This had a powerful psychological benefit, and the next section explores the different ways these benefits were manifested.

#### *Psychological and emotional benefit*

Navadharshani, quoted above, mentions recognition, and this highlights an important psychological outcome of the capacity-building work of the Music Cooperation, that of increased social recognition for musicians and their music. Recognition was one of several psychological and emotional benefits that participant artists attributed to their Music Cooperation experiences.

Many of these outcomes were connected to the turning-around of feelings of insecurity and hopelessness among artists in the war-affected communities. According to Navadharshani, Jaffna University performing arts professor and advisor to the 2011 Jaffna Music Festival, "there was a little bit of inferiority complex. They felt they had not been trained for the stage or had the same performance experiences as the Sinhala artists had". Those working in some folk traditions, such as the all-female Thappu drumming group from Vanni region, felt that their simple folk instruments

denoted them as “working on a different level” to musicians playing more modern instruments (Thappu drumming focus group).

Therefore, artists found an increased sense of esteem and confidence through performing in the high profile Music Festivals and having the aesthetic value of their artform acknowledged and appreciated by others. Groups had the chance to see a new audience respond to their music, and for many, this was an important moment of understanding its wider social value.

All the other performances in the Festival, the people just watch and are sitting. But for our performance, the audience stood up and was dancing! Now we get many more invitations. We have had to become more organized, with bookings in our calendar a long way in advance. (Kaffer Manja focus group)

This increase in esteem and recognition of the aesthetic value of their traditions also occurred *within* ethnic groups. The Parai drummers, for example, were largely unknown. Their music was typically only performed for funerals, and had rarely been appraised for its aesthetic value. And yet they proved to be one of the most memorable performance groups in the 2011 Jaffna Music Festival. Attitudes in their own community shifted, so that after the festival, Jaffna University decided to open an auspicious event with Parai drummers, rather than the higher caste Taval drummers they would typically use. This suggests that the increased sense of esteem and value of the Parai tradition was felt throughout the Tamil community, and not just among the musicians. Later too, the Parai drummers were invited to be part of an international collaboration with German musicians, organized by the Goethe Institute.

Artists were also encouraging of each other, and this raised feelings of esteem and confidence among the performers.

Many artists approached us after the performance. They asked us, where can we learn this drumming. So that was very encouraging. Many foreigners also encouraged and congratulated us. (Thappu drumming focus group)

Some artists saw themselves as representatives of their cultural group, and felt that their pride in their traditions was reinforced and strengthened through sharing them with others. For example, the Kali Kambatam performers were “the only Sri Lanka Muslim group performing at [the 2013] festival, and felt proud that [they] could represent the musical culture of the Muslim community in Sri Lanka”. They believed that their Festival participation had helped build the profile of their performance form, and as a result, there was now inclusion of “musical competitions for Muslims”, alongside those already existing for the Tamil and Sinhalese groups in Sri Lanka. Television

appearances connected to the festival meant that “now the people know who we are” (Kali Kambatam focus group).

For the Thappu drumming group, television coverage also brought about a welcome additional outcome, in the form of newfound community support. Women in Tamil communities rarely play drums or perform in public. There is an element of stigma attached to public performance and “many community people didn’t encourage us” (Thappu drumming focus group). However, after their Festival performance was broadcast on Sri Lankan TV, community attitudes shifted from one of suspicion and disapproval to one of interest and support. “After the publicity, many people enjoyed us doing this drumming, and they want to train their children in playing this drum” (Thappu drumming focus group). This important shift in community attitudes for the group has given the performers increased confidence and pride in their performance work.

Increased esteem and confidence has also helped musicians to act with greater agency and self-determination. The Kaffer Manja artists described the way that their increased confidence and sense of custodianship and responsibility to their ancestors helped them to draw an appropriate boundary for themselves, in response to the many new high-profile performance opportunities that began to come their way:

A famous musician from Colombo came in order to make a CD with us. He suggested that we change our music, to make a new version. But after making the CD lots of other musicians and people in our community criticized us. They said, “Why did you change this music? Why would you change your ancestors’ music?” Later, we were invited to appear on the final episode of the TV program “Superstar”, and they also wanted us to change our music. But by that time we had learned from our experience. We didn’t agree to this, and so we didn’t participate in that program. (Kaffer Manja focus group)

The experience of performing in a Jaffna or Galle Music Festival created for some artists an important emotional release:

Being a victim of that war changed the perspective towards the life we could have had. But then, the invitation [to the Festival] was given, financial support was given, and it was a good feeling after all those bad things that happened. And we felt a great relief to be able to see our own place after a long time of displacement, and also to be able to perform freely and express our feelings of sorrow, hopelessness. All the stuffed-in, dead feelings were let out and it was like being able to breathe freely again. (Kovalan Kooththu focus group, Mullaitivu district)

So much of the artists' identity was bound up in their custodianship of the ancestral traditions, with their traditional homelands, and with the social rituals and festivals with which their performance traditions had always been associated. The three decades of war had devastated these links and interconnections, through displacement and material loss, but also through things such as curfews and limited freedom of movement. "We lost the night during the war," one participant explained "I think that psychologically, these performances of folk traditions were very essential for recreating our society and our minds" (Navadharshani, Jaffna Music Festival Consultant). Therefore, for many artists from the war-affected communities, there were multiple real and perceived barriers to recreating their traditions anew, and the opportunity to revive them produced significant beneficial psychological, emotional and social impacts.

#### *Shift towards future-oriented thinking*

For many of the artists in the 2011 Jaffna Music Festival the opportunity to perform was, in itself, transformational, and triggered many new possibilities. There was an evident shift towards more future-oriented thinking for many of the artists.

When we were given than kind of chance to perform in the festival, it changed our psychological satisfaction towards our future and towards everything. We now had something to do, to take charge of. (Kovalan Kooththu focus group, Mullaitivu district)

Outside observers like Navadharshani also observed this shift towards optimism and possibility, particularly among the artists from war-affected communities. "It gave them inspiration to perform more, and to guard these traditions. Many had not performed for more than 20 years. And now through the Music Cooperation they had the village-level performances, and also the Festivals".

This future-oriented thinking was characterized in different ways. For some artists, it was focused on new conceptualizations of their music and how they could use it more widely in their communities.

Through the festival we realized we can change the hearts and emotions of the people through this drum, and that it could be part of the healing process. After this, we began to include the drums in our Playback Theatre work in the community. (Thappu drumming focus group)

For others, it was recognition of the fact that they needed to prioritise the training of the next generation of musicians – both in order to preserve the tradition and to meet the new demand for performances.

We realized we need to develop our younger generation too so that they can do the performances too. We are not quite sure of our future because our younger generation is going for different jobs, some in other countries. But we wish that it can continue because this is our music, only we have this music, and you will only hear it here. So the most important thing is to train the younger generation and keep the music traditions strong.  
(Kaffer Manja focus group)

All artists described the way that their Music Cooperation participation had led to further invitations to perform on new stages, setting in train a continuation of future planning and imagining. However, this made the question of training the next generation of performers even more urgent. While the capacity-building of the Music Cooperation does not resolve this, it is important that it has facilitated engagement with this topic, and offered support towards some solutions. One of these is ensuring a consistent level of public valuing and recognition of the artforms, as discussed above.

