



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE

Dipartimento di Scienze della
Formazione e Psicologia

Master di primo livello per Operatori
musicali per cori e orchestre infantili
e giovanili

El Sistema Abreu, collective musical learning as an answer to social unease in young people: the importance of self- efficacy

Relatrice

Prof.ssa Ersilia Menesini

Candidata

Mariana Pinto

Anno Accademico 2013/2014

El Sistema Abreu, collective musical learning as an answer to social unease in young people: the importance of self-efficacy

1. Introduction 2. El Sistema's fundamentals 2.1 Social unease in young people: causes and consequences 2.2 When social risk is community prevalent 3. Social cognitive theory: how behaving learning process is developed inside a group 3.1 Self-efficacy perception: the importance of instil it in uneasy young people 2.2 *Locus of control* 4. El Sistema's three spheres 4.1 *Núcleos* as a starting point to answer community unease 4.2 El Sistema's pedagogy and didactics 4.3 Peer Tutoring and Roles deliberation 4.3.1 Practical example of peer tutoring 5. Performance as purpose of common goal and sense of achievement: Affiliation and community acknowledgement 6. Conclusion

El Sistema Abreu, collective musical learning as an answer to social unease in young people: the importance of self-efficacy

Abstract

The goals of this thesis are to present El Sistema programme from Venezuela as one answer to the social unease as well as the importance of the young people's self-efficacy and self-achievement as a protective factor against risk, vulnerability and unstable outcome. El Sistema implies musical strategies that relate to didactic, pedagogic and psychological theories and tenets / core concepts.

1. Introduction

This thesis presents El Sistema programme as a model of the collective learning of music as a possible answer to problems of social unease in young people. Today, social unease is observed as prevalent in young adults that struggle to fit in school and in their community. Often their uneasiness is reflected in aggressive behaviour and school failure. At the psychological level, young adults tend to give up when faced with challenges. This thesis presents the social cognitive theory of A. Bandura to explain how young people model behaviour from the environment. It also suggests how social learning may become a positive model of behaviour.

This thesis studies the lack of self-efficacy in young people and the importance to stimulate it in order to start a process of change in the individual. At the same time, such a process affects the interactions of the individual with the

environment. Ensemble playing and peer tutoring develop a positive constructive behaviour and increase the individual's sense of control, encouraging the will to change life outcomes. Orchestra performance is presented as a common goal to foster interaction and develop a sense of affiliation with the community.

2. El Sistema's fundamentals

El Sistema from Venezuela is a collective music education programme created by the musician, educator and social activist José Antonio Abreu in 1975. The goal of El Sistema is to integrate and empower young people at risk of poverty, drugs, criminalization and violence coming from disadvantaged communities by providing them music tuition within a group context.

José Antonio Abreu inaugurated his idea of El Sistema over forty years ago when first rehearsing a group of young people in a garage. He had prepared the room to receive around one hundred musicians but only eleven turned up¹. "When Dr. Abreu convened those 11 children (...), he gave them a choice that they may otherwise never have had: a choice between the streets and strings, drugs and drums, gangs and guitars, violence and violins."² After the first rehearsal in the garage, the group started to increase its number and quickly multiplied. This programme has been very successful developing solid values of integration to deprived children³. Today has in the whole country over 623,000 children⁴ in more than 416⁵ local programmes in the 24 states of Venezuela⁶.

Being a musician himself, José Antonio Abreu realized that Venezuela had few opportunities for young classical musicians and therefore set off to create a symphonic youth orchestra. He was aware that musical education was not available

¹ TED – Technology, Entertainment, Design – Ideas Worth Spreading. Acceptance Speech by José Antonio Abreu. URL: http://www.ted.com/talks/jose_abreu_on_kids_transformed_by_music.html, Accessed on 18 February 2015.

² Govias, J.A. Social Action Through Music – El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 03-09-2014.

³ Majno, M. 2012. From the model of El Sistema in Venezuela to current applications: learning and integration through collective music education. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 52: 1-26, 56.

⁴ Govias, J.A. Social Action Through Music – El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

⁵ Fundación Musical Simón Bolívar. <http://fundamusical.org.ve/nucleos/>, Accessed 28-03-2015

⁶ Fundación Musical Simón Bolívar. <http://fundamusical.org.ve/nucleos/>, Accessed 28-03-2015

to everyone, but belonged to the elite, while he believed that one could build young orchestras as an instrument for social change:⁷ ‘I do not just want to train better musicians – I want to form better people’⁸. Since the expansion of El Sistema, music education in Venezuela is considered a social right and is widely accessible for free.⁹ Abreu considered that “Music is immensely important in the awakening of sensibility, in the forging of values. The orchestra and choirs are much more than artistic studies. They are examples and schools of social life because to play and sing together means to intimately coexist toward perfection and excellence”.¹⁰ El Sistema provides intensive teaching in ensembles, such as symphonic orchestras and choirs where children have the chance to pursue self-fulfilment by getting the chance to transform their lives and to promote a positive change in their communities. According to Abreu, a child learning the art of music inside a group can acquire understanding of others, self-discipline, self-esteem, sense of leadership and responsibility; and to recognize his value in society. Learning music becomes the means to achieve the goal of social development and is the way to break the vicious cycle of poverty: “The huge spiritual world that music produces ends up overcoming material poverty. From the minute a child is taught how to play an instrument, he’s no longer poor. He becomes a child in progress, who will become a citizen”.¹¹

El Sistema is considered a philosophy, a way of being in life, and has created also a new paradigm in music education. For Dalouge Smith, CEO of the San Diego

⁷ TED – Technology, Entertainment, Design – Ideas Worth Spreading. Acceptance Speech by José Antonio Abreu. URL: http://www.ted.com/talks/jose_abreu_on_kids_transformed_by_music.html, Accessed on 18 February 2015. WHEN A CITATION RECURS, SHOULD IT NOT JUST BE “CIT”? WHAT IS THE CUSTOM IN SUCH ARTICLES?

⁸ Majno, M. 2012. From the model of El Sistema in Venezuela to current applications: learning and integration through collective music education. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1252: 62.

⁹ TED – Technology, Entertainment, Design – Ideas Worth Spreading. Acceptance Speech by José Antonio Abreu. URL: http://www.ted.com/talks/jose_abreu_on_kids_transformed_by_music.html, Accessed on 18 February 2015.

¹⁰ TED – Technology, Entertainment, Design – Ideas Worth Spreading. Acceptance Speech by José Antonio Abreu. URL: http://www.ted.com/talks/jose_abreu_on_kids_transformed_by_music.html, Accessed on 18 February 2015.

¹¹ Tunstall, T. (2012). *Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music*, 17. CHECK CAPITALS AND SEE QUESTION ABOUT RECURRENCE

Youth Symphony, ‘El Sistema is really a new way of thinking about music education. It is about building a community and productive citizens through the group experience of ensemble and orchestra’.¹² Tricia Tunstall in her book “Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the Transformative Power of Music” documents the values of El Sistema program. It also reports the history of El Sistema from Abreu to Gustavo Dudamel, the celebrated conductor who began his music studies inside a *núcleo* of Venezuela. Tunstall expresses the great potential of this programme and its values at the social level: “It traces my gradual realization that within El Sistema the guiding ideal of the orchestra as a school for civic community is so strong to effectively transcend the distinction between musical education and social transformation”¹³.

