



**INTERGENERATIONAL
MUSIC MAKING**

**Intergenerational Library Partnership
Shared Prosperity Fund, Place
Partnership Cultural Programme**

EVALUATION



**GREATER
MANCHESTER**
DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY



Funded by
UK Government

www.imm-music.com



Introduction

Intergenerational initiatives are powerful tools for building meaningful connections across age groups, reducing social isolation, and creating more cohesive, resilient communities. By bringing together families, students, older adults, care home residents, and professionals from across the health, education, and community sectors, these projects celebrate human connection and promote sustainable, cross-sector partnership working.

This report outlines the intergenerational programme led by Intergenerational Music Making (IMM), in collaboration with North Libraries. The plan involved a two-phase approach designed to use music and creativity as a catalyst for connection and community building.

The programme involved delivering four pop-up events at The Avenue Blakely, Newton Heath, and North City/Abraham Moss Libraries. These events offered inclusive activities such as songwriting, group singing, drumming, storytelling, and creative conversations.

Aims of the Programme:

- Promote social inclusion by engaging diverse and underrepresented groups across the community.
- Improve health and well-being through creative, musical, and conversational activities that support emotional, mental, and physical health.
- Foster strong cross-sector partnerships linking libraries with care homes, GPs, schools, hospitals, and voluntary organisations.
- Build community resilience by encouraging skills-sharing, volunteer involvement, and co-created sessions.
- Celebrate culture and heritage through storytelling, oral history, and opportunities for empathy-building across generations.

The following report details the implementation of the project, its impact and creative outcomes.



The background is a solid yellow color with various musical instruments and notes scattered across it. A large acoustic guitar is centered in the background. Other instruments include a drum, a tambourine, a microphone, a maraca, and a conga. There are also several musical notes and a bass clef.

North City Library
February - March 2025



Evaluation

Dates of Delivery

Saturday 22nd February - Language Day
Monday 24th February - Culture & Oral History
Monday 3rd March - Culture & Oral History
Saturday 22nd March - Culture & Oral History
Saturday 29th March - Culture & Oral History

Partners

Manchester Libraries

Overview of Project

The programme involved delivering pop-up events at The Avenue, Blakely, Newton Heath, and North City/Abraham Moss Libraries. These events offered inclusive activities such as songwriting, group singing, drumming, storytelling, and creative conversations. Celebrate culture and heritage through storytelling, oral history, and opportunities for empathy-building across generations.

Methodology & Results

Methodology:

- Quotes and feedback
- Video & pictures
- Written Feedback Forms

Engagement:

- Saturday 22nd February - Language Day – 32 participants
- Monday 24th February - Culture & Oral History – 4 participants
- Monday 3rd March - Culture & Oral History – 5 participants
- Saturday 22nd March - Culture & Oral History – 22 participants
- Saturday 29th March - Culture & Oral History – 20 participants





Evaluation

Quotes & Feedback

"This is the best day of my life!"- on playing the ukulele

"Can we dance?" [yes] "Yay!"

"I want to do more" – on playing percussion

"My child didn't want to leave, he loved playing the ukulele so much. We really enjoyed the session!" - parent

"It was a really interesting session, the children and parents loved it!" - staff member

Facilitator Feedback

To celebrate Language Day, we delivered a vibrant and inclusive pop-up session at North City Library. The session featured:

- **Latin American drumming circles**
- **World music exploration, including lullabies and traditional songs from various cultures**
- **An instrument 'petting zoo', where children and young people could explore and try out a variety of instruments**
- **A showcase of music from different cultures, highlighting diverse rhythms, languages, and traditions**

The session was a huge success, with high levels of engagement from children and families throughout. The drumming circles were especially popular, with participants enthusiastically joining in call-and-response rhythms. Children were curious and excited to try out unfamiliar instruments, sparking conversations around sound, culture, and creativity.

The atmosphere was joyful and energetic, with music acting as a powerful tool for embracing cultural differences and celebrating the rich diversity of the local community.