In summary, while capacity building is not a reconciliation process in itself, it serves to support engagement with reconciliation processes. This is because openness to inter-ethnic reconciliation is predicated on a sense of equality between the groups, and capacity-building has supported artists to present high-quality work and feel proud and deserving of inclusion among the country's artists and performers. They have benefited from feeling their community's pride in their performances, as well as building an externally-validated picture of the importance of what they contribute to their community and to Sri Lankan society. They have been able to experience and enjoy recognition of this contribution. From these more secure psychological and emotional foundations, they are better placed to build relationships and engage in exchanges with artists from other Sri Lankan communities.

# **Section 4: Planning and organizing Music for Reconciliation programs**

Many of the issues raised in Section 3, particularly in relation to the barriers experienced around generation of affective ties and cultural learning among artist-participants in Music for Reconciliation programs like the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation, have implications for organizers of these kinds of activities and programs. The barriers noted include issues around time spent in intergroup activities, communication issues, financial issues and those of cultural valuing of skills, interpersonal skills, shyness and other social inhibitions, and the need to address more subtle issues of equality (and perception of equality) among intergroup contact participants.

This section extrapolates from the findings to discuss issues that can arise for organizers of Music for Reconciliation projects, using the theoretical frameworks offered by reconciliation theories and Intergroup Contact Theory. Here, the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation is the case in focus, but the section takes the form of a discussion of key considerations that have application to other sites and other projects where music as a reconciliation tool is being used.

## **Music Development and Music for Reconciliation**

A discussion of how to better plan and organize for Music for Reconciliation must open with an explication of how such a programming approach differs from Music Development activities. This research began by asking:

*How do the music development activities of the Music Cooperation support reconciliation in Sri Lanka?*

The artist perspectives shared in the ‘Findings’ section indicate that across the three principle areas of focus (cultural learning, generation of affective ties, and capacity building), there are examples that indicate the potential of music activities to impact each of these. However, particularly in the social dimension of building friendships, significant barriers remain. These can be addressed through programming decisions and clearer identification of strategic priorities, but for this to happen, a clearer delineation between a ‘Music Development’ approach to programming and a ‘Music for Reconciliation’ approach is required.

This is because the work of Music Development and Music for Reconciliation diverges at a number of critical junctures, which has implications for decisions around artist selection and programming, scheduling and planning, in addition to the actual content of activities that are taking place.

Consider, for example, the question of reach and artist inclusion. A music development goal may be to create greater recognition and performance opportunities for as wide a range of folk performance forms as possible. This suggests a programming strategy of including as many *different* artists and groups in the annual festivals, and sharing the performance opportunities around.

However, a ‘music for reconciliation’ programming strategy would prioritize identified mechanisms for reconciliation, such as the building of meaningful social connections and bonds between artists, and enable these to be strengthened over multiple occasions to meet and talk. Music development is the overt reason for the gathering, but the intention towards the generation of affective ties would be enacted in the breaks and programmed periods of unstructured but scheduled ‘hang out time’, and this would require a very different approach to artist inclusion (repeat visits rather than spreading opportunities wide, targeting of specific communities in order to address identified social issues around division and reconciliation), and scheduling.

There are many other examples of how a strategic prioritization of Music for Reconciliation over music development will trigger different decisions and allocations of funds:

<b>Music Development</b>	<b>Music for Reconciliation</b>
Objective is to revive traditional performance forms, build capacity, and professionalism	Objective is to create opportunities for cultural learning, social bonds, and other reconciliation processes (e.g. healing, truth-telling)
Ideal is to include diverse artists and share the opportunities as widely as possible	Ideal is to facilitate and support stronger relationships and potential for exchanges and collaborations between artists over time. Equal group status is an important condition.
Selects artists according to audience interest and artist capacity	Selects artists according to potential for social change and impact among artists and their communities. Decisions are informed by ongoing conflict/needs analysis of potential sites/target groups.
One-off nature of activities works well as a way to spread the opportunities widely	Activities need to be programmed as events within a larger, long-term strategic engagement, with multiple opportunities to participate
Training activities for artists are focused on improving performance with audience and in the venue. Professionals may or may not take part in these training activities.	Training activities are focused on both performance and communication skills, with a view to 'what happens next' in their communities and through further exchanges. Professionals may be less engaged with this goal.
The underpinning Theory of Change sees revival of endangered performance forms and greater professionalism bringing more audiences, and spreading the opportunities for cultural learning among audiences	The underpinning Theory of Change sees activities supporting the creation of stronger cross-community bonds, links, and friendship, and more nuanced intercultural understanding over a long period of time. Professionalism and revival of performance traditions builds identity and esteem, creating a stronger foundation for reconciliation.

**Table 3: Music Development and Music For Reconciliation**

In music projects it can be difficult to select one approach over the other—the limited financial support for cultural work in aid and development contexts means that aligning with donor priorities may be the only way to get financial support for artistic development. Music, like other creative arts, lends itself well to multiple goals, because of the range of social by-products a single event can be seen to generate. However, by-products are often ambiguous and therefore more difficult to manage, measure, and validate. This has implications for demonstrating impact and effectiveness to donors.

Interestingly, there are strong arguments for having a communications strategy that refers only obliquely to reconciliation goals. In Sri Lanka there is residual distrust of projects branded as “reconciliation projects” due to past experiences of these being appropriated for political rather than

community gain. By positioning itself as a Music Development program, the Music Cooperation has been able to successfully sideline such negative perceptions and ensure support and engagement from artists. And, as highlighted in section 3, the capacity-building work of music development makes an important ground-laying contribution to the viability of reconciliation processes.

These last two points demonstrate that seeing Music Development and Music for Reconciliation as mutually-excluding approaches is unhelpful, for they share many common practices and have underpinning theories of change that are mutually supportive. Rather, the key point is the importance of recognizing where the two approaches diverge, and ensuring clear communications and planning that anticipates and accommodates these more strategically.

### **Cross-cutting programmatic foci**

A key initial step in developing more strategic planning and programming for Music for Reconciliation activities is ensuring the key processes relating to reconciliation remain in focus and prioritized for each proposed activity (social bonds, cultural learning, and capacity building). The two reconciliation processes identified in the conceptual framework, and the third that establishes (or enhances) suitable emotional and psychological terrain among artists, need to be recognized as central, focusing objectives that cut across all planned activities.

The Music Cooperation's experiences suggest that when the strategic objectives relating to reconciliation do not remain in the foreground (particularly in an environment where overt references to reconciliation, such as in the title of the event or the activities, could lead to distrust and suspicion of government co-option of artists) it is more likely that some of programming and scheduling decisions could shift towards those connected to Music Development rather than Music for Reconciliation. Projects may be initiated that are not strongly aligned with the overall strategic priorities.

The cross-cutting foci of social bonds, cultural learning, and capacity building will also inform choice of indicators for evaluation purposes. The findings of this research suggest that 'reconciliation' cannot be assumed to have occurred merely through the presence of ethnically-diverse groups in the one activity. Rather, indicators that show a change in social relationships, cultural knowledge, or sense of equal status and value will offer more robust indications of change-orientation.

## Programming for repeated and prolonged engagements

The artist interviews raised several important barriers to reconciliation processes for organizers of Music for Reconciliation projects to consider. The first of these, and the most frequently reiterated, was the importance of time. The interviews revealed that the reconciliation processes do not take place during performance times, but during *down-time* – during breaks, meals, and occasions where artists are together but not engaged in structured activities. Therefore, programming and scheduling needs to strategically plan for, and accommodate repeated and (when possible) prolonged opportunities for artists to mix and interact informally.