2.1 Social unease in young people: causes and consequences

Currently, society faces one more major challenge: social unease in young people. The word unease can be defined as a situation of “non-ease”, a lack of well-being or lack of adjustment. Social unease in psychology can be defined as situation in which the individual finds himself inadequate to the social system where he/she lives, and is not capable of using the resources and opportunities offered by the society. This leads to a suffering state and or lack of wellbeing manifested in social isolation or a feeling of rejection. The solution the problem of social unease is an intervention from society itself.¹⁴

The lack of social adjustment is caused by several factors. 1) socio-economic ones (precariousness, unemployment and suburban inferior living conditions); 2) socio-territorial (suburban areas presenting with marginalization and aggressive behaviours); 3) Psychological and relational factors: struggle, transition from childhood to adulthood, troubles of identification and problems in managing relationships; 4) educational and affective: conflict and isolation in teenagers, misunderstood by educational figures, and lack of adults’ capacity to monitor and

¹² Eger, J. M. 2012. There is Something About El Sistema. HuffPost Arts & Culture Blog [Internet], 2 April, 2012. Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/johnm-eger/-there-is-something-about_b_1390248.html?ref=arts, Accessed 10-03-2015.

¹³ Tunstall, T. (2012). Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music, XVI

¹⁴ ORML-CIRIEC 1998 ORML, Ciriec, Il disagio sociale in Toscana - Ricerca esplorativa per il monitoraggio e le nuove politiche, Flashlavoro Quaderni 57, Firenze, 1998.

relate with them.¹⁵

With the fast changing pace of society, young people are the first ones to experience trouble in integrating. At school, unease reflects mostly in problems in following social rules and respecting authority figures, issues in relating to colleagues and tendencies to isolation, bullying and violent behaviour. Eventually, this leads to giving up studies altogether, after a permanent track of school failure. On the psychological level, uneasy young people have trouble fulfilling their personal goals and completing tasks, often quitting or adopting negative conducts when facing challenges.¹⁶

2.2 When social risk is prevalent in the community

Taking Venezuela as an example, unease is predominant in areas such as cities' outskirts, with many disadvantaged communities. Very often the high risks in these areas are caused by extreme poverty, with other connected problems. Such problems include poor school performance, violence, juvenile crime, drug addiction, sexual promiscuity and gang memberships. Without social intervention, these areas tend to be in a vicious circle, with no way out. It is necessary to remember that life in *barrios* is tough, very often with extremely low standards of living. In schools with not enough prevention to deal with their problematic students, failure will increase.

El Sistema aims to provide an answer to this endless “spiral” by reaching out to youths that are the most vulnerable and exposed to delinquency, *before* delinquency reaches out to them. This has the potential to change these communities. Such a programme is considered a form of social prevention and rehabilitation since the goal is to involve individuals living in outspoken risk situations.¹⁷

One of the challenges when dealing with the uneasiness of young people is that their behaviour can sometimes be uncooperative and even hostile to figures of

¹⁵ Cambi, Dell'Orfanello, Landi (a cura di), *Il dis-agio giovanile nella scuola del terzo millennio*, Armando, 2008, 53.

¹⁶ Pianta, R. D. 2001. *La relazione bambino-insegnante : aspetti evolutivi e clinici*. Cortina Raffaello, 15.

¹⁷ See Higgins, C. 2006. Land of hope and glory. *The Guardian*, 24 November 2006. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2006/nov/24/classicalmusicandopera>. Accessed 10-05-2014 and Vulliamy, E. 2007. *Orchestral manoeuvres*. *The Guardian*, 29 July 2007. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2007/jul/29/classicalmusicandopera1>. Accessed 03-04-2014.

authority or colleagues. When analysing behaviours, it is important to understand that this cannot be isolated from the overall context. Therefore, to understand the origins of such behaviour and to intervene in the context may already be an effective way to address the problem.¹⁸

3. Social cognitive theory: how behaviour learning process is developed inside a group

One of the main causes of unease in young people is the feeling of non-adjustment inside their homes.¹⁹ When handling behaviour in uneasy young people, it is important to understand how the behaviour was first learned. Parents are responsible for properly managing the emotional and social development of the child. Therefore, parents are their first role models. Inside the classroom, it is crucial for the teacher to take into consideration that children carry with them the behaviour they learned at home in the interactions with their family. It is fundamental that teachers interpret the classroom environment and assess group's interactions.²⁰

Social learning theory may explain how these young people copy and shape their own behaviour under the influence of their environment. In addition, it explains that if these subjects are placed in a more positive atmosphere, this can promote new ways to learn and behave.

El Sistema is a specialised teaching ensemble. Children first learn how to play an instrument on an everyday basis in a group where they can see other students learning at the same time. The group becomes the individual's learning model, the centre of the participant's experience²¹. In addition, the music teacher and other young participants can become positive role models for others both as to music skills and for social and emotional behaviours. To clarify these processes, it is relevant to understand how the learning process happens within a group.

Social cognitive theory was founded by the psychologist Alfred Bandura. It was first called "social learning theory" but over the last thirty years it has become

¹⁸ Cambi, F., Dell'Orfanello, M. G. & Landi, S, 2008. Il disagio giovanile nella scuola del terzo millennio. Armando Editore, 53.

¹⁹ Pianta, R. D. 2001. La relazione bambino-insegnante : aspetti evolutivi e clinici. Cortina Raffaello, 77.

²⁰ Cambi, F., Dell'Orfanello, M. G. & Landi, S, 2008. Il disagio giovanile nella scuola del terzo millennio. Armando Editore, 35.

²¹ Govias, J.A. Inside El Sistema - El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

gradually *cognitive* due to its understanding of human learning. It considers that the learning of behaviours is a cognitive process developed within a social context²², where an individual can learn a behaviour by seeing the performance of others and its outcomes in a three-stage process: the observation of attitudes and actions of others, the memorisation of those behaviours, and their interpretation as standards for the observing the individual's future actions.²³

Bandura thus clearly distinguishes between the learning of behaviour and behaviour itself. The learning process can occur without change of the individual's performance. This means that, while an individual may learn a new behaviour, this does not necessarily imply that the behaviour will be adopted.

Bandura believed that people can learn from their environment. Observational learning is one of the fundamental processes of learning according to social learning theory. The theory states that learning requires a social model. A social role model is someone of authority or higher status, important enough to affect the development of the individual's behaviour. A social role model is usually someone close to the child, and can be a family member, a teacher, or even a friend.

Thus, learning may be achieved through a shaping process which involves observation (of a model), imitation and integration. The learner encodes what he / she has observed and a possible new behaviour will be stored in his / her memory for later imitation which is the process of copying and reproducing. Through his experiments, Bandura realized that processes of learning a behaviour do not necessarily determine the performance of the learned behaviour. This group of experiments was called "Bobo Doll" and was conducted in 1961 and 1963. The experiment consisted in studying a group of children's behaviour after watching an adult model acting aggressively towards a Bobo doll. Bandura clearly showed that observation of an aggressive behaviour would not elicit the same reactive behaviour in all children.

Bandura also stated that reinforcement was very important in this type of learning, distinguishing the direct reinforcement from the vicariant. Direct reinforcement happens after the individual behaves in the desired way (by the teacher, or the parent, for example), getting a compliment or a reward. With the vicariant process, reinforcement comes from the model itself. For instance, the student observes another colleague receiving a compliment for his behaviour and

²² Bandura, A. 2001. Social cognitive theory: an agentic perspective. *Annu Rev Psychol.*, 52:1-26, 15.

²³ See "social learning", Encyclopaedia Britannica. Encyclopaedia Britannica Online Academic Edition, available at <http://academic.eb.com.ezproxy.eui.eu/EBchecked/topic/551304/social-learning>. Accessed 13-03-2015.

feels stimulated to model his own accordingly. Therefore reinforcement affects the processes of behaviour learning and performance.

Social cognitive theory explains how behaviour learning processes take place and it can be a way to explain why young people living in uneasiness show negative behaviours towards peers and teachers. It is acknowledged that “economic conditions, socioeconomic status, and educational and family structures affect behaviour largely through their impact on people’s aspirations, sense of efficacy, personal standards, affective states, and other self-regulatory influences, rather than directly”.²⁴ However, and importantly, these factors are not the only ones that affect learning. Other factors matter, such as attention to what the model does, motivation, expectations and the individual’s self-perception of efficacy.

In conclusion, there are relevant processes of imitation and observational learning for individuals’ behaviours, but at the same time the probability to perform in a certain way is partly related to self-regulative mechanisms. For some children, the imitation of negative behaviours is a way to feel approved and valued by others who behave the same. However, others are not willing to engage in destructive or undisciplined behaviour.

3.1 Self-efficacy perception: the importance of instilling it in uneasy young people

Bandura wrote that “self-efficacy perception has an essential part in the causal structure of social cognitive theory because efficacy beliefs affect adaptation and change not only in their own right, but through their impact on other determinants such as motivation”.²⁵ For a behaviour to be performed, it is necessary for the individual to have confidence in his own skills. That confidence, the individual’s self-perception and belief of personal ability to complete tasks and reach goals, is defined in psychology as self-efficacy.²⁶ It relates to competence and is reflected in how long an individual persists in attempting to succeed with an assignment and in the drive to face challenges. It is important to understand that self-efficacy representation is intrinsically relational and communicative, and is built and shaped upon the external experiences of the individual.²⁷

²⁴ Bandura, A. 2001. Social cognitive theory: an agentic perspective. *Annu Rev Psychol.*, 52:15.

²⁵ Bandura, A. 2001. Social cognitive theory: an agentic perspective. *Annu Rev Psychol.*, 52:1-26, 10.

²⁶ Bandura, A. 2001. Social cognitive theory: an agentic perspective. *Annu Rev Psychol.*, 52:1-26,10.

²⁷ Cambi, F., Dell’Orfanello, M. G. & Landi, S, 2008. *Il disagio giovanile nella scuola del terzo millennio*. Armando Editore, 110.

Self-efficacy starts in early childhood while children deal with an extensive variety of experiences, and continues to be developed throughout adult life. Self-perception evolves with the attainment and learning of new skills.

Self-efficacy can be explained according to Bandura's theories which highlight four major causes²⁸: mastery experiences, social modelling, social persuasion and psychological responses.

Bandura explained: "The most effective way of developing a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences."²⁹ El Sistema offers to young people that might have never seen an instrument the possibility to learn it and master it. Research suggests that learning an instrument has a positive influence in delinquent young people. Mastering an instrument can be faced as a challenge. According to Jessica Balboni, former L.A. Philharmonic director of educational initiatives, "playing in orchestras '(...) can give children a strong sense of their own efficacy in the world'."³⁰

Social modelling is another important source of self-efficacy. Witnessing other people completing a task successfully stimulates the individual's perception that he too has the skills to master the same task.³¹ El Sistema models behaviour through the cooperation between older and younger students. The observation process of more advanced colleagues increases the motivation of younger ones to develop their skills.³²

Social persuasion means that people can be persuaded through verbal encouragement from others to believe that they have the skills and capacities to succeed.

Psychological responses are considered reactions on an emotional level, as moods and stressful situations can also have an impact on how a person perceives his/her abilities. A musician that becomes extremely nervous before playing in public can develop a sense of low self-efficacy when he/she is requested to have a

²⁸ Cherry, K. Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. Available at: http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/self_efficacy.htm. Accessed 12-03-2015.

²⁹ Cherry, K. Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. Available at: http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/self_efficacy.htm. Accessed 12-03-2015.

³⁰ Tunstall, T. (2012). Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music, 138-139.

³¹ Cherry, K. Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. Available at: http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/self_efficacy.htm. Accessed 12-03-2015.

³² Govias, J.A. The Science behind El Sistema – El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 03-09-2014.

public performance. But Bandura also notes "it is not the sheer intensity of emotional and physical reactions that is important but rather how they are perceived and interpreted."³³ When an individual learns how to handle emotions and stress, he develops a better sense of self-efficacy.

Collective efficacy is another perception of efficacy: it is the shared belief of a group about its collective ability to achieve a certain result³⁴. In relation to a group (for example family, couple, etc.), it does not depend on each member's perceptions and beliefs about their individual capacity to achieve a certain goal. Rather, the sense of efficacy can be about their communal perception and capacity to work together as a team and to achieve shared goals. According to Bandura, the perception of individual self-efficacy affects the collective perception when it comes to managing relationships. The perception of self-efficacy contributes to a sense and belief of collective efficacy. For example in the case of a couple, individual self-perception will have an impact on the couple's efficacy in managing their relationship.³⁵ The achievement of goals is also affected by the interaction and coordination between group members.

Children coming from deprived communities tend to have a low self-efficacy background. Reasons such as constant school failure and no family support to change it, make these children believe that they are not capable of learning and mastering something, and sooner or later they give up their studies. An important aspect of self-efficacy is domain-specific belief. You might also feel incapable in a certain area but at the same time you can also develop a sense of efficacy in another domain.

2.2 Locus of control

After analysing how behaviours are learned and the importance of self-efficacy, another concept that can help to understand El Sistema is that of "Locus of control", which is the process connected to how people explain and react to adversities and choose to face challenges of life.

"Locus of Control" was a concept developed in Personality Psychology by Julian B. Rotter³⁶, who like Bandura also developed a social learning theory³⁷. An

³³ Bandura, A. (ed.) (1995). *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies*, Cambridge University Press, 5.

