

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE	8th October 2009
DIRECTOR	Annette Bruton
TITLE OF REPORT	Strategic Music Partnership and Potential Links with Sistema Scotland
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/09/031

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update members on potential links between Aberdeen City and Sistema Scotland in the context of the Strategic Music Partnership (SMP) in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

The SMP will hold the overarching strategic vision for music for children and young people in the North East. New and developing provision of music opportunities will sit within the SMP's strategic framework and priorities.

Sistema Scotland is an intensive immersion project that seeks to develop 3 socially driven children's orchestra centres in Scotland by 2013, each in a regeneration area.

The Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire SMP is the first in Scotland and its evaluation, along with the evaluation of the second SMP in Glasgow, will assist the Scottish Arts Council's Youth Music Initiative in determining future priorities for youth music nationally.

This report outlines actions taken to explore links and their implications, and to highlight the areas for possible future research.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Committee is recommended to:

1. Endorse the work done to date in exploring potential links with Sistema Scotland
2. Recognise the potential opportunities provided by Sistema as a socially driven initiative.
3. Note the costs, timescale and actions involved in being a Sistema Scotland orchestra centre.
4. Instruct relevant officers to consider feasibility of the development of a Sistema children's orchestra centre in Aberdeen as part of an integrated

approach to community regeneration and report to committees as appropriate.

5. If initiative is agreed, request a further report within 18 months, by which time the Strategic Music Partnership will have been operational for over one year, on the feasibility of developing a Sistema children's orchestra centre in Aberdeen as part of an integrated approach to community regeneration.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Should the committee agree to review Sistema links within 18 months, and agree to more detailed research and feasibility appraisal then any financial implications will be included in the follow-up report to Committee.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Future potential links with Sistema Scotland would have a positive impact on children and young people.

This paper relates to the Sistema Scotland approach to transforming young lives through music, particularly those in the most deprived areas.

Links with the Community Plan:

- people who live or work in Aberdeen will have access to services of a high quality that meet their needs
- developing Aberdeen as a City for Learning and the highest attaining city in Scotland

Links to the Single Outcome Agreement:

- **Outcome 3**
We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
- **Outcome 4**
Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- **Outcome 5**
Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
- **Outcome 6**
We live longer, healthier lives
- **Outcome 13**
We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity

Links to Vibrant, Dynamic & Forward Looking:

Education

- The best possible education for all our children is essential if we are to ensure that Aberdeen and its citizens have a prosperous future.
- Ensure expenditure of education delivers maximum benefit to pupils' education
- Continue work to improve attainment across city schools
- Ensure education is appropriate to pupils' needs and ensure pupils leave school with skills essential for living
- Ensure Aberdeen's teachers receive appropriate training and CPD to deliver the best quality education
- Review best teaching practice and trial projects in Aberdeen and beyond to identify the best ways of delivering an even higher quality education to all pupils
- Continue work to raise the achievement of vulnerable children and close the attainment gap across the City.

Culture, Arts and Sport

Aberdeen is developing as a culturally vibrant city with a range of excellent festivals and venues that attract the best in music, dance and theatre.

- Support arts venues to bring the best and most innovative performances to city
- Continue to support the best city festivals

and in particular:

- 9. Recognise the role of Sport and the Arts in tackling anti-social behaviour.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications arising directly from this report.

Future implications as a result of further investigating the links with Sistema Scotland can be reported. (following a review of Sistema in the context of the SMP in 12 – 18 months)

6. REPORT

6.1 About Sistema Scotland

Sistema Scotland is a charity set up to break the cycle of social blight which sees children in many areas at risk of growing up to be involved in crime, substance abuse and anti-social behaviour.

Sistema Scotland is a social and artistic initiative and wishes to have established 3 socially driven children's orchestra centres across Scotland by 2013.

Sistema Scotland's mission is to transform young lives through music, and took the Sistema name from the orchestra movement established in Venezuela in 1975 by Maestro José Antonio Abreu.

Sistema Scotland exists to develop youth orchestra centres in Scotland. The first is in Rapploch, Stirling and is called Rapploch Big Noise. There are longer term plans to develop further centres across Scotland with an ambition to have 3 centres by 2013.

Sistema Scotland has a Strategic Partnership with Stirling Council (Director of Children's Services) and an integrated working partnership with Stirling Council.

Sistema Scotland's work is very intensive and seeks full integration into the community. It is currently located within Rapploch, a regeneration area of Stirling and future centres in Scotland are intended to be in areas/communities with identified social problems.

Sistema Scotland is undertaking a longitudinal study of the Big Noise Orchestra in Rapploch, to examine the benefits for children, families and the community, particularly in relation to improving lives and reducing negative outcomes for children and young people.

See Appendix 1, Sistema Brochure, Let the Children Play

6.2 Update on Work to Date

The Council's Cultural Co-ordinator - Music Dance and Performance, met with Nicola Killean, Director and Chief Executive, Sistema Scotland and discussed the Strategic Music Partnership and any potential links between Sistema Scotland and Aberdeen.

Early work undertaken by the Scottish Arts Council and Sistema Scotland identified Aberdeen and Glasgow as potential future centres, based on a number of factors.