Recollections of the 2011 Jaffna Festival were indicative of this. Artists recalled that living in a shared space for three consecutive days, allowing them to wander and visit other artists and take part in spontaneous skills exchanges and jams, was highly meaningful and pleasurable experiences. They observed each other's performances and soundchecks, shared meals, and spent their leisure time together. There was a luxury of time for these interactions which allowed individuals to engage and retreat as they so desired, offering an important level of emotional safety in that potentially fraught post-war time.

In contrast, artists in the 2016 Galle Music Festival had only fleeting opportunities to meet and mix. They were rarely at the same place at the same time, given the large number of artists and the logistics involved in moving them between soundchecks, rehearsal venues, and the stage in an extremely limited timeframe. Very few artist groups were able to stay for the duration of the Festival, and thus did not see each other's performances, nor have opportunity to converse or exchange skills. A 'Music for Reconciliation' approach might have responded to the limited timeframe in different ways, prioritizing artist interactions more substantively and looking for opportunities for groups to share their downtime in the same space.

Many of the artists interviewed spoke of cultural learning, but always in terms of what they were exposed to (different instruments, different folk forms), rather than how they were changed or influenced by the experience. This suggests that the exposures they had to other groups were effective in planting seeds of interest and awareness of other cultural knowledge; however, taking this as evidence of deeper cultural learning is more problematic. Deep intercultural learning, like the forming of friendships, requires time. It is an iterative and accumulative process that depends upon many variables (such as environment, timeframes of exposure, socio-cultural context, interest and predisposition toward learning, and so on) in addition to the inputs within organisational control.

Ultimately, learning and social bonding need to continue beyond the festivals, and providing scheduled but unstructured downtime during festival programs is only the first step. Artist interviews indicated that subsequent exchanges and collaborations between artists that followed the initial festival interactions and shared performances were more likely sites where firmer social bonds and learning exchanges would be nurtured. However it was clear that multiple barriers impeded those that wished to continue their connections. While the concerns raised were financial (the need to pay artists, and to make up for incomes lost while away from home), the testimony of one group (Kovalan Koothu) suggested there was also a lack of templates or models for artist-led partnerships and exchanges that appropriately valued artist skills without requiring substantial financial support.

Organisations should therefore explore possible models for continued artist exchanges, developing essential scaffolding templates that encourage strong artist ownership and independence. I use the term ‘scaffolding’ in the educational sense, because the expectation and design should be that in time, this support would be removed so that the exchange can be maintained without the need for external drivers, and for the artist communities’ mutual benefit. Scaffolded supports could be financial (e.g. incentive grants to cover costs), organizational and logistical (helping artists to plan and coordinate the different aspects of exchanges and local performances); and communicative (facilitating dialogue across language barriers).

The short-term nature of the majority of the Music Cooperation’s activities thus far (with their emphasis on spreading opportunities widely) provide only limited opportunities for audiences or artists to have a deeper longer-term engagement or robust grappling with the cultural knowledge being presented. Rather, the Music Cooperation has effectively *planted seeds* for new ideas and exposures, and offered short bursts of stimulation and recognition. These are important components of the learning process, but ideally would occur within a multi-engagement framework of cultural learning and social bonding opportunities that provide repeated and prolonged opportunities for engagement.

### **Focus on the micro and meso levels**

The findings also indicated the levels of society to which music might be able to contribute most effectively. Artist experiences indicated that the most meaningful and memorable interactions of either a social or cultural learning nature took place between individuals or small groups of artists. While the Music Festivals created the opportunity for exposure and proximity to new people, the actual interactions that took place involved only small numbers of people at a time. This suggests

that the reconciliation processes most pertinent to the Music Cooperation are more likely to occur on the micro (individual) and meso (community) levels, rather than the macro (societal) level. This finding concurs with Bloomfield's (2006) identification of the likely sites of occurrence of interpersonal reconciliation.

Therefore, organizers should focus greater attention on programming activities at the micro and meso levels as the sites where direct and sustained change has the greater likelihood of taking place. These should be intercultural collaborations that take place over a number of days, are bottom-up rather than top-down, and involve artists working together on cooperative projects with common goals. Such an approach would also benefit from a conceptual reframing of events at the national level as strong sites for initial exposure and inspiration, as well as celebratory recognition of achievement. Artists would move through activities at each of these levels (local, regional, and national) in a fluid trajectory of experiences that enhance their opportunities for strengthened cross-community bonds and deeper intercultural learning.

For example, a number of Music Cooperation activities take place at the national level, such as the annual Galle/Jaffna Music Festival and the radio broadcasts. While these have the potential to seed affective ties and nurture cultural learning, they cannot match the frequency and intensity of interactions at the micro and meso levels, nor the multiple mechanisms and pathways (sensory, embodied, cognitive, emotional, social) that are important supports of deep interactions. These national-level programs therefore less likely sites for any direct sustained change.

They do however serve important purposes for both initiating and augmenting social bonding and cultural learning. The Festivals, for example, can be valuable sites for both seeding potential collaborations between different artist groups, allowing them to meet and interact within a larger context, before any commitment to further work has been made. They are also suitably celebratory events that can serve to showcase original work, established artists, and the outcomes of collaborations between paired artist groups. Meanwhile, national radio broadcasts of diverse traditional folk musics, in two languages and focused on increasing cross-cultural knowledge and awareness, can be a valuable vehicle for showcasing groups, inspiring and enhancing public learning, while generating and feeding individual curiosity, interest, and pride. Planning and investment should therefore reflect the role of national endeavours as *secondary* rather than *primary* reconciliation sites, and greater priority (e.g. frequency and intensity) given to those activities at the micro and meso level.

## **Festivals as reconciliation vehicles**

This analysis of societal impact leads to the question of how, or in what ways, a festival event can most effectively be employed as a reconciliation vehicle. Reconciliation is a long-term, complex and multi-layered process, while festivals are by their nature short-lived and time-bound. This limits a festival's capacity to generate sustained changes among either audiences or artist participants despite the propensity to inspire feelings of euphoria, unity, and a powerful sense of shared joy. Such a mismatch points to the need for a more strategic understanding of the festival's role in Music for Reconciliation programming.

There are many different Festival models to consider. The 2016 Galle Music Festival illustrated two potential models – the Evening Programme, with its purpose-built stage, professional-quality sound and light, and high production values; and the Morning Programme, held in a local market place and more informal and intimate in nature. These provide useful contrast for the purposes of this discussion of music festivals as vehicles for reconciliation.



**Picture 4: 2016 Galle Music Festival, Evening Programme (Photo by G. Howell)**

If reconciliation is the overall objective, then organizers must identify if the target group is the audience, or the artists. Which of these models offers the strongest or most likely benefits for artists, and which for audiences? If 'artists' are folk performers rather than professionals (based upon the finding that professionals tended to be far less engaged with the reconciliation and social goals of festival events), then their skills and capacity to engage audiences must also be considered.

Arguably, the high production values of the Evening Programme serve audience needs, accommodating large crowds and creating the atmosphere for a ‘big night out’, a memorable event, and potential to create the synchronous music euphoria that a festival event can produce. However, this kind of single-use infrastructure may not best support the artists’ strengths. It can be challenging for artists more experienced with the intimacy of community performances to communicate and engage with an audience across such a large space. Some commentators in 2016 questioned the scale of the Evening Programme of the Galle Music Festival, given its high costs, and occasional incompatibility between audience and artist needs<sup>20</sup>.

The Morning Programme of the 2016 Festival was arguably a more promising performance space for many of the folk artists. It provided flexible and intimate spaces in which to perform, while still accessing a diverse audience of all ages. The ‘market stall’ spaces in which the different artist groups were based were potential locations for workshops with passing audience members, skills exchanges with other artists, and social spaces. This festival model showed great potential to provide performance space that doubled as a social and learning space for the artists. The main weakness in 2016 was that only a small number of artists were invited to perform in the program.