³⁴ Bandura, A. 2001. Social cognitive theory: an agentic perspective. *Annu Rev Psychol.*, 52:1-26, 14.

³⁵ Smith, H. M.& Betz, N. E. (2000). Development and validation of a scale of perceived social self-efficacy. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 8 (3): 283-301.

³⁶ The theory is found in Rotter J. B. (1966) Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychol Monogr*, 80.

individual's "locus" is theorized as either *internal* or *external*. Internal refers to a person's belief of being able to influence life circumstances – someone with a strong internal locus believes that outcomes of life results from his own actions, for instance, when getting an exam evaluation, this character tends to approve or blame himself or his/her capacities. By contrast, individuals are said to have an external locus of control when they consider events as being outside their, and being instead the product of chance or bad luck³⁸.

This concept has been researched and applies to different areas of psychology, especially at the educational level.

Discussions about this concept continue and one of those debates concerns the relations between locus of control and self-efficacy. This last concept relates to competence in certain situation and activities, while "locus is a more general cross-situational beliefs about control."³⁹⁴⁰

Although the definition of this two concepts differ, they relate to each other. A strong sense of self-efficacy is crucial to managing personal life circumstances. An individual is not completely influenced by the environment because reactions and stimuli can be self-controlled and one has a choice of behaviour. The more an individual masters a task, the more he will be in control of future outcomes related to that competence. The individual is not seen as a passive subject to be dominated by environmental forces, but as an influential actor in all processes. This leads to the idea that the individual's self-perception can be an agent of change, to influence the proper functioning and the circumstances of life intentionally.⁴¹

Jonathan Govias, a conductor, consultant and educator for El Sistema programs, has concluded that "the empowerment that the (...) network gives students, placing their fate into their own hands, reflects the ideas of locus of control and self-efficacy (...)"⁴² The programmes offers participants the right

³⁷ For a brief overview, see Roddenberry, A. & Renk, K. (2010). Locus of control and self-efficacy: potential mediators of stress, illness, and utilization of Health Services in college students. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 41 (4): 353–370, at 354-355.

³⁸ see Roddenberry, A. & Renk, K. (2010). Locus of control and self-efficacy: potential mediators of stress, illness, and utilization of Health Services in college students. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 41 (4): 353–370, at 354.

³⁹⁴⁴ Bandura, A. 2001. Social cognitive theory: an agentic perspective. *Annu Rev Psychol.*, 52:1-26

⁴¹ Bandura, A. 2001. Social cognitive theory: an agentic perspective. *Annu Rev Psychol.*, 52:1-26, 2.

⁴² Govias, J.A. Social Action Through Music – El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 03-09-2014.

combination of challenge and comfort⁴³, which in turn is a structural facilitator to enhance children's quality of life and give them new directions for the future.

4. El Sistema's three spheres

The main structure of El Sistema lies in three categories or spheres of intervention: the first is the personal and social circle, the second is the circle of the family, the third the circle of the community.⁴⁴ All these spheres communicate and interact with each other in El Sistema.

Abreu considers, it a major concern when a child lacks sense of identification. Inside orchestras and choirs, the child can develop emotionally and intellectually. Learning inside the group will develop one's sense of commitment, leadership, responsibility, generosity and collaboration with colleagues.⁴⁵ At the family level, the parents' support is crucial: with their acknowledgement, the child feels important and becomes a model to his family and community. Josbel Pulce, teacher at El Sistema, reports that the programme brought transformation in many families: "They are thrilled when they hear what their children have accomplished", "They hear the kids practicing at home, and they hear concerts here, and they feel a kind of pride that gives them hope for the future of the whole family"⁴⁶

At the community level, regular group performance provides interaction: relatives and friends have the chance to listen and acknowledge the children's hard work. It is the moment when children can share their joy of playing: "the spiritual world that music produces in itself, which also lies within itself".⁴⁷

⁴³ Govias, J.A. Social Action Through Music – El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

⁴⁴ TED – Technology, Entertainment, Design – Ideas Worth Spreading. Acceptance Speech by José Antonio Abreu. URL: http://www.ted.com/talks/jose_abreu_on_kids_transformed_by_music.html, Accessed on 18 February 2015.

⁴⁵ TED – Technology, Entertainment, Design – Ideas Worth Spreading. Acceptance Speech by José Antonio Abreu. URL: http://www.ted.com/talks/jose_abreu_on_kids_transformed_by_music.html, Accessed on 18 February 2015.

⁴⁶ Tunstall, T. (2012). *Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music*, 168 pp.

⁴⁷ TED – Technology, Entertainment, Design – Ideas Worth Spreading. Acceptance Speech by José Antonio Abreu. URL: http://www.ted.com/talks/jose_abreu_on_kids_transformed_by_music.html, accessed on 18 February 2015.

4.1 *Núcleos* as a starting point to answer community unease

The main cause of unease in young people and its definition is the lack of non-adjustment to society.⁴⁸

It is essential to realize that El Sistema has a community background, in the sense of revolving around the local community. Local programs in Venezuela are created inside of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, more known in Venezuela as *barrios*. They are adjusted and connected to their specific needs.

The musical practices are held inside a building structure, for example a school that becomes the centre of the musical program – this is called a “*núcleo*”. Therefore the *núcleo* is the place where children are sheltered from the dangers of the street after school by rehearsing up to 6 days a week, 4 hours a day. The fact that children spend so much of their time inside the *núcleo* creates the feeling of a second home, where they can share their feelings, address fears and most of all share their music. “The logic, although prosaic, remains simple and universal. If children are at the *núcleo* (music school) in the hours after school and the end of the workday, they’re not at risk. The fact that their activities are supervised, focused, disciplined, demanding, and rewarding on multiple levels becomes almost a secondary consideration for those who have never experienced them personally.” (J. Govias)⁴⁹

Besides being the center of musical activities, the *núcleo* is the place where children can feel secure after school hours, and where they have adults looking after them. Thus, this activity becomes the mediating influence between the students, teachers and the families and the surrounding community. The local programme takes care of its students in every way, creating a contact with the students’ parents and relatives and keeping informed about their development in school. To start learning in a *núcleo*, there are no auditions or exams. The aim is for children to feel part of the group (orchestra or choir): no matter their level or musical ability, the only requirement is the commitment and participation.

4.2 El Sistema’s pedagogy and didactics

El Sistema does not rely on only one method and is far from being rigid, since each *núcleo* needs to adjust its programme according to the students and

⁴⁸ ORML-CIRIEC 1998 ORML, Ciriec, Il disagio sociale in Toscana-Ricerca esplorativa per il monitoraggio e le nuove politiche, Flashlavoro Quaderni 57, Firenze, 1998.

⁴⁹ Govias, J.A. Social Action Through Music – El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

communities.⁵⁰ It is a combination of musical strategies. The only certain principle is its emphasis on “ensemble-all-the-time pedagogy”⁵¹.

Children start their studies at the *núcleo* at a very early age, around two or three years old. This is sometimes called a “Baby Vivaldi orchestra”. Even though it is called this way, there are no instruments: the orchestra may consist in gathering students also with the presence of their parents so they can sing, mostly folk songs. Since the beginning of El Sistema, it was very clear that there was a need to remember traditional Venezuelan songs, since at *barrios* the most common music to hear had been the current standard commercial music. This was a way to involve adults: especially mothers were led to remember this traditional folk songs while at the same time their children were being introduced to music.

After when children are around four years old, they start the so-called “Paper orchestra”, where they learn the premises of string instruments.. Literally, students play on instruments made of paper actually made by themselves and their parents. This idea came from the famous pedagogue Susan Siman, who closely collaborated with José Antonio Abreu. In Siman’s words, “We encouraged the development of fine motor skills by making wooden and papier-mâché replicas of the instruments that the kids could learn ‘to play’ before they had the capacity to play real instruments. And this also taught them how to love and care for an instrument.”⁵²The process consists in building a violin during the class, by following the instructions of the teacher. Homework means to continue building their instruments at home. This is another chance for parents to get involved in their children’s learning process.

The main goal of the Paper orchestra is in providing a first approach to the instruments: how they should be taken care of, how to take them out of the case, how they should be positioned, etc. And this whole process again takes place in a

⁵⁰ Borchet, G. 2012. El Sistema: a subjectivity of time discipline. In Araújo, E. & Duque, E. (Eds). Os tempos sociais e o mundo contemporâneo. Um debate para as ciências sociais e humanas.

Universidade do Minho: Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade. Centro de Investigação em Ciências Sociais. Available

at:http://www.lasics.uminho.pt/OJS/index.php/cecs_ebooks/article/view/1553/1455. Retrieved 30-01-2015.

⁵¹ Booth, E. Thoughts on seeing El Sistema. Available at:

http://www.americanorchestras.org/images/stories/lld_pdf/elsistema_Booth.pdf. Retrieved 11-02-2015.

⁵² Tunstall, T. (2012). Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music, 79.

group, to prepare for the next orchestra. Even when only playing a paper instrument, it is clear in El Sistema that from this early age students should learn how to behave in a group, how to collaborate with their colleagues, and how to develop a sense for discipline.

Mostly at this age, repertory is also very based on folk songs, with simple melodies but always related to the instrument. Singing becomes a way to approach technique in an easy and fun way. After some two years of studying at the Paper Orchestra, children are ready to start with real instruments.

Another interesting approach, this time, incentivized by USA El Sistema programme, is through playing with the *boomwhackers*. They consist in plastic tubes, each one tuned to a musical note. The playing consists on clapping the tube with the hand or tapping a tube against another. A lot of repertory can be accessed with the boomwhackers and again the sense of group is cultivated⁵³.

The easiest way to make a child acquainted to the instrument is to make it easy and simple. For centuries, the Western music tradition put the task of reading music ahead that of playing the instrument. But when talking about uneasy children is crucial to make music learning as simple as possible, keeping students interested and motivated. Therefore the imitation approach emerges as a relevant one, where inside a group of children learn to play an instrument by copying the teacher and colleagues. When a child realizes that playing an instrument can be stress-free, this is the first step towards self-efficacy.

In teaching, El Sistema shares some of the principles of the Suzuki method. The Suzuki movement was created and developed by the Japanese violinist Shin'ichi Suzuki (1898-1998). Suzuki also believed that people could learn naturally from their environment, by modelling their behaviour on the roles of the environment.

The Suzuki method puts more emphasis on instruments, especially on the violin. Abreu extended this approach to all the instruments in the symphonic orchestra. The method consists in learning how to play an instrument through physical coordination and ear memory. The instrument technique is taught in a very basic way and the notation is added after the child is already motivated: it is then introduced to be of support. At the beginning children play mostly by heart; but with time, reading becomes important in order for them to understand cognitively what they are playing. Having a relaxed approach to learning increases the student's self-perception of what being capable.

Another key of Sistema is that of non-exclusion. A student is never excluded

⁵³ Annenberg Learner. The Power of Music: P-5 Teaching inspired by El Sistema. Available at: <http://www.learner.org/workshops/k5music/>, Accessed 13-12-2014.

for being less experienced or not playing on the same level as the others. Even if the child only manages to clap his hands, so be it. In the Western classical music tradition, students in ensembles from music schools are grouped according to their levels and if one student does not match the level, the solution lies in the extent of practice. Implicitly, the idea is that the individual needs to strain as much as possible and solve the technical aspects by himself, in order not to make the group lag because of him. There is always a feeling of competition and each student is more on their own as regards problem solving.

El Sistema has the opposite philosophy and criteria. Abreu said himself: “Classical music for hundreds of years has been excluding people. We are about changing that. We are the opposite of that.”⁵⁴ This can be seen in the strategies Sistema applies. If any student is feeling behind, teachers will do what they can to help, providing extra individual classes, or more experienced students would practice together with the less advanced ones: “If you have a problem, the feeling is not ‘Oh, that’s your problem, go take care of it’. No – if you have a problem, it’s everybody’s problem”.⁵⁵ El Sistema does not instill an idea of competition, because music is played inside the group. There is no primary reason to compete, because everybody does their best, according to their capabilities.

Another way in Sistema helps integrating students is by adapting scores. Beginners may even be admitted to play in advanced orchestras with such repertoire as 5th Mahler Symphony, but teachers will prepare special adaptations so these students have a sense of belonging to the ensemble. Basically everything is done according to a group approach yet with no feeling of competition, rather with a clear sense of inclusion. This *leitmotiv* is applied to all situations, even in the most important ones. During Dudamel’s concert in Hollywood Bowl in 2005 with the YOLA EXPO children orchestra⁵⁶ some participants were playing in public for the first time, but that was far from an excuse for these children not to participate. Tricia Tunstall witnessed: “the teacher tells me that some of the kids were real beginners, unsure until the last minute even of how to hold their instruments. ‘Cassandra held her bow right that night for the first time in her life’, the violin teacher marvels. Dudamel, she says, never stopped smiling in rehearsals, and often told the children to make their instrument sound ‘happy’.” This a very clear

⁵⁴ Tunstall, T. (2012). *Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music*, 34.

⁵⁵ Tunstall, T. (2012). *Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music*, 119.

⁵⁶ Tunstall, T. (2012). *Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music*, 17.

example of Sistema's strategies put into practice as non-exclusion philosophy.