Also discussed were some key dates, figures and actions required to explore links further. (see below at 6.4)

6.3 Other Information

- The Sistema approach is intrinsically linked to a Curriculum for Excellence, with a strong emphasis on linking schools and communities and involving parents.
- Nicola Killean and Richard Holloway, Sistema Scotland Chair, are working with the Scottish Government looking at Sistema Scotland within the National Framework.
- The current costs of Sistema youth orchestra in Stirling are c. £2,000 per child per year – by locating in a regeneration area, there is a cost comparison with

other interventions and re-generation initiatives. More detailed information from Stirling Council will be sought as will findings from the Sistema longitudinal research when available.

- Sistema is working with the Scottish Government and hopes the funding agreement with the next Sistema centre will be:

YEAR 1 – YEAR 3

Local Authority	50%
Sistema Scotland	25%
Scottish Government	25%

YEAR 4 ONWARDS

Local Authority	75%
Sistema Scotland	25%

- To be a Sistema Scotland centre certain things must be in place,
 - A commitment to work in one urban re-generation community
 - A commitment to an intensive approach
 - The work must be grounded within Community Planning

Further details are available at <http://www.systemascotland.org.uk/>

6.4 Conclusion

Sistema Scotland is an artistic and social initiative that requires full immersion in the project and integration in the community. As such, the scope of any links with Aberdeen is wide and not without resource implications, financial and human.

Future links should be explored in the context of an operational SMP and taking account of a year 1 review of the SMP, as well as regeneration strategies and priorities. In order to further explore the links, future next steps would include:

- Arrange a delegation from Aberdeen to visit Sistema in Stirling to see the Rapploch Big Noise youth orchestra and meet with Stirling Council elected members, officers, Sistema staff and Rapploch Community representatives.
- Arrange a return visit to Aberdeen where Nicola Killean and Richard Holloway would wish to have high level meetings within the authority and meet with the SMP Steering Group.

Detailed of research outcomes from the Sistema longitudinal study will be useful in determining the potential for links with Aberdeen.

The above should be carefully considered if more immediate links with Sistema are sought.

6 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Aberdeen City Council Combined Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement
- Integrated Approach to Establishing and Delivering Cultural Entitlements in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire – Cultural Pathfinder Project – Final Consultants Report, November 2008
- Read My Lips, the Aberdeen Youth Action Committee Manifesto, 2008
- National Youth Music Strategy 2006 – 2008, Scottish Arts Council
- Culture Delivers, Scottish Government, January 2009
- Building the Curriculum 3, a framework for learning and teaching, The Scottish Government, June 2008
- Aberdeen City Council, Creating a Curriculum for Excellence, Implementation Strategy – Phase 1
- Aberdeen Learning Strategy: a framework for delivery (23.01.09 combined version 6)

APPENDIX A

Sistema Brochure – Let the Children Play

APPENDIX B

Big Noise Endorsements

APPENDIX C

Big Noise Case Studies

APPENDIX D

Sistema Scotland, Transforming Lives with Music, Business Plan 2007 - 2013



Sistema Scotland

Let the Children Play



On a mission to transform lives through music

Sistema Scotland is a charity set up to break the cycle of social blight which sees children in many areas at risk of growing up to be involved in crime, substance abuse and anti-social behaviour.

We believe these afflictions, all too common across urban Scotland, often stem from a loss of self-worth in childhood. An answer can lie in making music within the structure of a symphony orchestra.

This is not just some fanciful theory. Although we are the first in the UK to use this method, its success has been proven over more than three decades.



First established in Venezuela

Sistema Scotland takes its name from the orchestra movement established in Venezuela by Maestro José Antonio Abreu. In 1975 he began giving music lessons to children from the barrios, or slums of Caracas.

Today Sistema orchestras can be found across Venezuela, where they have touched the lives of many thousands of children. Aside from social benefits, the movement has produced a number of internationally regarded musicians such as the conductor, Gustavo Dudamel.

The full name of this South American phenomenon is 'Fundación del Estado para el Sistema Nacional de las Orquestas Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela' (FESNOJIV). Most people refer to it simply as "El Sistema".

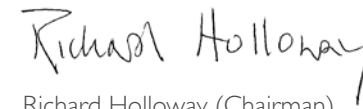
In 2006, funded by the Scottish Arts Council, I took a group from Scotland to Venezuela to find out more about this remarkable

musical and social movement. Overwhelmed by what I saw, I came home determined to bring the idea to Scotland. A charity was founded to begin work on establishing the first orchestra of its kind in the UK. As in Venezuela, an orchestra that would transform lives, and turn no child away.

A further visit was made to Venezuela in 2007, along with representatives of the new charity's partners, the Scottish Arts Council, BBC Scotland and Stirling Council. Talks were held about a formal partnership between FESNOJIV and the Scottish organisation.

In August 2007, the top El Sistema orchestra, the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, performed at Edinburgh International Festival. During the visit Maestro Abreu and I signed the historic agreement - and the new charity, by then known as Sistema Scotland, became officially part of the Sistema family.