**Picture 5: Mullaitivu group performing in the 2016 Morning Programme (Photo by G. Howell)**

The responses to the 2016 Artist Survey suggest there is great optimism around the annual Music Festival event as a vehicle for reconciliation. 100% of artists felt that “they were taking part in

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<sup>20</sup> Several staff members from both implementing partners made this comment, both informally and formally in the days following the 2016 Galle Music Festival. Some reported hearing similar comments from others in the audience.

something meaningful”<sup>21</sup>, and a similar number (98%) agreed that it gave them an important psychological and emotional boost to perform their music on this stage<sup>22</sup>. The vast majority of 2016 audience survey respondents (88%) saw folk forms in performance that were new to them, and 87% felt that music was an effective way to bring people from different ethnic groups together following the war years. It was clear, through the survey and interview data, that many people are strongly invested in the continuation of a Music Festival as a way of bringing communities together, although not necessarily as a national event in the style of the current model.

Ultimately, a festival’s capacity to generate reconciliation outcomes will always be limited if it is not strategically linked to other activities. Organisers therefore should reframe festivals as important events within a larger Music for Reconciliation program, recognizing the limitations of one-off events in delivering sustained social change, but as powerful vehicles for bringing people together. Festivals can be framed as culminating events (celebrating achievements and work that has developed over a longer timeframe) or as initial jump-off galvanizers (energizing, inspiring and connecting people prior to further scaffolded development programs). High production values, even for local and regional events, afford status and importance to the work of folk artists, showcasing them in attractive ways for new audiences and allowing them to proudly claim their place in that arena alongside more mainstream and festival-experienced artists. However, performance venues should be of a scale that works to artists’ strengths.

## **Initial field analysis**

In order to fully exploit the potential of festivals and other intercultural music activities, Music for Reconciliation organizers should also undertake some kind of field analysis that assesses where conflicts linger, and who should be reconciling with whom. An early ‘conflict analysis’<sup>23</sup> is a critical step in order to best understand who or where to target, the kinds of activities to program, identifying better entry points for programming, and the kinds of change that might indicate the reconciliation objectives have been met (Herrington, 2015).

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<sup>21</sup> To the statement “I felt I was participating in a significant and meaningful event”, 65% of respondents answered “Strongly agree” and 35% answered “Somewhat agree”.

<sup>22</sup> To the statement “Performing the music of my community to these new audiences gives me a positive psychological or emotional experience”, 73% of artists answered “Strongly agree”, 25% answered “Somewhat agree”, and 2% did not give an answer.

<sup>23</sup> This may not be the most appropriate term, as reconciliation activities can also take place as preventative, or relationship-building actions. Organisers may prefer to undertake a ‘needs analysis’, ‘benefits analysis’ or ‘site assessment’ or similar. The key point is of the importance of clearly identifying the desired change, and theory of change that connects the assessed situation to the intended change, by means of the activity.

A targeted approach need not only consider sites of lingering conflict. It can also highlight those locations where other reconciliation work is already underway (for example, in Sri Lanka working in schools with proactive bilingual language curriculum in place, or that are working with the recently introduced ‘Citizenship’ curriculum) in order to reinforce messages and augment a multi-faceted program of change. A focus on those localities addresses one of the essential conditions of contact theory, that of aiming to work in environments where “wider social norms support equality” (Hewstone, 2003, p. 352), rather than where division and conflict is entrenched and normalized through political and communal discourse.

What should we make of the fact that artists report being ‘not in conflict’ and in fact eager and open to work with artists from other ethnic groups? If, as the Kovalan Koothu focus group found, “most of the folk artists are not very much into politics”, are they a suitable investment for reconciliation purposes? Intergroup Contact Theory research would suggest that they are, given the evidence that has found that *indirect* contact can also lead to reduced prejudice and hostility (Hewstone, 2003 citing Wright et al., 1997; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Pettigrew et al., 2011). Indirect contact refers to ‘friends of friends’: if Person A knows that their trusted friend has a good relationship with someone from the ‘out-group’, then Person A’s feelings of prejudice towards the out-group can begin to reduce. Put more simply, ‘the friend of my friend is (or can be) my friend’. Folk artists are often respected and valued members of their communities, recognized for their commitment to protecting the local traditions and role in significant rituals; they are therefore be well-placed to influence others and thus help to transform any generally-held prejudices towards the out-group within their community.

### **Collaboration, learning, and equal group status**

One programming strand that gained traction in the 2016 Music Cooperation activities was that of inter-communal collaborations. These projects brought artist groups from different ethno-religious backgrounds together to collaborate on a musical item for the Galle Music Festival, and showed strong potential as vehicles for reconciliation. This was in part through the cultural skills exchanges that took place as the performance work evolved, but also because they satisfied many of the conditions for successful intergroup contact, particularly in terms of shared “downtime” in which friendships could begin to form.

Two collaborations from the 2016 program were included in the research and are examined here<sup>24</sup>. The first, “Musical Meeting Spaces”, involved students from three different universities, travelling to Colombo for an intensive weekend of rehearsals. The second was a drumming collaboration in which two ensembles (one from Colombo performing classical Kandyan drumming, and the other from Kilinochchi, a war-affected area, involving an ensemble of Thappu drummers, seen in Pictures 2 and 3), who met for the first time and worked together for two days in the week leading up to the Galle Music Festival.

However, the collaboration models also revealed limitations. The researcher observed that equal group status, for example, may have been less assured in the drumming collaboration given that the two groups worked in the Colombo group’s ‘home space’, worked with musical material that the Colombo group had chosen, and that was directed by the artistic director of the Colombo group, with the Kilinochchi group being much younger, with different previous performance experiences, and without their own artistic director present to assume a co-director role. This imbalance also reflected the dominant power asymmetry across Sri Lankan society more broadly, with the Colombo group coming from the Sinhalese Buddhist majority, and the Kilinochchi group representing the Northern, Hindu Tamil minority. Both groups took part in the collaboration with eagerness and openness, and if these power imbalances were felt they did not result in any obvious issues or unhappiness. However, the researcher considered that, should they have wished to raise concerns or propose alternative ideas, social norms affording seniority and authority might have limited the younger Kilinochchi drummers’ possible channels for collaborative dialogue and alternative suggestions.

Following their well-received performance, members of all the collaborative groups eagerly shared ideas to work together again, and this demonstrates the importance of these kinds of skills exchanges and artistic collaborations being planned to take place over an extended timeframe, rather than as a single event. A strategic focus on Music For Reconciliation would see the initial performance as the first collaboration of a planned trajectory of engagement.

Of the two collaborations observed as part of this research, the Musical Meeting Spaces model was more successful at building on opportunities for reconciliation processes (social bonds and cultural learning). The students shared accommodation and meals during their weekend of workshops. They each performed in songs and dances from other cultural groups, learning these as they went.

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<sup>24</sup> While the Galle Music Festival program included a further two collaborative performances, these involved artists that had worked together before and did not arise as a result of a Sevalanka commission.

Furthermore, an outside artist (unaligned with any of the universities) was engaged to artistically direct the project. Students and faculty members from all three universities were thus engaged as both learners and leaders throughout the process, ensuring greater equality between the groups.