As Rodrigo Guerrero says, "El Sistema's (...) pedagogy has thus far focused more on performing than on creating music".⁵⁷ It relies on constant playing and performance, unifying technical aspects such as bowing, dynamics, intonation, instilling technical precision leading into a more uniform type of performance. Everything in El Sistema is about playing in group: therefore orchestra is seen as a whole and all aspects of playing, including instrument technique, are homogenized. "A *ripieno* part must be played in exactly the same way by all the musicians who communally perform it".⁵⁸

The role of teacher / conductor in El Sistema has an important part when leading *núcleos*. As previously said, teachers in Venezuela, besides their work, accompany their students more broadly, creating contact with families, relatives and school. There is the concept of a multi-tasking teacher who takes care of children, adaptations of repertory, families, *núcleo* organization, concerts planning and many others issues. Abreu defined the role of the conductors / teachers as also community leaders: "They are very brilliant conductors – *directores brillantísimos* – (...) they work all the time with families as well with kids. (...) They are social leaders and musical leaders at the same time."⁵⁹

Another fundamental aspect of El Sistema is the conception that teachers need to be prepared to respond to all kinds of situations that might arise in different musical matters. A violin teacher can be a conductor but in a rehearsal he / she may also have to teach a cello student how to place the first finger on the board, even though cello is not his / her main instrument. In the Western tradition, teachers' roles tend to be more defined: for example, the conductor just communicates what he / she is expected to. Some teachers believe that if they are the conductors, then they should only care for this task: they might not even teach their own instrument, so that students regard them solely as the orchestra's conductor. Here again, El

⁵⁷ See Tunstall, T. (2012). Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music, 35.

⁵⁸ Borchet, G. 2012. El Sistema: a subjectivity of time discipline. In Araújo, E. & Duque, E. (Eds). Os tempos sociais e o mundo contemporâneo. Um debate para as ciências sociais e humanas. Universidade do Minho: Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade. Centro de Investigação em Ciências Sociais. Available at:
http://www.lasics.uminho.pt/OJS/index.php/cecs_ebooks/article/view/1553/1455. Retrieved 23-09-2014. 70.

⁵⁹ Tunstall, T. (2012). Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music, 95.

Sistema works the way around. It aims to train teachers so that they can be prepared to conduct as well as to help in the performance of other instruments. The conductor role does not constitute an isolated or a “higher” function: instead, it is regarded as important as the orchestra components. Thus, all should face together the diverse circumstances of playing, both in successes and in adversities. “Dudamel never remounts the podium. On the contrary, he takes every curtain call from among the musicians, winding his way between the music stands and making sure that every player who has played a featured solo or moment rises for a bow”.⁶⁰

The experience of playing in an orchestra allows children not only to experience music, art and beauty but also to cultivate the sense of order and discipline. It is essential to stimulate children at risk because as they are very young they tend to give up music quite easily once they must face other challenges at school. It is important to structure the programme and the orchestra in a way that children feel included and engaged. El Sistema is so successful because of its intensity of practise, with the regularity of rehearsals and the frequency of performance. This offers children an atmosphere of continuous improvement. The discipline in El Sistema is not seen as source of stiffness but as tenet of motivation.

One of the keys of this programme is putting intrinsic motivation at the basis of the student’s engagement. Borrowing Bandura’s terms, this is really an experience of self-efficacy development. The engagement is a long-term process and does not provide a magic key since each student is different. Essentially, only with time does it become apparent that a programme, its structure and pedagogic approaches are fruitful: that is, if students continue to be motivated and engaged..

The intrinsic motivation is achieved, according to Abreu, by the simple fact that a child feels the joy of playing an instrument, of being effective in mastering this experience, and especially in performing which is an act of sharing. It is playing and making music that creates a beneficial mechanism of identification, motivation and sense of value for the group and for each participant.

4.3 Peer education, peer tutoring and roles deliberation

“One of El Sistema’s greatest triumphs is the integration of mentoring
“⁶¹(...) El Sistema has successfully realized that learning music and teaching it is a unified, simultaneous process.”⁶² From the moment they begin to learn a new piece,

⁶⁰ Tunstall, T. (2012). *Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music*, 19.

⁶¹ Tunstall, T. (2012). *Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music*, 163.

⁶² Hall, Z. *Discovery Day. El Sistema. Carnegie Hall 2012. Transcript of a Talk by Leon Botstein.*

children are made realize that they can also teach it. “Peer teaching (...) is a primary cornerstone of El Sistema pedagogy; rather than trying to inhibit interaction between kids, teachers welcome and encourage it in the direction of mutual support.”⁶³

Peer education and tutoring are part of a didactic strategy in which some members of the group are indentified as tutors or leaders in respect to their colleagues.⁶⁴ These members receive specific orientation in how to become leaders and experts of a certain task. This information is also imparted within a group, but apart from the one of the classroom, under the guidance of an adult; it will be also the place to debate which approaches can be useful to solve difficulties recurring in the class. Thus, such leaders will be actively operating to shape growth and to positively influence their colleagues, and to implement an effective prevention.⁶⁵ Peer education is directed at stimulating good behaviour, and helping students to solve amongst themselves issues and relational problems. This too can be considered a useful strategy to prevent and reduce uneasiness.

While *Peer education* is more aimed at solving issues of behaviour, *Peer tutoring* is more about transmitting information and knowledge between students. It is a more complex strategy and it needs additional planning and definition of the goals, structure and evaluation of the process. One example consists in dividing the classroom into groups entrusted to different tutors, where more experienced student will be the leaders while the others will receive information. The groups are supervised by the teacher and receive information about the tasks and goals that are expected to be fulfilled. Besides the gratification and self-fulfilment implicit in being a tutor, this also has intensifies the self-learning process, since the tutor while teaching explains what he/she has learned, thus enhanceing competence and knowledge about that task.⁶⁶

Available at: <http://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2012/12/8/0100/PM/Discovery-Day-El-Sistema/>, Accessed 02-01-2015.

⁶³ Tunstall, T. (2012). *Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music*, 163.

⁶⁴ Cambi, Dell'Orfanello, Landi (a cura di), *Il dis-agio giovanile nella scuola del terzo millennio*, Armando, 2008, 113.

⁶⁵ Cambi, Dell'Orfanello, Landi (a cura di), *Il dis-agio giovanile nella scuola del terzo millennio*, Armando, 2008, 112

⁶⁶ Hall, Z. *Discovery Day. El Sistema. Carnegie Hall 2012. Transcript of a Talk by Leon Botstein.* Available at: <http://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2012/12/8/0100/PM/Discovery-Day-El-Sistema/>, Accessed 02-01-2015.

El Sistema applies peer tutoring inside the orchestra by placing more advanced students next to the beginners. This fosters collaboration between levels and instils responsibility in older students.

Peer tutoring is also an opportunity for students to experience new social roles, being guided by the norms and values of reference.⁶⁷

Another strategy is the one of *roles deliberation*, meaning that students will be responsible for a specific task: for example, being responsible for placing the chairs before an orchestra rehearsal, or being chosen as section leaders during a tour. All tasks are essential for children to better feel and understand that are responsible for their orchestra's success. At different times, the deliberation of roles may change, meaning that it will not always be the same student responsible for the same task. For example, the concertmaster may change within the same concert, where one instrumentalist will be leading the first part and after the break it will be another one. This is another example of how orchestras in El Sistema work in contrast to the normal Western classical tradition. Being concertmaster or section leader does not imply that someone is more important or even that someone performs better than the rest of the group. Being at the first stand is an opportunity to experience leadership and again, responsibility. According to Jonathan Govias, having a variety of roles within an ensemble is compatible with efficiency as long as there is an agreement of purpose and direction: "In an ensemble, there is no success for one without success for all. And unlike sports, an ensemble's success is measured only against its potential; its victories are not contingent on others being vanquished."⁶⁸

4.3.1 A practical example of peer tutoring: solving the non-homogeneous ensemble level

One practical example is offered by an ensemble where I taught within the project "Orquestra Geração" / El Sistema, Portugal. During my third year of collaboration, it happened that some students lagged behind their colleagues and could not yet move up to the next level of the orchestra; so they had to remain part of the newcomers' orchestra. This was a beginner's group; as it often happened during the school year that new students were being added, there was no homogenous level of performance. Besides, older students were feeling demotivated because they were playing the same repertory as in the previous year.

