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Representing Musical Identities of Children with Migrant Background – An Example from the Research Project *Music without Borders**

ABSTRACT

The growing presence of heterogeneous populations in most European countries has resulted in increased interest in rethinking systems of compulsory education for citizens, especially for pupils from migrant backgrounds. This was the starting point for the research project *Music without Borders: Multilingualism in music (bi- and/or multi-musicality) and understanding the 'other' and the unfamiliar (2015-2017)*.

Challenges and limitations that ethnomusicologists have encountered during the operation, as well as strategies for conducting research on musical identities of pupils with migrant background will be discussed. Thereafter, the audio- and songbook *Sieben Blätter und ein Stein (Seven Leaves and one Stone)*, consisting of a printed story with drawings by pupils, and two music CDs will be presented as an outcome of this project. In the songbook, research findings are condensed into an artistic pedagogical product for a broader audience that aims to empower underprivileged Austrian pupils with migrant backgrounds.

KEYWORDS

Intercultural learning
Intercultural communication
Bi-musicality
Austrian education
Pupils
Pupils with migrant background
Migration in Austria
Multiculturalism

* In the beginning, the research project was conducted by its initiator Hande Sağlam who, after six months, handed it over to Wei-Ya Lin. Some parts of this article refer to and integrate Sağlam's written reports, source: <https://www.MDW.ac.at/fsi/?PageId=4191> (accessed on 25.11.2017).

Introduction to the Austrian Education System

The origins of the Austrian public school system go back to the reign of Empress Maria Theresia, who identified illiteracy as a political problem that could be improved by the government through compulsory education. Public schooling was therefore established in 1774. Then, six years of primary school were obligatory for every citizen in Austria. With the Compulsory Education Act of 1962, compulsory schooling was extended to its present-day duration of nine years.

Nowadays, the so-called 'differentiated education system' in Austria enforces children and parents to choose either an elitist 'gymnasium (academic secondary school)' which prepares for a university program or the 'general secondary school and new secondary school' which prepares for vocational programs. Figure 1 shows that at age ten, pupils are divided into these three different categories. This division serves as a filtering mechanism based on pupils' performance and scores during the last year (fourth grade) in elementary school. Even though at the age of fourteen pupils could theoretically change from the general or new secondary schools to academic secondary schools or colleges for higher vocational education in order to get admitted to university, practically, the requirements for such a change are highly challenging. Therefore, it is impossible for most pupils to qualify. This two-track secondary system has been subject to repeated criticism, especially for its rigidity of early selection and the inherent absence of equal opportunities (Wojnesitz, 2010; Riedl, 2015; Pichler, 2017). Consequently, dualities like elitist versus mass education, merit-based differentiation versus equality of opportunities, and performance-oriented versus inclusion-oriented teaching prevail in political debates regarding the Austrian educational system.

On the other hand, the growing presence of heterogeneous populations in most European countries has caused increased interest in rethinking systems of compulsory education for citizens, especially for pupils with migrant backgrounds. As Auerheimer (2007) points out, three developments challenge contemporary pedagogical discourse in Europe. Firstly, structural changes in societies occur due to immigration. Secondly, the European unification process likewise causes structural challenges to established systems. Finally, the global economic integration, that is, the globalization of markets and the accompanying media networks, which in turn, results in the globalization of risks, increasingly requires political cooperation. Therefore, urgent implementation of

In order to improve the current Austrian education system, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education advocates, among other measures, *intercultural learning*, specifically in relation to the complex of school and migration. This was ‘anchored as a teaching principle in the curricula of all general schools at the beginning of the nineties’¹, which “should contribute to mutual understanding, to recognize differences and similarities, and to reduce prejudice”² (Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, 2017³). However, the terms ‘cultural’ or ‘culture’ are not defined, and remain ambiguous and abstract. Therefore, it remains unclear what exactly is meant here by *intercultural learning*. Furthermore, how can *intercultural learning* unfold in the current discourse of Austrian music education? Can intercultural learning in music produce constructive suggestions that can support pupils with migrant backgrounds in this differentiated two-track education system? This article aims to provide an example on how ethnomusicology can act and fill some gaps in this complex.

