

<b>Institution:</b> Glasgow Caledonian University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA17: Business and Management Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Community Orientated and Opportunity Learning Music Project (acronym COOL Music)		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> June 2015 – March 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Artur Steiner	Principal Investigator (PI), Professor in Social Entrepreneurship and Community Development	2015 – present
Simon Teasdale	Co-Investigator (Co-I), Professor of Public Policy and Organisations	2013 – present
Francesca Calo	Co-Investigator (Co-I), Researcher	2017 – 2020
Stephen Millar	Lead Researcher	2017 – 2018
Ellen Vanderhoven	Lead Researcher	2019
Callum Sutherland	Lead Researcher	2019 – 2020
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> October 2017 – March 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>  <p>Between 2017-2020, GCU conducted an action research project with a social enterprise called Heavy Sound to develop the 'Community Orientated and Opportunity Learning Music Project' (acronym: COOL Music). The partnership generated £394,314 with a direct investment of £249,103 to Heavy Sound ensuring the sustainability of the social enterprise and continued employment for key staff, while also leading to service improvement. COOL Music focused on tackling persistent challenges faced by disadvantaged young people normally excluded from public services by enabling their participation in music-making. In 2017-2018, COOL Music was delivered to 27 'hard-to-reach' young people. Following positive evaluation of the health and wellbeing benefits, COOL Music scaled up to reach another 267 beneficiaries between 2019-2020. COOL Music is now a central component of Heavy Sound; it has improved their financial sustainability, while leading to positive change and social inclusion for 294 disadvantaged beneficiaries.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		

Between 2016 and 2020, Steiner et al. examined how social inequalities and vulnerabilities experienced by disadvantaged hard-to-reach young people could be tackled through a social enterprise intervention.

An initial scoping study showed that those who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are up to 20-times more likely to be involved in anti-social behaviour and be incarcerated at some point in their lives, and less likely to go into a positive destination after leaving school, compared to people with no ACEs. ACEs frequently lead to a spiral of negative effects on future life-chances, including social development, family-life, relationships, engagement in employment (e.g. within nine months of leaving school 1 in 3 are unemployed), as well as impacting health outcomes (G1, G2). Although perceived to be disadvantaged and 'at risk', traditional mainstream interventions frequently fail to effectively support this vulnerable group in society.

Evidence from a systematic literature review indicated that arts-based and music projects can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing of vulnerable people (R1, R2). Heavy Sound - a social enterprise that uses music as a wellbeing tool - claimed to be able to address some of the challenges faced by disadvantaged young people but were unable to evidence, in a rigorous way, the impact of their work. Heavy Sound also faced difficulties securing financial resources to deliver their services to disadvantaged young people.

GCU and Heavy Sound developed a joint proposal (G2) to run and evaluate a participatory action research project called COOL Music. COOL Music's objective was to engage 'hard-to-reach' (as defined in R1) young people including those affected by abuse, neglect and parental incarceration as well as those with poor school attendance records, behavioural problems and offences for violence and drug dealing. The scoping study findings (2016-2017) informed COOL Music design: a personally-tailored programme utilising music-making activities to enable young people to express emotions and tackle personal problems, create opportunities for innovative inclusion, and support wellbeing through personal development, offering alternative approaches to education/literacy as well as providing opportunities for skills development for life and employment.

The GCU evaluation of COOL Music used a mixed-method approach:

- Pre- and post-participation questionnaires (based on validated Good Childhood Index measures) showed self-reported positive changes in COOL Music participants' attitudes towards friends (50%), family (22%) and future plans (44%).
- In-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews with the project participants and relevant stakeholders including teachers, carers and those delivering the project identified how and why changes occur (or not) (R1, R2). Qualitative findings indicated increased sense of accomplishment, self-confidence, feelings of protection, being listened to and understood, development of trust and good relations with peers, tutors and wider communities amongst 86% of study participants (R1, R2).
- Interviews with project stakeholders (e.g. those involved in setting-up and running the project, project managers, tutors, local council representatives, relevant school staff) and an analysis of financial documents, contracts and agreements produced during COOL Music (R3) identified best practices associated with running the project to ensure the project's sustainability.

To increase the capacity and impact of the COOL Music intervention, our analysis recommended introducing COOL Music in new locations, and working with wider communities and stakeholders to understand and prevent sources of ACEs in order to deliver sustainable change and improve the lives of young people (G1).

### 3. References to the research

#### Key publications:

- (R1) Millar, S., Steiner, A., Calo, F., Teasdale, S. (2020) COOL Music: A "Bottom-Up"

Music Intervention for Hard-to-Reach Young People in Scotland. British Journal of Music Education, 37, 87-98. (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051719000226>; double blind peer reviewed paper; IF: 0.583).

- (R2) Calo, F., Steiner, A., Millar, S., Teasdale, S. (2020) The impact of a community-based music intervention on the health and wellbeing of young people: a realist evaluation. Health & Social Care in the Community, 28, 3, 988-997. (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12931>; double blind peer reviewed paper; IF: 2.05).
- (R3) Vanderhoven, E., Steiner, A., Calò, F., Teasdale, S. (2020) Can Public Venture Capital Support Sustainability in the Social Economy? Evidence from the Social Innovation Fund. Journal of Business Venturing Insights, 13, 6, e00166. (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbvi.2020.e00166>; double blind peer reviewed paper; Cite Score: 3.8).