In terms of presenting opportunities for embedded reconciliation mechanisms, intercultural collaborations offer a great deal of potential. They bring artists together for longer periods of time, where they are working to realize a project of mutual interest, which requires their different skills and knowledge. Through the integrative and collaborative work, they learn about each other's musical traditions, and often begin to teach and exchange. The working process includes periods of downtime, where social bonds can evolve in an organic way. However, as with the festivals, strategic focus on Music for Reconciliation will recognize that sustained change occurs through repeated and prolonged exposures, and this must be accommodated in longterm planning and scheduling.

### **Communication challenges**

Language barriers were significant for many of the artists interviewed, reflecting the considerable linguistic complexity of contemporary Sri Lanka. Monolingual artists were far less likely to be able to build relationships with their counterparts from other ethnic groups. The Music Cooperation organizations expanded considerable efforts to address this, providing bilingual interpreters to those artists working collaboratively across two language groups.

The reliance on interpreters revealed the critical difference that proactive interpreting could make. Proactive interpreters translated throughout, rather than summarizing at the end of a statement or conversation. This facilitated the groups' capacity to converse with each other, rather than with the interpreter (as tended to happen if interpreters worked in 'summary' mode, translating large chunks of dialogue as summaries, and in the third person). Proactive interpreters anticipated when they would be needed, following dialogue rather than waiting until they were called upon. Proactive interpreters also matched the energy and tone being conveyed by each speaker, helping to build dialogue and cross-group connections.

Interviewed artists also noted the benefits of intergroup warm-ups and workshop activities that helped them explore ways of communicating with each other non-verbally, through being alert to gesture, eye contact, and body language. These activities helped to create a sense of unity and shared goals across the groups, encouraging laughter and willingness to experiment with different communication methods.

Organisers are therefore encouraged to brief any interpreters on their role as *facilitating conversation between artists* rather than just conveying information, and to take a proactive stance in this. Programming activities that encourage artists to interact in playful, low-stakes activities at the beginning of any intergroup activities may also reap benefits in helping those artists that are ready to initiate contact to break the ice and start conversations. These steps will not alleviate the language barriers that exist but will help to mitigate some of the associated challenges.

### **Identifying the mechanisms for change through music**

A desired goal of this research was to identify the prime mechanisms that support reconciliation processes. Here, Intergroup Contact Theory has provided helpful guidance (Hewstone, 2003; Pettigrew et al., 2011), as it identifies essential conditions, likely mediators (mechanisms), and important moderators or environmental factors. Table 2 in Section 1, offers a succinct summary of the theory and these components.

The intended mechanisms (as social psychology’s ‘*mediators*’ are more commonly called in international development planning) need to underpin decisions about program content. The mechanisms through which intergroup contact can lead to improved intergroup relations and reduced prejudice are in fact the same for artists and festival audiences; however, the capacity of the Music Cooperation to ensure the provision of these varies in terms of program design elements. The following Tables 4 and 5 offer an overview of these:

*For artists and program participants*

<b>Mechanisms</b>	<b>Program design elements that deliver these</b>
Learning about the other group(s)	<p>Opportunities to see and hear performances of other groups</p> <p>Opportunities to discuss and exchange knowledge; teach skills informally</p> <p>Opportunities to collaborate and integrate performance styles</p>
Generating affective ties and friendships	<p>Ensuring selected artists have repeated and prolonged opportunities to meet other artists, within the timeframe of Music Cooperation activities as well as through participating in consecutive Festivals and activities.</p> <p>During ‘downtime’: Shared meals, breaks during rehearsals, same accommodation with space for meeting and casual conversations, shared travel and transport.</p> <p>Provision of contact lists with email addresses, phone numbers (opt-in</p>

	<p>mechanism) following events such as festivals, workshops.</p> <p>Provision of proactive, engaged interpreters who facilitate and anticipate opportunities for conversations between artists</p> <p>Support for continued contacts, e.g. travel funds, funding for visits to each other's communities, 'incentive grants' for musician-initiated intergroup projects</p>
Behaviour-driven attitude change	<p>By participating in cooperative (i.e. not competitive), positive, intergroup tasks (e.g. music collaborations, performances in 'paired' towns and villages; skills exchanges)</p> <p>These may be <b>facilitated</b> collaborations and exchanges or <b>artist-initiated</b>, supported by incentive grants from the Music Cooperation.</p>
In-group reappraisal	<p>This refers to the process of recognizing that one's own group may not have all the answers or all the information; it is a by-product of other program activities in the Music Cooperation.</p>

**Table 4: Primary mechanisms and program design possibilities for artists**

*For audiences*

Mechanisms for audiences are far more fleeting and less assured within the program design.

<b>Mechanisms</b>	<b>Program design elements that deliver these</b>
Learning about the other group(s)	<p>Opportunities to see and hear performances of diverse groups</p> <p>Opportunities to discuss and exchange knowledge; teach skills informally in a workshop setting during festivals</p>
Generating affective ties and friendships	<p>This is a potential by-product of attending the festival. Friendships may be formed with other audience members and with artists. However, it is impractical to facilitate this beyond programming actual content.</p>
Behaviour-driven attitude change	<p>A possible by-product of attending the festival, but not something to measure, beyond general survey question about attitudes (see 2016 Audience Survey for examples)</p>
In-group reappraisal	<p>This refers to the process of recognizing that one's own group may not have all the answers or all the information; it is a by-product of other program activities in the Music Cooperation.</p>

**Table 5: Primary mechanisms and program design elements for audiences**

This model of how Intergroup Contact Theory can be applied to the content of music activities concludes this discussion of issues for organizers of Music for Reconciliation initiatives to consider.

This section began with consideration of Music for Reconciliation as a distinct approach to planning and programming, and has pinpointed a number of important areas of critical interest for organizers, from questions around when activities happen, their frequency and length, who takes part and what they are engaged in, where activities and programs are focused in relation to social needs and likely benefit, what kinds of music activities to include, and important considerations for doing intercultural music for reconciliation effectively. Throughout, arguments have been framed in terms of the empirical data and informed by the theoretical frameworks discussed in Section 1. The final section of this report, *Next steps, Recommendations, and Conclusions*, continues in this action-oriented vein, re-evaluating the work of the Music Cooperation in the light of these findings and making a series of recommendations for future action.

## Section 5: Next steps, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The idea of using music as a tool for reconciliation is innovative, and the work of the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation has been effective in bringing artists together from across the country in shared events that have planted the seeds for potential friendships and cultural learning, and helped to build the profile and skills base of traditional folk performers. However, the findings of this research suggest that some important opportunities remain for generating stronger reconciliation outcomes through a more strategic approach to planning and programming, and these were discussed in general terms in Section 4.

The key learnings from the research can be summarized as follows:

### **LEARNING ONE:**

Reconciliation in the Music Cooperation takes place in the *interpersonal* domain. It is a process of relationship-building, and thus occurs between people, rather than imposed through programs. Like any kind of learning, it cannot be forced, but is facilitated through supportive and carefully-planned environments, and generous program timeframes.

### **LEARNING TWO:**

The generation of affective ties and friendships, and cultural learning that leads towards more nuanced understanding of the out-group, are the primary reconciliation processes at work here.

### **LEARNING THREE:**

In the context of shared music activities, reconciliation processes happen in downtime, and therefore opportunities for *scheduled, unstructured* social interactions, and multiple occasions to meet and work cooperatively are essential. Reconciliation processes are most effectively facilitated at the micro and meso levels of society.

#### **LEARNING FOUR:**

The capacity-building aspects of music development are important contributors to Music for Reconciliation (because capacity-building of music skills and experiences supports more equal status between artist groups). However, there are key points of divergence between Music Development and Music for Reconciliation approaches that, if overlooked, greatly limit the music activity's potential to contribute to reconciliation outcomes.