In the first section of this article, I propose a way of understanding *intercultural learning*, before presenting an overview of the research project *Music without Borders*. I will include project contexts and results, and describe the role that ethnomusicological research played during its operation. Thereby, details on cross-disciplinary communication will be provided. I extrapolate the challenges and limitations for ethnomusicologists in this scenario and elaborate on how both scholarly research and practice-oriented methods can benefit from each other. The following section presents the songbook *Sieben Blätter und ein Stein* (*Seven Leaves and One Stone*) that consists of a printed story, an audio book, a music CD and drawings of pupils, and which aims to transform the research findings into an artistic pedagogical product for a broader audience. Finally, some of the problems and issues encountered during the research project and the book’s production will be discussed within the broader framework of current methodologies in music pedagogy.

¹ Originally in German: “zu Beginn der neunziger Jahre als Unterrichtsprinzip in den Lehrplänen aller allgemein bildenden Schulen verankert”, translated to English by the author.

² Originally in German: “ein Beitrag zum gegenseitigen Verständnis, zum Erkennen von Unterschieden und Gemeinsamkeiten und zum Abbau von Vorurteilen geleistet werden [soll]”, translated to English by the author.

³ Source: https://www.bmb.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/prinz/interkult_lernen.html (accessed on 25.11.2017).

Intercultural Learning

The *Handbook of Intercultural Learning* proposes ‘change of perspective’ and ‘dialogue’ as fundamental principles for intercultural learning (Binder and Luciak, 2010: 17-19). Changing perspectives, on the one hand, requires increased self-reflection and, on the other hand, offers the opportunity to view phenomena from the perspectives of others, or to situate oneself in situations commonly experienced by others. Dialogue, in this context, means effective exchange between individuals from different social, religious, and cultural backgrounds. This allows for learning from each other and promotes mutual understanding and acceptance (see Binder and Luciak, 2010: 17). However, more concrete methods, such as *situational approaches, considerations for dealing with intercultural teaching content* and *visual aids and media*, are also explained in detail, with examples, by these same authors (see Binder and Luciak, 2010: 18-19).

All these terms and methods suggest that within the concept of intercultural learning, ‘culture’ should not be understood as the static condition most people think it is. Their rather conservative attitude towards ‘culture’ still recalls the concept suggested by Herder in the 18th century, picturing ‘culture’ as being characteristic of ‘a nation’ or ‘a people’ (see Herder, 1961). Nowadays, ‘culture’ should be perceived as a mosaic of mobile, changeable and dynamically continual processes (see Binder, 2002: 427, Leenen et al. 2002: 85). This means that in particular, individual students should be considered as individuals regardless of their background, rather than accumulating students with migrant background into ‘cultural,’ ‘ethnic,’ or even ‘religious’ groups, and setting them up to face biases and prejudices. However, it is often the case that people uncritically impose attributions such as ‘the Turks’ or ‘a Serb’ to individual pupils. The most well-known prejudice in Austria is the accusation that pupils with migrant background were unable to sufficiently master the German language.

At the same time, intercultural learning “cannot only be ‘taught’ in isolated subjects, and/or does not only play a role in a few subjects”⁴ (Binder, 2002: 426), but must be included everywhere and in every subject. In this context, music is proposed as an excellent means “for the implementation of the teaching principle of ‘Intercultural

⁴ Originally in German: “nicht nur in einzelnen Unterrichtsfächern ‘gelehrt’ werden kann und/oder nur in einigen wenigen Fächern eine Rolle spielt,” translated to English by the author.

Learning,”⁵ because “the development of musical genres often results from intercultural contacts, or is an expression of the culture of different groups in society”⁶ (Binder and Luciak, 2010: 46). Auernheimer emphasizes that “music education [...] is always a place of intercultural formation and education, even if the music [in a particular case] does not function as the medium of intercultural education”⁷ (2007: 23).

Music without Borders

The two phenomena mentioned above – the ‘differentiated education system’ and *intercultural learning* as a pedagogical strategy, as related to the complex of school and migration in Austria – build the starting point for the research project *Music without Borders: Multilingualism in music (bi- and/or multi-musicality) and understanding the 'other' and the unfamiliar*.

The research project *Music without Borders* (1st of March 2015 – 30th of June 2017) was financed by a grant from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economics called *Sparkling Science*. It was realized at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (MDW) in cooperation between the Franz Schubert Department of Wind and Percussion Instruments in Music Education (FSI) and the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology (IVE). The primary research/project partner was ‘*Campus Landstraße*,’ a complex including a kinder garden, a primary school (*Volksschule Kleistgasse*) and a so-called new secondary school (*Neue Mittelschule Kölblgasse*). 90% of pupils at this campus count with a trans-national migration background. The project’s initiatives mainly involved primary and secondary schools.

The role of academic research within *Music without Borders* was defined as ‘accompanying research’ (*Begleitforschung*) in the framework as prescribed by the funding institution. It combined scholarly ethnomusicological research with praxis-oriented methods applied in music education, thus constituting an optimal

⁵ Originally in German: “für die Umsetzung des Unterrichtsprinzips ‘Interkulturelles Lernen,’” translated to English by the author.

⁶ Originally in German: “die Entwicklung von Musikrichtungen oft aus interkulturellen Kontakten resultiert bzw. Ausdruck der Kultur von verschiedenen Gruppen in der Gesellschaft ist” translated to English by the author.

⁷ Originally in German: “der Musikunterricht [...] immer [...] ein Ort interkultureller Erziehung und Bildung [ist], selbst dann, wenn die Musik nicht als das Medium interkultureller Bildung fungiert” translated to English by the author.

interdisciplinary cross-section. Nevertheless, different interpretations rooted in the given disciplinary discourses had to be overcome.

The main areas of research in this project were the students' musical identity *per se* and bi- and/or multi-musicality. One of the primary goals was to foster the pupils' understanding of the 'other' and the 'unfamiliar' in music that was new to them. We intentionally confronted pupils with hitherto unfamiliar musical styles in order to neutralize existing prejudices and to support them in acquiring an increased sensibility towards difference. Within the scope of this project, the participants – pupils, schoolteachers, MDW teachers and students, and researchers – cooperated with each other towards developing sustainable concepts for understanding and respectfully displaying intercultural communication.

The main academic objectives of the project were as follows:

1. Pupils shall be made familiar with scholarly and practical methods of ethnomusicology and music education at a pre-university level.
2. New methodological concepts for intercultural music teaching will be developed in collaboration between ethnomusicology and music education, in order to facilitate teaching, learning and understanding of interculturality in school lessons.
3. By focusing on intercultural communication and the experience of being-together, and by providing sustainable research based on pupils' own motivations during the learning processes, pupils should ultimately be well prepared for reflecting on identity issues by themselves.

Ethnomusicology in *Music without Borders*

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economics requires for projects funded within the program *Sparkling Science*, that practical work is conducted in schools, and that accompanying research is performed with pedagogical engagement. Therefore, the ethnomusicologists involved applied research, teaching and organizing, by means of the following concrete tasks: 1) To introduce ethnomusicological research methods to the pupils and likewise practice their application, such as how to ask questions or conduct interviews, how to use audio-visual recording devices for learning and for documenting others' knowledge; 2) To collect data by conducting interviews

with pupils, teachers, and school directors, and by collaborating with teachers and students of the MDW. 3) To document instrument lessons given by MDW teachers and students, and musical events performed at the schools. Data collected in tasks 2) and 3) were later anonymized and evaluated by using MaxQDA⁸; 4) To produce a song- and audio-book. Around thirty teaching sessions were documented, and twelve interviews with pupils, eighteen interviews with teachers and students at the MDW, and four interviews with school directors and teachers were conducted. Furthermore, five instrument lessons, two recording sessions for the audio-book, and six events that took place at the campus were documented.