⁶⁷ Cambi, Dell'Orfanello, Landi (a cura di), *Il dis-agio giovanile nella scuola del terzo millennio*, Armando, 2008, 113.

⁶⁸ Govias, J.A. Social Action Through Music – El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

For new students, this was not an issue, as it was their first experience. But at the end of the school year they still had to know how to play a specific piece that was determined by the directors. Here the stress factors were the demotivation and somewhat poor behaviour of older students, the non-homogeneous level of performance of the group, and the tension to make them play at the end of the year most of the pieces they were supposed to play.

After analysing the situation I decided that the only way to solve the problem would be that the less experienced students should have a chance to speed up their learning process, and limiting the individual sessions to half an hour per week would not be enough to achieve the goal. So I decided that during the orchestra time, I would divide students into more or less experienced pairs supervised by peers. The groups were spread throughout the building and each older student had to teach his or her colleague how to play a part of a certain piece. During this time I was supervising and telling them where the problem was and how they could help colleagues solve that technical issue. Each class lasted two hours and there were 6 groups of students, with 12 individuals in total. This approach was used during two months, and at the end of the school programme the initial problems were completely solved. The group managed to learn almost all the pieces and older students were feeling useful, keeping their motivation to remain engaged in the project.

El Sistema uses this method for students who are behind; they can be helped to catch up with the group level. This is a common occurrence due to several factors such as the irregular presence at the sessions, the lack of practice on the parts, or because new students join the programme in the middle of the school year. El Sistema proposes a model to solve possible problems by dividing children into groups where one student will be responsible to coordinate the group; at the same time all groups are supervised by an official teacher of the programme.

5. Performance as common goal and sense of achievement: sense of affiliation and community acknowledgement

“Music is fundamentally a social activity, has social impact, a phenomenon most eloquently connected to the community” (Christopher Small)⁶⁹.

El Sistema cannot be dissociated from the community since one of the goals is to reach and involve parents, relatives, friends and the rest of the community.

A main cause of social unease in young people is the sense of “non-fitting” with the community and society⁷⁰. In his theory of the *Hierarchy of Needs*, Maslow

⁶⁹ Govias, J.A. The Science behind El Sistema – El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

⁷⁰ Maslow, A. H. A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.

defined the third level of the Pyramid as the individual's need of love and belongingness to a social group.⁷¹ Later, this was described as *Need for affiliation* by David McClelland that followed Henry Murray's classification of several needs, including achievement, power and affiliation⁷². Murray defined that a person that connects strongly with others and takes part of a group develops a sense of affiliation. This sense, when felt by all individuals in a group, instils motivation towards a sense of accomplishment.

The term *Need for achievement* was also used by Murray and was described as the individual's drive to accomplish something deeply relevant, to master skills, to take control or high values, to have determination to succeed. Accomplishment also implies working with straightforwardness of purpose towards a high and distant goal.

El Sistema programme motivates students to play inside an orchestra to make them feel part of something larger. Mastering and accomplishing also entails discipline, focus, commitment. Abreu calls it "pursuit of excellence". This is another fundamental key of El Sistema – the communal search for artistic excellence. The pursuit of excellence unites the students towards a common goal, which means that the team needs to work together and that everything they do affects the entire group. The orchestra members become collectively efficient and accomplished when pursuing and achieving common goals: for example, a concert.

El Sistema's structure, as said before, always has the community at its basis: connecting children, families and others builds this sense of belonging.

The most evident strategy that El Sistema presents for interacting with the community is the orchestral performance. This of course does not rely only on expecting people to be present at the orchestra's concert. As mentioned before, the *núcleo* creates a bridge between students and their families, while considering their situations and needs.

The frequency of performing is considered one of the keys of El Sistema's program. Children in Venezuela are used to performing in concerts several times a month. All the chances that they have to perform are essential. Abreu believes that performing spurs the sense of achievement, giving purpose and direction.⁷³ The community becomes the spectator and a main agent in acknowledging the children's

⁷¹ Maslow, A. H. A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.

⁷² Zimbardo, P. & Formica, R. (1963). Emotional comparison and self-esteem as determinants of affiliation. *Journal of Personality*, 31(2): 142-162.

⁷³ Booth, E. & Tunstall, T. Five encounters with El Sistema International. A venezuelan marvel becomes a global movement. Available at: <http://ericbooth.net/five-encounters-with-el-sistema-international/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

achievements.⁷⁴

The event itself of a symphonic performance, in Western tradition, according to sociologist Christopher Small “had a clear ritualistic function in which ideal relationships are enacted to reaffirm a specific type of social organization.⁷⁵ These relationships make different types of interactions be recognised not only among the performers, but also between the young persons, the staff and the parents.⁷⁶

Including parents and relatives in activities like a concert performance enriches the young people’s experiences, and can help develop the support that young people require in order to be successful in their musical accomplishments⁷⁷.

The audience / community becomes the spectator and the agent of acknowledging the children’s achievements; by acknowledging them, it brings up the feeling of affiliation.

6. Conclusions

El Sistema proposes collective musical education as an answer to social unease prevalent in disadvantaged communities, and as a strategy to promote self-efficacy and self-achievement in disadvantaged young people. Mastering a musical instrument also develops the individual sense of efficacy. Ensemble playing and peer tutoring instils positive behaviour in young people, while older students becoming role models for the younger ones. The orchestra performance becomes a

⁷⁴ Booth, E. & Tunstall, T. Five encounters with El Sistema International. A venezuelan marvel becomes a global movement. Available at: <http://ericbooth.net/five-encounters-with-el-sistema-international/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

⁷⁵ Borchet, G. 2012. El Sistema: a subjectivity of time discipline. In Araújo, E. & Duque, E. (Eds). *Os tempos sociais e o mundo contemporâneo. Um debate para as ciências sociais e humanas.* Universidade do Minho: Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade. Centro de Investigação em Ciências Sociais. Available at: http://www.lasics.uminho.pt/OJS/index.php/cecs_ebooks/article/view/1553/1455. Retrieved 23-09-2014, 72.