#### **LEARNING FIVE:**

Reconciliation is a long-term and gradual social change and needs to be planned strategically, rather than left to simply occur as an organic and assumed by-product of intergroup music activities.

These are applicable across other contexts and offer a firm foundation for new initiatives in using music to address reconciliation needs. Beyond these learnings however, this research project into the nexus between music and reconciliation in Sri Lanka intends to serve the very practical purpose of providing the implementing partner agencies with timely reflective material on the SLNMC's achievements thus far, and suggestions for how to more effectively deliver the remainder of the planned program.

### **Recommendations for future action**

With over a year of the current funding for the Music Cooperation still to run, this report concludes with a number of recommendations specific to the Music Cooperation, each of which propose strategies for strengthening the reconciliation outcomes connected to the Music Cooperation's activities. If adopted, these steps will more clearly align the Music Cooperation activities with a Music For Reconciliation approach.

### **Recommendation 1 – Tighten programmatic focus towards Music for Reconciliation**

Each activity that the Music Cooperation should be delivering on one or more of the three cross-cutting foci (cross-cutting in that they apply equally to all program strands and activities within the Music Cooperation rather than as discrete programmatic strands). These are **generation of social bonds, cultural learning, and capacity building**, where the first two are key processes of reconciliation, and the third is important groundwork for optimizing reconciliation processes.

How would this look in practice for the Music Cooperation organizers? At the initial stage of proposing and conceptualizing an activity, its capacity to deliver outcomes in relation to these three reconciliation processes should be assessed and recorded. Activities that do not address at least one of these three objectives could not be considered strategic priorities. Throughout, organisers must remain mindful of the conditions, mechanisms and moderators that support reduction in intergroup prejudice and anxiety, aligning these with specific programming strategies (as demonstrated in Section 4).

### **Recommendation 2 – Strategically identify and engage key artists and sites**

Decision-making around selection of artists and sites should follow an internal logic related to Music for Reconciliation, rather than Music Development. This can include an initial ‘field analysis’ (or conflict analysis) at the concept and planning stages, so as to ensure that the project is appropriately targeted and matched to the needs of the community and participants. Such an internal logic does not subsume consideration of many curatorial and aesthetic factors including audience experience, variety and contrast, artist development needs, thematic considerations, and program balance. Rather, it should help to narrow the scope of who and what to include in the program by including identified reconciliation (rather than artistic or aesthetic) needs, and ensuring these are foregrounded in the selection and programming process.

Appendix C is an Artist Selection tool that lists relevant criteria for consideration. The use of consistent tools will ensure a more systematic and transparent process for navigating the many complicated and competing considerations that are at play in a Music for Reconciliation (or other arts-based social change) approach. The Artist Selection tool also invites assessors to articulate the (evolving) theory of change that is informing their decisions, as consideration of this can help to strengthen the internal logic underpinning artist selection processes.

Site selection for Music Cooperation activities is also critical. Section 4 discussed the way that the pertinent reconciliation processes of interpersonal reconciliation (Bloomfield, 2006; Cohen, 2005) are more likely to occur and deliver substantive changes at the micro and meso societal levels,

translating to local, inter-communal, and regional levels in Sri Lanka. Both the key reconciliation processes that are the focus here depend on *frequency* and *intensity* of exposure for their effects to be felt. Activities that are smaller in scale, take place on multiple occasions involving the same people, that last for longer periods of time and create opportunities for more meaningful interactions (e.g. intergroup collaborative tasks and common goals, rather than fleeting and superficial social encounters), have by far the strongest potential to promote reconciliatory processes of social bonding and cultural learning.

### **Recommendation 3 – Reconceptualise and plan activities so that each exists in a trajectory of artist opportunities and experiences**

This recommendation addresses the need for artists to maintain links (social and artistic) beyond the timeframe of their Music Cooperation participation, which this research has found to be a critical gap in the Music Cooperation's capacity to realize reconciliation outcomes. Rather than being seen as discrete events, all activities within the Music Cooperation should be seen as connected, with opportunities for artists to move from one activity to another in order to strengthen social bonds with other artists and maintain opportunities for intercultural learning and understanding.

A 'trajectory of artist opportunities and experiences' involves opportunities for performance and development at the local level, inter-communal pairings, exchanges, and collaborations with similar-profile groups from other ethno-linguistic regions, and regional gatherings such as festivals. Regional festivals would serve the same function as the current Jaffna/Galle Music Festival model, but be smaller in scale, working in local performance spaces (rather than with a purpose-built stage) more suited to the intimate artist-audience communication style of many of the folk performers, while maintaining the high production of values of lighting and sound that are a feature of the current national festival model.

Projects and activities in the **Local** strand (such as the current village-level festivals) are important for strengthening intra-cultural learning and building the capacity of performers so as to boost group esteem, agency, and skills. These create strong foundations for future intercultural engagements. Projects and activities such as inter-communal **Pairings, Exchanges, and Collaborations** are similarly small in scale, but their relatively nimble nature and potential to be artist-driven and shaped makes them promising vehicles for reconciliation processes, provided the conditions, mechanisms, and moderators of Intergroup Contact Theory are addressed. Projects and activities at the **Regional** level bring together artists and audiences from multiple villages within a specified region (district or province). Regional events function as showcase and collaboration/friendship seeding opportunities for artists. Note though, that the reconciliation

potential of Regional level activities depends on the fluidity of relationship with activities and artists at the Paired and Local strand levels, with frequent potential for artists to interact with each other at each stage apart from the local.<sup>25</sup>

Projects and activities in the **National** strand are those associated with the Folk Music Conservation Library, which provides opportunities for artists to share their performance traditions across the whole country. Artists may interact intermittently with the National program strand throughout their Music Cooperation engagement.

Such an approach would see the majority of participant artists having multiple opportunities for involvement, and this would likely necessitate a reduction in overall numbers of artists involved. For this reason it is essential that artists and sites are carefully selected following a reconciliation-focused field analysis or similar process, to facilitate substantive changes related to reconciliation.

#### **Recommendation 4 – Introduce technical support and funding for artist-led initiatives**

Scholars and practitioners in the fields of music, reconciliation, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation acknowledge the importance of ensuring local ownership and bottom-up organizing of efforts to bring divided communities together through cooperative projects, dialogue, and commitment to shared goals (Anderson, 1999; Bergh, 2010; Haider, 2012; Lederach, Neufeldt, & Culbertson, 2007). With this in mind, and as a tactic that supports both capacity-building and reconciliation, this research recommends development of quick-response, action-focused small grants and incentives that would support artists to initiate their own inter-cultural collaborative projects.

Such support is designed to mitigate some of the practical and financial barriers to artists maintaining their relationships and collaborations following Music Cooperation involvement, particularly in the absence of a longer trajectory of repeated opportunities. Artist groups that meet through Music Cooperation (either through incidental meeting or a facilitated collaboration/exchange) and that wish to continue their musical interactions could apply for these small grants and incentives.

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<sup>25</sup> Also taking place at the Regional level are training opportunities for young artists, sound and lighting engineers. Unless subjected to the same conditions, mechanisms, and moderators of Intergroup Contact Theory as the activities in the Paired strand, their capacity to deliver reconciliation outcomes will be more limited due to the short-term nature of the activities. Where possible, trainees taking part in these programs should be offered a similar trajectory of related experiences across the Music Cooperation as the artists.