Cross-disciplinary and Intercultural Communication

The project involved more than one hundred participants. By applying semi-structured interviews and by teaching weekly ethnomusicological lessons with the voluntary attention of twelve pupils, one could observe and learn in detail about interactions among all people involved.

Based on the interviews with schoolteachers, it was possible to clearly define some of the recurring issues at the new secondary school. The most urgent issues mentioned by several interviewees were their observations of teachers' obvious lack of appreciation for the pupils' first languages; their learning environment is chaotic, and schoolteachers' ways of dealing with pupils are overly authoritative, like in the military. Furthermore, interviewees complained that they recognized the schoolteachers' lack of intercultural competence, education and life experience, as well their lack of emotional attachment toward their school with pupils. All these problems lead to difficulties encountered and raised during this project. On the contrary, these issues were not explicitly expressed when talking about the elementary school.

It should suffice here to provide an in-depth analysis of these two main difficulties that repeatedly appeared in the project's process for all MDW members.

First, we observed that pupils in general lacked motivation in the beginning. This pertained especially to the pupils attending the secondary school, who often do not identify with the institution due to restrictive rules imposed by the school

⁸ MaxQDA is software used for qualitative data analysis by VERBI GmbH, for details see: <http://www.maxqda.com/> (accessed on 25.11.2017).

administration (pupils' parents are not allowed to enter the school building without appointments, for example, and pupils must immediately leave the campus after their regular lessons).⁹ MDW teachers assume that these rules are the main cause for the lack of emotional attachment the pupils have for their school. Likewise, effective communication strategies between schoolteachers and pupils, and between teachers and pupils' parents are missing. Most pupils' parents only reluctantly contact schoolteachers because of their different socio-cultural perceptions and values. Furthermore, many parents fear that their proficiency in German language is insufficient. This also impedes communication between MDW teachers/students and pupils' parents/family members. In the end, thanks to the weekly music lessons given by MDW teachers and students which were scheduled after the regular school lessons, this emotional attachment could grow significantly.

The second problem we encountered is the mode of communication at the administrative level. In the beginning, the schools' administration did not organize weekly music/instrumental lessons (see Tab.1) in a satisfactory way. Often, pupils did not attend the lessons, mainly because they did not know about them. This could be optimized during the project, because after one year of MDW teachers and students working with the pupils, a positive effect on the children was noted in both schools. When realizing this, the school's administration started to acknowledge the importance of this project, and began providing full administrative support.

⁹ Source: interviews with two MDW teachers conducted on 05.11.2015 and 16.11.2015.

Table 1. Schedule of weekly music lessons in *Music without Borders*. Created by Silvia Erdik

Day of the Week	Instrument	Day of the Week	Instrument
Monday	Saxophone	Wednesday	Trumpet
Monday	Fagot	Thursday	Horn, Trombone
Tuesday	Clarinet	Thursday	Singing/ Voice Training
Tuesday	Singing/Voice Training	Friday	Oboe
Wednesday	Recorder	Friday	Percussio n

Processes and Results

Pupils' musical identification

We could observe that most pupils from migrant backgrounds are able to speak the first language of their parents and family members, perform music, and share knowledge about the music and dance traditions from their respective communities. We can conclude that most pupils who come from migrant backgrounds are musically multilingual, which means that they listen to many different musical styles and identify with a multitude of musical languages. On one hand, there are no significant tendencies among pupils to actually identify with musical languages of their families' communities of origin. They mainly identify with mainstream musical genres and musical products such as rap, hip pop, rock, popular love songs etc., mostly provided by German- or

English-speaking commercial music industries. Contrastingly, pupils do significantly identify with dance practices from their parents' or families' source communities.

Suggestions for improving MDW curricula

Courses on music beyond western-classical traditions were hitherto unavailable at MDW University, as were group instrument lessons. Our project aims at optimizing the curriculum of the MDW's music education departments. This is achieved by defining problems, possibilities, and suggestions with the collaboration of students, teachers and pupils. By now, MDW teachers have helped students develop strategies to address challenges posed by group teaching practice. Likewise, engaging with the regular school context – which is very different from a *Musikschule*¹⁰ – became an important topic in teaching at the MDW. The regular school pupils' perspective can thus be better understood. This is much appreciated by MDW students.

Ethnomusicology as a strategy for establishing a platform for intercultural communication

As mentioned before, an ethnomusicologist offered weekly lessons for pupils who attended voluntarily. These interventions aimed at introducing the pupils to the ethnomusicological research methods and their application. For example, they were instructed how to ask questions or conduct interviews, and how to use audio-visual recording techniques for learning and for documenting others' knowledge. In the beginning, some pupils ridiculed their peers who presented their own favourite songs or dances; others even refused to listen to those speaking. However, during the learning process, especially when presenting their own and their parents' favourite songs, the pupils began to respect each other's musical and aesthetic preferences, decisions, and activities. Furthermore, they became curious about their peers' favourite songs and dances and started to imitate and participate in performance. Later, they decided to create individual or collective dance choreographies. Therefore, the lessons in ethnomusicology created an effect of serendipity, by itself providing an efficient tool for establishing a platform for intercultural communication.

¹⁰ *Musikschule* means music school in German. These music schools are extracurricular and charge fees, so they are mostly attended by pupils from upper or middle class families. Music lessons at these schools are regularly taught in individual classes.

Acknowledging Diversity as an advantage

Schoolteachers, students and teachers of MDW often tend to conflate pupils' self-identifications with their grandparents' or parents' nationalities. Especially schoolteachers often use terms like 'Turkish children', 'Serbian children' and so on, although most of these pupils were born in Austria. Before launching our project in 2014, its initiator, Hande Sağlam, a Turkish music expert in Austria (see Sağlam and Hemetek, 2008), noted, for example, a discriminatory attitude and prejudices toward pupils and parents with migrant background expressed by one of the campus' decision-makers who issued statements like "those pupils with migrant background can never have success, because of their backgrounds. Children from lower-class families cannot be as intelligent as children from the upper class, because of genetic deformations" (Sağlam, 2016). Surprisingly, during an interview with the same person on June 30th, Sağlam could observe many positive changes in the person's attitude, a year and a half since the implementation of our project. Presently, this person even considers diversity and "multi-culturality" (Sağlam, 2016) at the school as an advantage and treasure, and recognizes that our project's music lessons support the pupils' self-confidence and encourage them to express their individual self-identification.

Sieben Blätter und ein Stein (Seven Leaves and One Stone)

In 1964, Allam Merriam found that ethnomusicologists rarely felt the urge to solve problems and influence people's destinies. However, he found it quite conceivable that such an attitude could be of greater importance in the future (see Merriam, 1964: 43). Since 1992 some pioneers – among them Daniel Sheehy, Bess Lomax Hawes, Anthony Seeger and Martha Ellen Davis – have committed themselves to establishing an applied ethnomusicology within the broader academic context. Twenty-five years later, applied ethnomusicology has become an important tool for rendering insights from research effective outside of academia. Specifically, it offers opportunities to actively participate in areas such as politics, education, sustainability of musical practice (UNESCO immaterial culture heritage, for example), music therapy, and so on. Practice-oriented processes generate further knowledge, which in turn can flow back into research.

Nevertheless, there is still no universally valid definition of Applied Ethnomusicology. The ICTM's Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology suggests that applied ethnomusicology is "the approach guided by principles of social responsibility, which

extends the usual academic goal of broadening and deepening knowledge and understanding toward solving concrete problems and toward working both inside and beyond typical academic contexts” (*ICTM Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology*). The concept used for producing the audio- and songbook *Sieben Blätter und ein Stein: das Märchen von Märchen* (*Seven Leaves and One Stone: the Tale of Fairy Tales*) follows exactly this approach.

This production consists of a printed story illustrated with drawings made by pupils, an audio-book, and a music CD.¹¹ It aims to transmit findings from our research to a broader public in a format appropriate for children of all ages and backgrounds. The idea of launching this book relates our project to both applied ethnomusicology and arts-based research.

The main story in this book was created by Jessica Huijnen, a language pedagogue experienced in working with children of migrant backgrounds, and with refugees in Germany. The plot is fictitious and describes how seven children embark on several journeys to different regions and communities, which are all connected to different traditional or popular musical styles. The protagonists, school pupils, escape during an exam in their regular music lesson, and by means of magic experience adventures they survive by applying their language and music proficiencies. The criteria for selecting musical styles were mainly based on the proportions of migrant groups in Austrian schools and the pupils’ favourite music styles. It is important to note that musical styles are associated with certain regions and milieus rather than nation states. The story is printed in the book and also recorded as told by professional actors on one of the accompanying CDs. The printed book also includes scores of all the pieces mentioned in the story, and these pieces can be listened to in full length on the second CD. In addition, drawings made by the pupils were edited by a professional graphic designer and illustrate the songs and stories.

¹¹ See the publisher’s website for details about the book: <http://www.bibliothekderprovinz.at/buch/7219> (accessed on 25.11.2017).

However, since *Sieben Blätter und ein Stein* was just recently released (on 28th of April 2017), the impact of this production cannot yet be fully evaluated.¹² At the very least, MDW students enrolled in other departments of music education have expressed their appreciation for this book, because they can finally use the music scores in this book for teaching. The CD with full-length pieces helps them learn and interpret musics from traditions and milieus hitherto unfamiliar to them.

Conclusion? Or more Debates?

To summarize, the (applied) research project *Music without Borders* lead us to identify problems and needs of pupils, parents, and teachers in everyday praxis, as well as to provide space and time for developing constructive strategies and putting these into practice. A number of studies, statistical data and numerous newspaper articles address the ‘disadvantages’ and ‘precarious situations’ of pupils of migrant backgrounds and their problems at school. Several studies have proven that musical activities and projects can help in overcoming deficiencies like problems in identity and communication (see, among others, Campbell, 2004; Klebe, 2005; Barth, 2008; Schippers, 2010; Alge and Krämer, 2013). It is likewise evident that strategic involvement of parents or family members can support positive learning processes among pupils (see Schmalze, 1985; Flutter and Rudduck, 2004; Fürstenau and Gomolla, 2009; Scheerens, 2009; Cork, 2005; and Müller, 2013), for example:

“We observed that strategies involving a ‘three-way’ dialogue for pupils, parents and teachers to talk about learning could be particularly helpful. [...] However, it is also important that schools have systems in place to help pupils whose families take little interest in their education” (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004: 129).

All aforementioned studies consider the cooperation with family members an advantage in order to develop collective common norms, better communication, respect and knowledge. *Music without Borders* shares this opinion and confirms respective results with its research findings.

¹² A review by music pedagogue Isolde Malmberg in German and English has been published in the *mdw-webmagazine*: <https://www.mdw.ac.at/magazin/index.php/2017/09/29/rezension-sieben-blaetter-und-ein-stein/?lang=en> (accessed on 25.11.2017).

Although music can be applied as a tool for supporting pupils' self-confidence, identification process and communication skills, a dilemma nevertheless remains in the Austrian compulsory system. In Austrian public media, the myth that children with migrant background would suffer from an inability of mastering the German language became widespread, thus establishing a common prejudice. At its outset, many schoolteachers involved in *Music without Borders* also shared this stance towards the children.