Evaluation

Facilitator Feedback

Saturday was a fantastic day to do this workshop- there was high attendance with other younger siblings and parents involved too. Making the playlist was a good icebreaker with children and adults- the adults picked songs that they sang to their children or that their children enjoyed listening to and the children picked their favourite songs to sing or dance to. There was a lot of conversation about how music makes people feel happy and a lot of the children loved to dance and showed off their dance moves!

Tuesday worked well as the children were very engaged and liked to sing and adding in the percussion and letting them choose fast/slow, loud/quiet was successful. Some children loved doing a solo and other were more hesitant or didn't want to which was fine.

Getting to try the ukulele was a highlight for the older children; they were very interested and wanted to play a chord. I hadn't planned this in but actually it was a lovely addition for the older children to try something new. This happened alongside the colouring- which a lot of the younger children really enjoyed. I think this may have been partly because it was a long massive piece of paper so they could really go big!

When we came back together to use the parachute, using Tue didn't work so well so we just did some fast/slow, high/low to get the excitement of it, then we sang Twinkle Twinkle at the suggestion of the children and waved it gently, before going underneath to finish.

Some highlights include:

- One child said on having a second try at the ukulele- this is the best day of my life! Another child saying they want to learn it.
- Talking to a parent whose first language was Tigrinya and she was telling me that her daughter was called a name that also had a meaning in a popular song in the Tigrinya language. She also talked about how important music was in their faith and she and her daughter sang a song with actions for me to see.
- The children wanting to sing their favourite nursery rhymes whilst doing the colouring.
- Comments from the parents about how their children really enjoyed it





Evaluation

Meeting the Project Aims

The pop-up sessions at North City Library successfully fulfilled the project aims by creating an inclusive, creative space that encouraged intergenerational connection, cultural exchange, and community storytelling through music and the arts.

Aim: To celebrate cultural diversity and embrace different languages through music

- Session 1 (Language Day) showcased a rich tapestry of musical traditions, from Latin American drumming to world lullabies and folk songs.
- Children and families engaged in call-and-response drumming, explored new instruments, and celebrated global rhythms and languages.
- Parents and children shared personal musical traditions, such as one family singing a Tigrinya song with actions, offering a powerful and joyful moment of cultural pride and exchange.

Aim: To encourage creativity and musical exploration for all ages

- The instrument petting zoo allowed participants of all ages to try out new instruments and explore sound freely, sparking curiosity and creative play.
- Children were invited to sing, dance, draw, and even try instruments like the ukulele—one child declaring, “this is the best day of my life!” after their second go.
- Spontaneous music-making was encouraged, with children leading rhythms, suggesting songs, and performing solos if they wanted.

Aim: To facilitate intergenerational storytelling and connection

- Sessions included drawing and music-based discussions about community, with families, children, and adults sharing what their local area means to them.
- Collaborative activities like parachute games, playlist-making, and shared singing created opportunities for dialogue, shared experiences, and fun between age groups.
- Parents shared songs they used to sing to their children, while children eagerly offered up their own favourites—building a shared playlist that reflected both memory and present-day joy.

Aim: To provide accessible and joyful musical opportunities for the local community

- Sessions were drop-in and free, taking place in familiar, welcoming library settings, ensuring accessibility for families and individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Participants expressed interest in future workshops and were signposted to further opportunities, showing the sessions sparked long-term engagement.
- Feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive, with several sharing how much their children enjoyed the sessions and the space it created for connection and creativity.

Overall, these sessions brought the local community together through shared musical experiences that honoured personal stories, cultural identity, and joyful exploration—meeting the aims of the project in both spirit and practice.





Images





Images





Images



The background is a solid yellow color with various musical instruments and notes scattered across it. In the center, there is a large, faint silhouette of an acoustic guitar. To the left of the guitar, there is a smaller silhouette of an acoustic guitar. Above the central guitar, there are several musical notes, including a bass clef, a treble clef, and a sharp sign. To the right of the central guitar, there is a microphone and a drum. Below the central guitar, there are two maracas. The overall theme is music.

Newton Heath Library
February - March 2025



Evaluation

Dates of Delivery

Tuesday 25th February – Culture & Oral History
Tuesday 11th March – Culture & Oral History
Tuesday 18th March – Culture & Oral History
Tuesday 25th March – Culture & Oral History
Tuesday 1st April – Culture & