

# Partnership

Sing Up 2007-2011  
Programme Evaluation  
Theme 7

Sing Up 2007-2011 was the Music Manifesto National Singing Programme, led by Youth Music, with AMV-BBDO, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead, supported by Government. It aimed to raise the status of singing and increase opportunities for school children throughout the country to enjoy singing as part of their everyday lives, and to support all primary schools to become 'singing schools'.

Sing Up commissioned the Centre for Use of Research & Evidence in Education (CUREE) to undertake an external evaluation of the whole programme. The evaluations are presented as follows:

- Synthesis Report including Executive Summary
- Probe & Case Study Report
  - Themed Reports:
    1. Communications
    2. Health & Wellbeing
    3. Impact on Schools
    4. Learning Across the Curriculum
    5. Management of Change
    6. Musical Development
    7. Partnership
    8. Speech, Language and Communication
    9. Transition
    10. Workforce Development
    11. Youth Leadership

The full set of reports can be found on the Sing Up website: [www.singup.org](http://www.singup.org)

Further information about CUREE can be found at: [www.curee-paccts.com](http://www.curee-paccts.com)

## Introduction

'Those children who have participated in the Sing Up programme are approximately two years in advance developmentally in their singing compared to their peers of the same age outside the programme.'

Sing Up 2007-11 was the Music Manifesto National Singing Programme, led by Youth Music, with AMV-BBDO, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead, supported by Government. It aimed to raise the status of singing and increase opportunities for school children throughout the country to enjoy singing as part of their everyday lives, and to support all primary schools to become 'singing schools'.



Sing Up operated through four main strands of activity: a national PR and advertising **campaign** highlighting the benefits of singing; singing **resources**, through the twin vehicles of a website [www.singup.org](http://www.singup.org) (including a 'Song Bank') and a free termly magazine with CD; a **workforce development** programme to build the confidence and expertise of primary school teachers, musicians and others in leading and supporting children's singing activities, with a supporting network of 30 Sing Up Area Leaders; **funded programmes**, supporting the development of singing activity around the country.

By March 2011 Sing Up had engaged with over 95% of state primary schools and over 90% of all schools with primary school-aged children in them.

## Background

Sing Up has partnership working at its core. The coming together of Youth Music, Faber Music, The Sage Gateshead and AMV-BBDO, along with associate partners (ContinYou and the Federation of Music Services), has created a broad consortium of experience and know-how, which in turn has modelled for project leaders the value of creating local coalitions to develop singing. The evidence presented in this report illustrates the range of people and organisations forming local partnerships, and the ways project leaders and lead organisations brought partnerships into being and exploited their potential to enhance learning through Sing Up.

## Project Aims and Objectives

1. For the purposes of this report, a project was defined as an aspect of activity carried out as part of the Sing Up programme. Projects therefore range in nature and include specific interventions; their types (e.g. Sing Up Awards); organisations and areas, leading a variety of strands of work; various communications activities and their analysis, etc.

Whilst partnerships were widely valued, project<sup>1</sup> aims were rarely articulated in terms of what they hoped to achieve in terms of partnership working per se.

Where one project related its aims specifically to the partnership element of Sing Up, it set out to use the partnership to:

- provide opportunities for sharing and disseminating good practice; and
- support transition from primary to secondary school.

## Processes and Strategies

Creating partnerships involved a lot of work initially (and on an ongoing basis) to ensure that partners' individual aims and needs were being met by the partnership, alongside those of Sing Up overall. The ways in which partners aligned their aims for the project included:

- laying a foundation of relationships;
- meetings to discuss mutual benefits of the partnership;
- questionnaires for teachers to discover teachers' priorities that could be used to shape the programme; and
- modelling for teachers the experiences and benefits for learners through initial singing sessions for teachers to give them first-hand experience of the benefits of Sing Up.

One project's consultation with teachers, for example, identified the creation of a planning framework (scaffold) which would help the teachers organise ideas around developing a creative curriculum as a priority for embedding singing. In another project, several schools were able to enrich their extended schools activities through the Singing Playgrounds project.

### Partners as Brokers to Hard to Reach and Other Groups

Hard-to-reach groups involved in Sing Up activities included:

- looked-after children;
- carers of looked after children; and
- elderly people with dementia/Alzheimer's disease.

In engaging with these groups project leaders sought out partner organisations and groups who would help them identify and engage participants from the particular target group. Often the partners for this would be local authority children's services, but project leaders also liaised with police forces, independent children's organisations, and local authority services for the elderly to access hard to reach groups.

One project, for example, partnered up with the local police force diversity team, migrant worker support groups, community development teams from the local authority, and the local radio station among others. These organisations helped promote the project and translate information into community languages. Whitewood and Fleming (Cumbria) and Pie Factory (Kent) worked directly with units within local authorities who had responsibility for looked-after children.

### Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Training sessions for lead professionals from partner organisations featured in several of the partnerships. In some cases this included inter-organisation CPD – such as shared development for mental health professionals, and local authority employees. One partnership set up cross-sector training between school-based practitioners and non-school-based musicians, basing the CPD on the Reflect Lab Co-Mentoring programme. The music service in one local authority established a strategic singing group, whose members (including colleagues from the Sing Up team), shared expertise and ideas across the authority.

### Parents as Partners

There were few reported examples of parents engaging in partnership work. One notable exception was the case of a mother of a primary school child, who developed a year 4 choir in the school as a volunteer. She went on to run an adult community choir and to lead singing sessions in other schools. Another project found it essential to engage the support and co-operation of carers of looked-after children, before it could achieve wide take-up of its offer amongst them.

### Schools as Partners

Projects were usually careful to ensure that schools they worked with were full partners, in the sense that activities were jointly planned. Projects had generally had positive experiences of engaging school staff in Sing Up. One project leader described the importance of headteachers showing a lead and joining in staff singing sessions, having noted this was occurring in six of the schools she visited. Engaging teaching staff in singing activities seems to have raised the likelihood of Sing Up becoming embedded in school life: 'With the whole staff approach, confident teachers have rubbed off on others. Strong singing lifts other members of staff ... It has generated conversation, interest and peer engagement'.

In some cases, however, projects had to experiment with different approaches to get schools involved as active partners. One project reported struggling to encourage school personnel to engage with the Sing Up programme, until it introduced playground singing, developed a whole school singing programme and launched a training course.

Partnerships also used the potential of young singing leaders to make links between schools. Bedlingtonshire High School (Northumberland Cluster) for example, arranged for its young singing leaders to work in partnership with staff in participating schools to help rehearse and coach school choirs.

'With the whole staff approach, confident teachers have rubbed off on others. Strong singing lifts other members of staff ... It has generated conversation, interest and peer engagement.'

### Other Partners

Beyond schools, arts organisations, parents and local authorities, partnerships were established with commercial organisations and, in one case, health workers. In the Participating Retailers scheme, local stores committed to stocking and displaying the featured publications found in the Song Bank. In return, stores received a Sing Up browser in which to display publications and a range of Sing Up merchandise, including a window sticker highlighting the store as a participating retailer. All store addresses and contact details were listed on the participating retailers page of the online store. In addition, project leads established a series of 'repertoire and resource sessions' in partnership with the stores.

Project leaders in the Drake project worked with partners at the Bristol Paediatric Communication Aid Service to adapt assistive music technology to enable young people with communications difficulties to participate in Sing Up.

## Findings and Outcomes

### Increased Capacity to Scale Up Singing Activities and Develop Resources

Partnerships often expanded a project's ability to involve learners in large-scale singing events. Five of the projects reported holding celebration or showcase events, often in large venues, such as town halls. The events invariably included joint singing across choirs from all schools in the partnership.

Partnerships also increased the capacity of projects to create tailored resources for specific groups. These included:

- orchestral parts and scores developed by the Hallé orchestra;
- Superheroes and Scaredy Cats – a resource produced by Sing Up and Sound Minds for practitioners working in child mental health;
- the adaptation of music software to meet the needs of schools;
- a resource pack of playground songs; and
- ICT tools and resources for young people with hearing and other difficulties.

### Increased Capacity Across Organisations

Partnerships, once established, were in several cases resourceful in finding additional sponsors beyond Sing Up.

- Supersing attracted financial support for its live event from six organisations in the Liverpool area
- Whitehead and Fleming signed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the local authority to run over two years
- Everyone Sing will continue Sing Up work in Southampton, sponsored by Southampton City Council

'Not only were partnerships formed between organisations in order to bid for and deliver Sing Up programmes, networks of practice were also established post hoc by graduates of Sing Up themselves leading singing at their own community groups, church, school or within their family/friendship groups.'