Our interviews¹³ with twelve pupils, who were mostly born in Austria as second or third generation to immigrant parents (or grandparents), unanimously show that these pupils are able to speak and write German much better than their (grand) parents' first languages. This leads to the question: what could have been going wrong so as to warrant the suggestion that these pupils were not able to perfectly master German during their entire lifetimes? Hans-Jürgen Krumm, professor of German Studies at the University of Vienna¹⁴, points out that the problem lies in an obsession teachers seem to adhere to, an obsession with overemphasizing German language skills from the very first moment children enter kinder garden. Pedagogues only cared about the children's (in)ability to speak German while they were unaware of what else these children can do. Jessica Huijnen – author of the narrative in *Sieben Blätter und ein Stein*, and experienced language pedagogue – confirms this, referring to her year-long engagement with children with migrant or refugee backgrounds in kinder garden. In a conversation on 29th of April 2017, Huijnen shared her experience as follows:

Children are very sensitive about adults' judgements. Once, a child aged five told me with tears in her eyes that she wished so much to be a writer, but she would never get that far, because she could never ever master German. Do you know how this hurt me? As a pedagogue, one should pay attention to existing skills and potentials of children in order to motivate them and to spark their curiosity in learning more things or other languages, instead of demotivating them by displaying imagined limitations that are pre-set by adults.

¹³ Interviews conducted on 10.05.2016, 24.05.2016, 31.05.2016 and 21.06.2016.

¹⁴ Interview published by the Austrian newspaper *Der Standard* on 4th of November 2009, see: <http://derstandard.at/1256743929918/Oesterreich-und-das-Deutsch-Problem> (accessed on 25.11.2017).

For this reason she decided to take an active role in the production of *Sieben Blätter und ein Stein*. Her intention matches our research findings, that is, to create a space and a format for acknowledging and strengthening the extracurricular knowledge, skills and potentials held by pupils with migrant background.

Where does the obsession with overemphasizing German language skills, as pointed out by Krumm, and the lack of appreciation for pupils' first languages come from? What is the source of the prejudices that pupils who come from migrant backgrounds or from underprivileged families will never have success? Perhaps, a false understanding of 'culture' – as a static condition – is a reason that hinders schoolteachers from considering and esteeming every pupil as a unique individual?

There are serious doubts about the sustainability of the project *Music without Borders*, especially due to its duration being restricted to two years without any possibility of extending it. The only way to make this project sustainable seems to be the teachers' and students' on-going enthusiasm and their willingness to provide private initiatives.

Teachers and students at MDW University are aware of this. The percussion class led by Thomas Mair, for example, extended far beyond the project's schedule, supported by individual initiatives. In April 2016, one of Mair's students, Gergely Ösze, organized an opportunity for the pupils in the percussion class to perform with and teach other kids during an event for children outside the school and independent from *Music without Borders*.¹⁵ With such empowerment, pupils can present what they learned during their classes and transmit it to others. Later, the pupils from the percussion class participated in a competition *Science Slam*, initiated by the project's funding institution – a kind of internal competition for all projects financed by the program *Sparkling Science*. During their performance in the competition, pupils should speak in both their first languages and in German. The kids told the audience in rap lyrics how they benefitted from our project by acquiring new knowledge and skills. This displays and confirms their great bi-/multilingual potential. The pupils presented their performance in the final round of this *Science Slam* competition and won it against pupils involved in other *Sparkling Science* projects from the whole country on 14th of November 2016.

¹⁵ Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLkHZ-L5fUo> (accessed on 26.07.2017).

Although it is nearly impossible to actively change the Austrian education system, we could at least publicly present the results from our research and give fruitful suggestions to the school and the MDW staff. Hopefully, our critical suggestions will be consciously and seriously considered by decision makers, students, and teachers at both the MDW and the involved schools. With the experience obtained throughout the duration of our project, we, as ethnomusicologists have to confirm that the differentiated school system is unjust and not suited for constructive education. We cannot change the system by ourselves, but we can contribute to making it better by achieving minor improvements with our investigations and evaluations. Furthermore, we can offer constructive suggestions to decision makers at the MDW and the *Campus Landstraße*, as well as beyond these institutions.

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