The Music Cooperation would provide scaffolding to successful applicants in the form of financial and practical support that would gradually be reduced, as and when the artists can maintain their activities without external support or drivers. In this program, artists and Sevalanka staff work as partners towards the same goal – that of increasing inter-communal friendships and understanding through music. The partnership approach will also build over time valuable in-house knowledge of effective working models for inter-communal exchanges, creating a locally-grounded templates for future pairings, exchanges and collaborations.

Planning for future artist-driven community-based music initiatives and collaborations makes assumptions about the appeal of such an approach for Sri Lankan artists, and also assumes that barriers to artist-led work can be predicted and surmounted. What is more, projects that are driven from the bottom-up are often non-linear in their development, and therefore more challenging to predict. These are two important limitations to this recommendation that should be heeded. However, the great strength of the recommendation is that it accommodates the all-important emergent, evolving, and often serendipitous character of people-led reconciliation work.

In sum, provision of incentives and grants that reduce some of the barriers to artist-initiated project ideas could result in the seeding of new arts-based reconciliation initiatives that are locally-owned and become locally-sustainable over time. Such outcomes are highly desirable given the increasing scarcity of external funds and drivers.

### **Other proposals and ideas**

Discussions throughout the fieldwork period also revealed other proposals and ideas that have not been detailed in this report as they did not directly offer a response to the central research question. Nevertheless they are ideas that could provide useful direction for the Music Cooperation into the future and secure sustained local support for its work.

One of these is for the implementing agencies to build **strategic partnerships with universities** with the potential for faculty and students to become involved with delivery of some aspects of the Music Cooperation's activities. Partnership with universities is an area of considerable interest for both implementing partners, not least for the potential such partnerships offer to enhance the sustainability of the Music Cooperation into the future.

There was also an expressed desire to develop a **network of researchers** engaged in arts-based peace and reconciliation work in Sri Lanka. This links to the inclusion of research component in the Goal Hierarchy of the Proposal and Agreement between Sevalanka, Concerts Norway, and the Royal Norwegian Embassy. In the course of fieldwork in Sri Lanka, the researcher found strong

interest in the possibilities and potential of arts-based reconciliation work, and a rich resource of practitioners working in a variety of art-forms, particularly theatre. However, very little empirical research is taking place that maps or analyses the operations and impact of this work and makes it publicly available. Independent research consultancies and research centres are a useful resource of skilled researchers with experience in program evaluations in the international development sector; however, only a small number of these have an acknowledged expertise or special interest in the arts and reconciliation nexus.

This is not a surprising finding, given the low profile of arts-based peacebuilding within the field of peacebuilding and reconciliation work more generally (Bergh, 2010; Cohen, 2005). However, it was an interesting finding given the richness and diversity of arts-based peacebuilding *practice* in Sri Lanka, which is very well-established, and has been a topic of interest for external researchers working in Sri Lanka (see for example Thompson, Hughes, & Balfour, 2009, which cites several different projects in Sri Lanka).

Perhaps because of this discrepancy between research and practice, there was great enthusiasm for the idea of forming a research network in Sri Lanka that could begin to document practice and build a locally-grounded evidence base. This is something to which the research component of the Music Cooperation can and should contribute; however, it remains underdeveloped at this time.

### **Conclusions for this section and the full report**

This research report into **Music, Development, and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka** offers a detailed examination of the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation, focusing on the ways in which the activities of the Music Cooperation may be impacting reconciliation between the nation's people in the post-civil war period. It has presented both qualitative and quantitative data gathered during three months of fieldwork in Sri Lanka, and contextualizes this with reference to literature from the fields of peacebuilding and social psychology. Prior to this research, an empirical or theoretically-informed understanding of how (if at all) the music development activities of the Music Cooperation might be supporting reconciliation had not been developed. This research engages with that task and offers some answers, and recommendations for future action.

Investigating and assessing the extent of changes experienced in social relations between different groups when there is no definitive baseline with which to draw a comparison has required a holistic and iterative approach. The initial literature review has produced a conceptual framework that pinpoints the most applicable processes of reconciliation work in relation to the Music Cooperation's activities and that positions the original objective of the Music Cooperation –

capacity-building within the music sector – in relation to these two key processes (the development of affective ties and social bonds, and cultural learning). This framework has informed the research design and has found a complementary partner in Intergroup Contact Theory in proposing new actions in response to the findings.

The last two sections of this report are strongly action-oriented, because the Music Cooperation has at least another year to run, and the implementing partners are committed to addressing how they can most effectively deliver the remainder of the program (funded until end-2017). Indeed, throughout the fieldwork the commitment of *all* the stakeholders to supporting both the music development and profile of folk performance traditions in Sri Lanka, and the urgent search for new and meaningful ways through which the people of Sri Lanka can begin to re-weave the complex social fabric of their nation, has been abundantly in evidence. Organisers and artists alike are strongly invested in this work, and believe in its importance.

In addition to offering practical strategies for the remaining period of SLNMC funding, this research project has also endeavoured to unpack and bring clarity to the issues that can impede music work that is intended as a vehicle for reconciliation and other processes of social change in post-war contexts. It has used the activities of the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation as the site of investigation, but offers detailed discussion that can be applied more generally across many other contexts. It has produced a conceptual framework for understanding the ways that key reconciliation processes may be occurring.

There is much about the Sri Lanka Norway Music Cooperation that is innovative and extraordinary, and this should be celebrated. The opportunities now lie in developing a more strategic approach to design, planning, and implementation of the different music programs so that their achievements can be more robustly recognised and validated, and so as to more effectively, efficiently, and rigorously plan, monitor, evaluate and learn from the different ways that music can support reconciliation in a country recovering from war.

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## About the author

Gillian Howell is a PhD candidate at Griffith University and lecturer in Community Music Leadership at Melbourne Polytechnic. Her current research investigates community music education in war-torn and post-conflict countries; her earlier research has explored the music learning experiences among newly-arrived refugees in Australia, and intercultural community music leadership. She has worked as a music leader and researcher in post-conflict settings in South-Eastern Europe, South Asia, and South-East Asia, and in 2016 was awarded a prestigious Endeavour Research Fellowship to research music and reconciliation in Sri Lanka and Norway.

Gillian is also an award-winning musician and teaching artist, working with many of Australia's leading symphony orchestras and arts organisations. She was the founding creative director of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Community Engagement Program, drawing the orchestra into challenging new community collaborations, and creating some of its most enduring community engagement programs. She serves on several national and international boards, including as a Commissioner of the Community Music Activity Commission of the International Society for Music Education of UNESCO, and Board member of Community Music Victoria. She maintains a blog exploring music leadership and practice at [gillianhowell.com.au](http://gillianhowell.com.au)

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# Appendix A:

## Interview guide for pre-2016 Festival artists

I'm interested in your experience as musicians performing in the festivals, and about any important changes that have happened as a result of participating in the festival.

### **(1) Background**

Tell me about your performance group:

Who are the members?

How did you first form?

Where do you/have you performed?

### **(2) How have you been involved in the Music Festivals and trainings organized by the Music Cooperation?**

Can you describe what you remember about being one of the performers in the festival?

What did you do that you still remember now?

Who do you remember meeting?

What is the significance of this memory for you, X years later?

### **(3) What are the important changes that have resulted for you from your participation in this project?**

What have you learned through the experience?

What have you learned about yourselves?

What have you learned about other people?

How has this experience influenced decisions and feelings you've had since then?

*[Or for big, slow, gradual changes]:*

When was the first time you realized there had been a change?

What were you doing, where were you, what was the date?

**(4) Why was this change important to you?**

What difference has this made now, or will it make to you in the future?