We are very proud of our close links with Venezuela. We seek to benefit from the South Americans' expertise, while adapting their methods to suit conditions in Scotland. Deprivation takes many forms, and we live in a very different country from Venezuela, but the circumstances which can lead to the alienation of a child, and the attributes of playing in an orchestra which can counter them, are essentially the same.



Richard Holloway (Chairman)



Our Patron – Gustavo Dudamel

“In Venezuela, going to a symphony concert is like going to a pop concert. Everyone feels very proud. It is our symbol. We have our flag, our national anthem - and now our orchestras. The citizens feel part of it - and it is my hope that Sistema Scotland will one day, with enough of the right kind of support, enjoy a similar status for their initiatives, like the ‘Big Noise Raploch’. It is a dream and one which simply must be realised!”

Gustavo Dudamel

Photograph by Chris Christodoulou



What is the Big Noise orchestra?

It is not simply a case of giving free musical instruments and lessons.

Our work brings social benefits by turning traditional music education on its head. Instead of practising hard to become good enough one day to play in an orchestra, the children we work with are in an orchestra from day one. They learn not just music, but that they all have a role to play and a contribution to make - to the orchestra and to life.

Through learning to play together the children learn to live together, and to grow up as confident people with respect for themselves and each other. The orchestra offers an environment for the young musicians to succeed and be challenged.

The Big Noise orchestra is for every child, regardless of ability - but we strive for excellence. We want the children to look up to and aspire to be like fellow players who have achieved success.

The influence of the orchestra's work spreads out from the children directly involved, into their families and wider community, who are proud of them and inspired by them.

A Big Noise orchestra is terrific fun. Children want to be involved.

Everyone is accepted and has a place. Children are never ever turned away.



For every child

We want to start Big Noise orchestras in places which have been identified as having particular social problems. Lots of children in these areas come from stable homes and are growing up into successful happy adults.

But many are not, and have significant difficulties in their lives. Our orchestra works by encouraging the talents of all of the children - from both stable backgrounds and challenging ones.



Inspiring People

These are not merely free music lessons and our staff have to be more than simply excellent music teachers.

We have recruited a team of experienced orchestral professionals who are energetic, committed and enthusiastic about having a major positive influence on the lives of the children we work with.



We want children who can rely on little else in their lives to be able to rely on the Big Noise orchestra.

Raploch

Sistema Scotland has established its first Big Noise orchestra in Stirling's Raploch estate.

In 2008 we recruited six talented string players who visited Venezuela to find out about El Sistema's methods at first hand. They returned to open the children's orchestra programme in Raploch, for children aged from birth to eight. We work with the children three times a week during term time, and full time over the holiday periods.

Big Noise Raploch will grow with these children as they progress through school, and will recruit new younger ones each year.

The range of instruments will be expanded until there is a full symphony orchestra.



The long view

We are committed to working with children from infancy through to their teens and beyond. This long term strategy differentiates Sistema Scotland from many other artistic and social initiatives.

Our work is about generational change - breaking the cycle which has for so long blighted communities.

This change cannot be achieved overnight and we are committed to being a permanent part of children's lives as they grow up.

Our vision

Our Vision for what we provide to communities we work in:

Our Big Noise orchestras work directly with children but touch whole communities.

Everyone is welcomed, accepted and contributes to our work.

Children of all abilities play music side by side.

The focus is always on trying to improve. By working hard and by working together we can get better and reach higher goals, both in our music and in our lives.

The local communities and Scotland as a whole will be inspired and proud of the achievements of the children in Big Noise orchestras.

Our Vision for the organisation:

By 2013 we will open three socially driven children's orchestra centres across Scotland.

Visionary and socially driven musicians from Scotland, Venezuela and around the world will collaborate with us.

Sistema Scotland will be an inspirational organisation to work for and collaborate with, and will have a positive influence on the arts, education and social development sectors.



How to Help!

Sistema Scotland is here
for the long term

This work promises great return if together we continue to invest in children and their community. To help give children a better future please make a donation to:

Sistema Scotland, City Halls, Albion

Street, Glasgow G1 1NQ or contact us

at sistemascotland@hotmail.co.uk for more details. Contributions from individuals, trusts, foundations and companies are most welcome.

Our Scottish Charity Number is: SC039119.

We would like to thank all partners and funders who appear on this page, and others who prefer to remain anonymous, for their generous support:

- The Bacher Trust
- BBC Children in Need
- Colinton Amateur Orchestral Society
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- Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust
- Graven Images
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- The Robin Leith Trust
- Locofoco
- The MacRobert Trust
- The Sigrid Rausing Charitable Fund
- Scottish Venezuelan Society
- Gordon Small Charitable Trust
- The Taylor Family Foundation
- Thirkleby Trust





Sistema Scotland, City Halls, Albion Street, Glasgow, G1 1NQ, www.sistemascotland.org.uk
Big Noise Raploch, 90 Drip Road, Raploch, Stirling, FK8 1RN, Tel.: 07811 489436, www.makeabignoise.org.uk

Sistema Scotland is a charity which aims to transform the lives of children and their communities through its Big Noise orchestras. Registered as a Scottish Charity, No: SC039119.

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