#### Key grants:

- (G1) PI: Prof. Steiner; Co-I: Dr Calò (2019) Project title: Community Orientated and Opportunity Learning Music Project (COOL Music Project); Funder: European Social Fund and Scottish Government; Project duration: April 2019 – March 2020; peer-reviewed competitively won grant Value: £249,171; including £172,075 for Heavy Sound intervention and £77,096 for GCU evaluation.
- (G2) PI: Prof Steiner; Co-I: Prof Teasdale (2017) Project title: Community Orientated and Opportunity Learning Music Project (COOL Music Project); Funder: European Social Fund and Scottish Government; Project duration: May 2017 – April 2018; peer-reviewed competitively won grant Value: £145,143; including £77,028 for Heavy Sound intervention and £63,950 for GCU evaluation.

#### **4. Details of the impact**

##### Impact on communities of practice (service providers)

As a result of the GCU research scoping study (2016-2017) and evaluation of the intervention (2017-2018), funding of £77,028 (2017-2018; G2) and £172,075 (2019-2020; G1; S1) enabled Heavy Sound to introduce and scale-up the COOL Music intervention. This funding was essential for Heavy Sound to survive, support the continued employment of COOL Music staff and deliver services: '[COOL Music] came at a challenging time for us when the long-term financial viability of Heavy Sound was precarious. None of it would have happened without COOL Music. Now our situation is much better: we are working with the kids and we have developed new comprehensive community services' (Founder of Heavy Sound; S8). In 2017-2018, this funding was used to employ eight staff to deliver COOL Music in four locations in Scotland (Queensferry High School, Wallyford Community Centre, Who Cares Scotland, The Bridges Project). In 2019-2020 the additional funding was used employ seven new staff to continue, expand and improve COOL Music 'reaching and affecting more vulnerable people' (S1, S5) through:

- Implementing COOL Music in new schools and residential care-services (Harmeny School, Liberton High School, Musselburgh Grammar School, Knox Academy, Ross High, Spartan's Community Football Academy).
- Implementing COOL Music (i) among adult-prisoners in Her Majesty's Prison Edinburgh, educating prisoners on causes/impacts of ACEs and through (ii) a Community Reach and Inclusion Bus enabling mobile access to multi-agency services (NHS/social security/police/third sector) to tackle challenges experienced by families (e.g. health, finance, access to services) in deprived areas in order to improve outcomes and life-chances for children (G1, S1, S5).

The research demonstrating the impact of COOL Music also helped to generate further public sector funding for Heavy Sound, enhancing their sustainability. For example, additional funding was secured from the Violence Reduction Unit at Her Majesty Prison to increase Heavy Sound's mentoring services for a period of two years (2019-2021) (S7); a new partnership was established with Black Diamond Thai Boxing Club to deliver the 'Fight for Change' programme to support disadvantaged young people (S7).

According to the Heavy Sound Business Development & Operations Manager, 'using the impact evidence, we have secured additional funding from various sources including Scottish Government to increase our music, sport and mentoring projects. Overall, COOL Music expanded our capacity to deliver services that can help to reduce social inequalities as well as providing us with the knowledge and skills to be able evaluate our own projects' (S8).

COOL Music demonstrates the importance of small-scale, community-based social enterprises in addressing social injustice and persistent challenges experienced by some young members in our society (R2). The EU Programme Manager for EU Policies in the UK said: 'It is always very encouraging to see how EU-funded projects help people, elderly and young alike, improve their lives. These, very often innovative, actions like COOL Music are the best proof that the European Social Model is not simple rhetoric, but real progress' (S2). Our open access research findings (R1-R3) have further potential to inform future policy and practice around tackling childhood disadvantage and health inequalities.

#### Impact on service users (beneficiaries)

In 2017-2018, COOL Music was delivered to 27 disadvantaged young people aged 12-18 bringing positive impacts to beneficiaries through a sense of accomplishment, self-confidence, feelings of protection, being listened to and understood, development of trust and good relations with peers, tutors and wider communities, as well as self-reported positive changes in attitudes towards friends, family and future plans (as detailed in Section 2 and R2, R3). Research findings of the evaluation led to the scaling-up of COOL Music using a whole-systems approach. This involved bringing together a broad range of stakeholders (participants in the project, researchers, Heavy Sound workers, teachers, support workers) to collectively identify, understand and resolve the issues faced by participants.

Consequently, in 2019-2020, COOL Music brought positive health and wellbeing impacts to a new cohort of disadvantaged project participants (n=267). A longitudinal survey of the young people showed positive change across all eight domains of the Good Childhood Index. This evidence was supported by qualitative narrative: COOL Music participants moved from total educational disengagement to completion of National 5 English modules; one participant reengaged with school to get the requisite qualifications for Music and Sound Production at Edinburgh College; some project participants joined Heavy Sound as sound production volunteers.

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- (S1) COOL Music: Community Orientated and Opportunity Learning Music Project presentation delivered to the Scottish Government Social Innovation Fund Committee on 3 December 2018.
- (S2) The EU Programme Manager for EU Policies audited and commented on the project (23 November 2018); information available on [the Scottish Government website](#).
- (S3) Video-clips with COOL Music participants and project stakeholders evidencing [the nature of the project](#) and [testimonies referring to Impacts of the project](#) including self-harm reduction.
- (S4) An article in [Teachers' Resource Magazine](#) together with radio interviews broadcast with the founder of Heavy Sounds and COOL Music participants. The project has also been

shared on BBC news, BBC Radio, STV and the Edinburgh Evening News.

- (S5) The Community Reach and Inclusion Bus described by [BBC](#).
- (S6) COOL Music 2017-2018 final report.
- (S7) COOL Music 2019-2020 final report.
- (S8) Statement from Heavy Sound directors.