**(5) What problems were there?**

Was there anything about the whole experience that surprised you?

**(6) Which of the different stories that you've told me is the most significant one?**

Which is the most significant story of change for you?

Which is the most significant story of change for the community?

**(7) In your opinion, what is the most important thing that these music festivals offer to Sri Lanka in this time following the war?**

There are so many difficulties and challenges for people living in the North and East right now. What difference does a music festival make, in your opinion?

We know that perhaps the most difficult things to rebuild are the social relationships and trust between people that have been on different sides. I know that things are especially difficult for those of you living in the former war zones.

Have the experiences you've described today had an impact on you feel about Sri Lanka's future?

**(8) Permission to retell the stories that have been shared:**

With your permission, I'd like to share your stories in a report that I will write for Sevalanka and Concerts Norway. I might also write about the experiences in an article for an academic journal in the future. You can decide if you are comfortable with me sharing this information or not, and in what ways.

Are you happy for me to use:

- Your names (or change to false names or just a vague description of the person)
- Your location
- The music group (or disguise this, be non-specific)

# Appendix B:

## Audience survey and Performer Survey

### Audience Survey – GMF 2016

1. I am completing this survey at the

Evening programme

Morning programme

2. I am:

Female

Male

3. Age range

0-12

37-59

13-17

60+

18-36

4. Which district do you normally reside in? (list all 25)

Jaffna

Kalutara

Batticaloa

Kilinochchi

Anuradhapura

Ampara

Mannar

Polonnaruwa

Badulla

Mullaitivu

Matale

Monaragala

Vavuniya

Kandy

Hambantota

Puttalam

Nuwara Eliya

Matara

Kurunegala

Kegalle

Galle

Gampaha

Ratnapura

Colombo

Trincomalee

5. Which language do you normally speak at home with your family?

Sinhala

English

Tamil

Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. My religion is

Buddhist

Christian

Hindu

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Muslim

I don't follow a religion

7. Highest level of education attainment

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary         | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational qualification |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors degree         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> O-Levels        | <input type="checkbox"/> Masters degree           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A-Levels        | <input type="checkbox"/> PhD                      |

8. This is my first time at the Galle or Jaffna Music Festival YES/NO

9. Why did you decide to attend the festival today? [select maximum of 2]

- Fun day out with family
- In order to discover and learn about Sri Lanka's folk traditions
- I love music and attend music festivals of all music genres
- I specifically wanted to see \_\_\_\_\_ [include name of performer or folk form]
- I saw it advertised and was curious. I had no prior knowledge of this event.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. What has been your favourite performance or activity in the festival? [Choose 1 only]

- Sufi singers (Akkaripattu)
- Puli Kooththu (Batticaloa)
- Kolam (Ambalangoda)
- Karagam (Mullaitivu)
- Sandisi Drum and Dance Academy (Colombo)
- Thappu Drummers (Kilinochchi)
- Kummi (Mullaitivu)
- Raghu Dixit Project (India)
- Urban Rappers
- The Calling: All-female drumming & choir collaboration
- Musicmatters & Eastern University collaboration
- Youth Voices (University Students' Collaboration)

11. What folk forms have you seen at the 2016 Galle Music Festival that are **new for you?** (i.e. you hadn't seen this folk form performed before)

- Sufi singers (Akkaripattu)
- Puli Kooththu (Batticaloa)
- Kolam (Ambalangoda)
- Karagam (Mullaitivu)
- Kummi (Mullaitivu)
- Sandisi Drum and Dance Academy (Colombo)
- Thappu Drummers (Kilinochchi)

12. As a result of attending the 2016 Galle Music Festival I have a greater appreciation for Sri Lanka's cultural traditions.

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree    | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Agree nor Disagree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree |   |

13. Because of the Festival, I have interacted with people I might not have otherwise met.

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agree    | <input type="checkbox"/> Neither Agree nor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree | Disagree                                   |

13a. If AGREE: The reason these interactions might not have happened otherwise is because: [CHOOSE 1]

- Our lives are very different; we have little in common
- We speak different languages
- We belong to different ethnic groups
- We live in different geographical areas
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

14. The Galle Music Festival is an inclusive event where everyone is made to feel welcome and valued

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree

15. Music is an effective way to improve relations between Sri Lanka's ethnic groups.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree

15a. If AGREE, It is effective because... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Please offer any further feedback for the Festival organizers regarding the **performances, organizational aspects, helpfulness of GMF staff**, and any other topic.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Performer survey – 2016 GMF Artists**

Name of performance group \_\_\_\_\_

District – \_\_\_\_\_

I am

- Female  
 Male

1. Performing our music in the festival made me feel valued and acknowledged

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
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2. Through performing in this festival I developed my confidence

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
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3. I feel more optimistic about the future of our music traditions because of this festival experience

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
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4. Performing the music of my community to these new audiences gives me a positive psychological or emotional experience.

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
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5. It felt like I was participating in a significant and meaningful event [Agree/Disagree]

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

6. Because of the festival, I have met new artist colleagues and made new friends.  
 [Agree/Disagree/Neither Agree nor disagree]

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>
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6a. If yes, do you hope to continue this friendship into the future? YES / NO [Circle 1]

6b. If you can't continue this friendship, the main reason will be because [Choose up to 2 reasons]:

- We've only talked for a short time  
 We don't share a common language  
 We live very far apart  
 One or both of us lacks access to email, Facebook, or mobile phone

- Lack of trust or interest because of the history of war and conflict between our ethnic groups or regions
- My community would not support this friendship
- Other...

7. Through the artist training session, I learned new skills and got new ideas

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

8. I feel inspired to generate new music experiences for my community

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
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9. GMF staff gave me the support I needed

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>
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10. GMF staff treated me with respect

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>
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11. I got to have a say in how our performance should go.

<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>
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12. What have you enjoyed most about being a Festival Artist at the 2016 Galle Music Festival?

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# Appendix C: Artist selection tool

This tool offers useful criteria for consideration of potential artists for Music Cooperation activities and similar Music for Reconciliation projects. The Committee may wish to make artist selections by scoring contenders according to a range of criteria, or simply use the criteria to focus discussions.

Criteria	Questions	Score /5
Conflict analysis	Is this group from an area with current entrenched divisions or conflict? Are there already efforts towards encouraging intercultural exchanges and other reconciliation work taking place in their community? (CF: Contact Hypothesis Essential Condition that there is structural/leadership support for reconciliation and equality already established)	
Cultural learning	Is this group presenting a rarely-seen folk artform? Is it modeling an innovative approach to contemporizing or integrating different traditions? Are the artists the recognized custodians of this form? Does this group have skills in/experience in/openness to workshopping their artform with others?	
Social Bonds	Will there be other artists present that this group has connected with at earlier festivals or SLNMC activities?	
Collaboration and exchange	Would this group make an interesting collaborative match with another group we wish to program? Do they have an artistic director who is open to collaboration and change? Are they in an environment (village, partner university, community arts hub) that could support ongoing exchanges and skill-sharing?	
Capacity building, program tailoring	Which stage/platform/program strand is this group ready for? (Morning/evening program/regional festival/village-level)	
<i>Underlying Theory of Change</i>	<i>“There is a concerning issue of [describe issue or area of need] in [village, region, district]. If we involve [Artist A] with [Activity B] and ensure [conditions, moderators, mechanisms] then [XYZ social or knowledge-related change, relating to nominated issue and involving specific sites, artists, other artists] is possible, within [N timeframe].”</i>	

**Table 6: Artist selection rubric**