Not only were partnerships formed between organisations in order to bid for and deliver Sing Up programmes, networks of practice were also established post hoc by graduates of Sing Up themselves leading singing at their own community groups, church, school or within their family/friendship groups.

Through partnership working, projects were also able to extend the repertoire of singing genres they could offer client groups:

- In Southampton the project linked up with Art Asia to provide an Asian dimension to its offer
- Children participating in a singing project linking with residential care homes learned songs from different parts of the world

There were several examples of the ways partners pooled resources to make the whole bigger than the sum of the parts. This was the case in Southampton where Council Support Workers were able to contribute to travel planning, promotion and follow-up evaluations. Often, the ability of music partners to provide access to specialist kit lifted the potential of projects to engage children and young people, whether through instrumental/percussion accompaniment, or recording and mixing facilities, as did, in one case, the filming of singing activities.

Children's services also benefited from collaboration with other partners on projects. In one case, young people spoke with musicians delivering the programme about issues they were having over moving foster placements, which they had not raised with social workers or teachers. The musicians conveyed this to their children's services link, who could arrange for appropriate support to be provided.

One project reported increased teaching and planning capacity for singing as a result of its training activities. Its legacy included nine qualified Voices Foundation Local Advisory Teachers, who were helping four music services/local authorities develop singing programmes across primary schools.

### **Establishing and Maintaining Partnerships – What made it work?**

The evidence documents a range of organisations involved in partnerships – this added to the capacity of the project to extend its reach and impact for children, young people and adults, but equally demanded time and a focus of effort on the part of partners to build relationships and overcome obstacles to partnership working. Where project leaders commented on the process of setting up and maintaining partnerships in detail, it becomes clear that a lot of work is required to achieve this, and that time is required for projects to mature and fulfil their potential.

One partnership felt that considerable groundwork in partnership building was required in the early phases (e.g. identifying the right people to speak to in the local authority,) and that this only bore fruit several months later. Another project reported the effort required in ensuring continuity of Sing Up in the face of staff turnover: 'A major achievement was to negotiate the transition from one trusted set of workshop leaders and management to an entirely new team. This took considerable planning, observation and also greater ambition for the participants'

musical achievements’.

Lessons were often learned in retrospect.

One partnership reported realising the importance of both diagnostic and evaluation activities with school partners to make the learning more visible and to increase commitment. Another project found it was more likely to engage the local authority when it aligned the focus of the project with local authority priorities, in this case improving the quality of learning in special needs settings. One

project engaging with an Asian music group did not anticipate the need to plan alternative approaches to take account of cultural differences – in this case understanding the role ‘guru’-based training plays in developing singing among Asian communities. Project leaders also discovered the value of running project activities within school time, as a way of engaging teachers, who otherwise were not showing much interest while it was an extra-curricular activity.



The success or failure of partnership work could rest on the degree to which key individuals became engaged in its activities. In the case of one project where children were visiting residential care homes, they were on the whole successful in gaining a rapport with elderly people, except in one case, where the ‘passivity’ of the warden meant that the leaders had to make more of an effort to achieve the same results. In another project, leaders felt community music freelancers contributed well when the leaders organised and directed activities, but took little initiative or responsibility in taking forward project activities themselves. Several projects also found it difficult to engage carers of looked after children, and developed strategies along the way, such as organising ‘concert party’ sessions with food and drink.

Key players in a partnership could also find themselves needing to focus on relationship building and aligning their understanding of the aims of the project, as well as each others’ roles: ‘The amateurs felt they were over-managed by the project management staff. In response the PM staff reduced contact time, but it then took longer for the amateurs to ‘get’ the idea of the project, discovering for themselves what had in fact been outlined in the initial brief.’

There was some evidence about the long-term trajectory of partnerships. In the case of one partnership, of the original seven singing hubs they established in the town, only two were in existence two years later, albeit these two were described as ‘strong’. Another partnership reported the ‘embedding’ of a number of ‘regional community groups’ by the end of the funding. One local authority commented on the way the project had helped develop relationships between the Borough Council Arts Development team and schools, where very little contact had existed before Sing Up.

### Benefits Across the Generations

Projects reported ways in which children, young people and adults collaborated during Sing Up activities. In one project children from three schools visited residential care homes to sing together with residents. Leaders in another project noted improvements in the way children and teachers behaved towards each other as a result of participation: 'Young singing leaders from the high school appreciated attending the same training sessions as the adult singing leaders and they could see that they acted as positive role models to the primary pupils.'