⁷⁶ Booth, E. & Tunstall, T. Five encounters with El Sistema International. A venezuelan marvel becomes a global movement. Available at: <http://ericbooth.net/five-encounters-with-el-sistema-international/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

⁷⁷ Barrett, M, 2014. Connecting through music: the contribution of a music programme to fostering positive youth development. *Research Studies in Music Education*. Published on line in December 2014.

common goal of the group and increases their sense of self-achievement. This climaxes with the acknowledgement of the community in which they live. Young musicians become a role model to their families, relatives and neighbours.

When building a social musical programme focused on integration of young people with social unease, the most important aspect to recognise is the self-efficacy and self-achievement of the students, since this is often the least of their priorities given their background. A student who does not recognize his full potential cannot understand the point of working with others and consequently the purpose of integrating in his / her community. When young people realize their potential, they have the opportunity to communicate and teach other students in their programme; they start to recognize themselves as valuable individuals and be aware of what they can give to others. Through the interaction of every student and the presentation of their work, an external approval of the community can occur as well.

El Sistema is based on social learning through its approaches of imitation, modelling, peer tutoring. As reported by developmental psychologists ‘Most musical activity is carried out with and for other people – it is fundamentally social – and so can play an important part in promoting interpersonal skills, teamwork, and co-operation’. Accordingly, music making has been linked to increases in spontaneous cooperative and helpful behaviour.⁷⁸

When an ensemble is playing we realize that “listening is an indispensable element in civil life, though it is often neglected. I am convinced that there is not only an aesthetic value in making music: its intrinsic beauty is the source of an intense ethical value”. (Claudio Abbado)⁷⁹

El Sistema shapes positive behaviour and at the same time fosters music skills. It promotes self-efficacy and self-achievement through mastering an instrument and ensemble playing, and gives young people the sense of value and belonging. It is really a great metaphor for human life.

El Sistema strategies replace the negative attitudes by constructive behaviours. These constructive behaviours, in turn, play an essential role in promoting individual perceptions of self-efficacy. As a result, El Sistema promotes integration in the society, both by promoting useful behaviours to interact positively with others, and by encouraging the self-esteem of the students and their motivation

⁷⁸ Barrett, M, 2014. Connecting through music: the contribution of a music programme to fostering positive youth development. *Research Studies in Music Education*. Published on line in December 2014.

⁷⁹ Majno, M. 2012. From the model of El Sistema in Venezuela to current applications: learning and integration through collective music education. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1252: 56.

to overcome social barriers with the belief in their ability to achieve goal.

References

Annenberg Learner. The Power of Music: P-5 Teaching inspired by El Sistema. Available at: <http://www.learner.org/workshops/k5music/>, Accessed 13-12-2014.

Bandura, A. (ed.) (1995). *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies*, Cambridge University Press

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84 (2): 191–215. doi:10.1037/0033-295x.84.2.191.

Bandura, A. 2001. Social cognitive theory: an agentic perspective. *Annu Rev Psychol.*, 52:1-26.

Barrett, M, 2014. Connecting through music: the contribution of a music programme to fostering positive youth development. *Research Studies in Music Education*. Published on line in December 2014.

Booth, E. & Tunstall, T. Five encounters with El Sistema International. A Venezuelan marvel becomes a global movement. Available at: <http://ericbooth.net/five-encounters-with-el-sistema-international/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

Booth, E. Thoughts on seeing El Sistema. Available at: http://www.americanorchestras.org/images/stories/lld_pdf/elsistema_Booth.pdf. Retrieved 11-02-2015.

Borchet, G. 2012. El Sistema: a subjectivity of time discipline. In Araújo, E. & Duque, E. (Eds). *Os tempos sociais e o mundo contemporâneo. Um debate para as ciências sociais e humanas*. Universidade do Minho: Centro de Estudos de Comunicação e Sociedade. Centro de Investigação em Ciências Sociais. Available at: http://www.lasics.uminho.pt/OJS/index.php/cecs_ebooks/article/view/1553/1455. Retrieved 30-01-2015.

Cambi, F., Dell'Orfanello, M. G. & Landi, S, 2008. *Il disagio giovanile nella scuola del terzo millennio*. Armando Editore.

Cherry, K. Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. Available

at: http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/a/self_efficacy.htm. Accessed 12-09-2014.

Eger, J. M. 2012. There is Something About El Sistema. HuffPost Arts & Culture Blog [Internet], 2 April, 2012. Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/johnm-eger/-there-is-something-about_b_1390248.html?ref=arts, Accessed 10-03-2015.

Encyclopaedia Britannica Online Academic Edition, available at <http://academic.eb.com.ezproxy.eui.eu/EBchecked/topic/551304/social-learning>. Accessed 13-03-2015.

Fundación Musical Simón Bolívar. <http://fundamusical.org.ve/nucleos/>, Accessed 28-03-2015

Govias, J.A. Inside El Sistema - El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

Govias, J.A. The Science behind El Sistema – El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

Govias, J.A. Social Action Through Music – El Sistema FAQs. Available at: <http://jonathangovias.com/faqs/>, Accessed 23-01-2015.

Hall, Z. Discovery Day. El Sistema. Carnegie Hall 2012. Transcript of a Talk by Leon Botstein. Available at: <http://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2012/12/8/0100/PM/Discovery-Day-El-Sistema/>, Accessed 02-01-2015.

Higgins, C. 2006. Land of hope and glory. The Guardian, 24 November 2006. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2006/nov/24/classicalmusicandopera>. Accessed 10-05-2014.

Maslow, A. H., A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.

Majno, M. 2012. From the model of El Sistema in Venezuela to current applications: learning and integration through collective music education. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1252: 56-64.

ORML-CIRIEC. (1998). *Il disagio sociale in Toscana-Ricerca esplorativa per il*

monitoraggio e le nuove politiche, Flashlavoro Quaderni 57, Firenze.

Pianta, R. D. 2001. La relazione bambino-insegnante : aspetti evolutivi e clinici. Raffaello Cortina,

Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement: Psychological Monographs: General & Applied, 80 (1): 1-28.

Roddenberry, A. & Renk, K. (2010). Locus of control and self-efficacy: potential mediators of stress, illness, and utilization of Health Services in college students. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 41 (4): 353–370. doi:10.1007/s10578-010-0173-6.

Smith, H. M.& Betz, N. E. (2000). Development and validation of a scale of perceived social self-efficacy. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 8 (3): 283-301. doi: 10.1177/106907270000800306.

TED – Technology, Entertainment, Design – Ideas Worth Spreading. Acceptance Speech by José Antonio Abreu. URL: http://www.ted.com/talks/jose_abreu_on_kids_transformed_by_music.html, Accessed on 18 February 2015.

Tunstall, T. (2012). Changing Lives: Gustavo Dudamel, El Sistema, and the transformative power of Music.

Vulliamy, E. 2007. Orchestral manoeuvres. *The Guardian*, 29 July 2007. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2007/jul/29/classicalmusicandopera1>. Accessed 03-04-2014.

Zimbardo, P. & Formica, R. (1963). Emotional comparison and self-esteem as determinants of affiliation. *Journal of Personality*, 31(2): 142-162.