### Methods

Ninety nine project reports and related evidence, ranging between internal evaluations and external assessment, were selected by Sing Up as a basis for a number of synthesis evaluation reports. The documents were coded by a team of CUREE researchers as likely to yield evidence for each of the themed reports. The data were then extracted by the same team, using Nvivo software, for each of the themes identified by Sing Up. The data extraction framework, based on questions focused on both impact and processes for each of the themes, was agreed in advance with Sing Up. The resulting data was then analysed and synthesised so that the key messages for each theme could be reported.

The current report is based on the documents which were identified as containing data relevant to the theme of Partnerships. A total of 14 projects had information relating to the theme. Types of the evidence collected by the projects that provided the basis for this report included:

- school staff perceptions/quotes;
- music specialist perceptions and quotes;
- parent interviews; and
- reports.

### Conclusions and Implications

Evidence from partnerships building elsewhere in the field of education echoes some of the key findings in this report, in particular, the extra reach and delivery power that partnership working can give. For example, an evaluation of Paul Hamlyn's Learning Away programme highlights the ways schools working together in clusters increased their capacity to support students' learning in the following ways:

- sharing knowledge and expertise, particularly at planning and design stage;
- opportunities for training, professional development and peer support which often included buddying of more and less experienced colleagues from different schools;

- sharing roles and responsibilities which minimised the burden on individuals and contributed towards sustainability of the initiatives in the long term; and
- forging links between primary and secondary schools, supporting, for example, better transition.

The evidence from the reports suggest that partners in Sing Up projects benefited in similar ways to the first three bullets: sharing knowledge and expertise, identifying and exploiting opportunities for CPD across organisations, and sharing roles and responsibilities. The potential for partnerships to contribute to improving transition experiences is an interesting area for further exploration. While there was information to suggest primary



and secondary schools were working in the same partnership, there was little reported on the nature of their relationship with each other. Project leaders might wish to identify the roles of schools in the partnerships and whether Sing Up is contributing to better continuity for learners, especially when they move across phases, and where this is happening explore what the practice looks like and how it helps. Evidence from one project presented here of how music professionals sharing information with social workers helped the latter improve their support of young people, illustrates Sing Up's potential to support increased communication, an essential element of good transition practice. What other ways might the increased sharing of information that flowed from Sing Up partnerships have fed back into improving practice, learning and the life changes of young people?

## Glossary

### **Sing Up Awards**

The Awards have helped schools to embed singing throughout their school life, encouraging them to celebrate their singing. There are three different levels of Award: Silver, Gold and Platinum. The Awards are specially designed to work across different types of school, including SEN settings.

### **Beyond the Mainstream (BTM)**

Sing Up made a commitment to ensure that its work impacts upon all primary aged children, including children in SEN schools, Pupil Referral Units, looked after children, children with mental health issues and many others early in 2009, and the stream of work that underpins this commitment throughout the programme is called Beyond the Mainstream. BTM broadly focuses on children who can't access primary mainstream school (in SEN or PRU settings) as well as those who have difficulties accessing primary mainstream (including looked after children, children with EBD, children with mental health difficulties etc).

### **Sing Up Clusters**

Sing Up Clusters have helped secondary schools to lead innovative singing projects with their feeder primary schools. The programme aims to train and inspire singing leaders and enables schools to work positively with pupils' transition issues. Clusters work with 240 schools across the nation, introducing exciting singing opportunities to over 7,500 pupils.

### **Sing Up Flagships**

Sing Up Flagships are leading singing advocate organisations that work to share and develop best practice through projects, performances and resources. Nine organisations have worked as Flagships, with most programmes typically lasting 2 years. Thousands of children, practitioners and singing leaders have benefited nationwide from their work.

### **Sing Up Communities**

Sing Up Communities have been run by arts organisations and music services that work with primary-aged children. They aim to place singing at the heart of the community. Each project has run for two years and aims to reach over 2,000 primary-aged children. Work includes the development of young singing leaders and encouraging singing out of school hours.

### **Vocal Force**

Vocal Force was originally a project based on the innovative Vocal Union programme devised by The Sage Gateshead, before becoming part of Sing Up in 2008. Vocal Force aimed to foster a peer support network for sharing learning and exploring ways of sustaining networks. It has created over 60 bespoke projects to increase the skills, confidence and repertoire of more than 3,000 singing leaders.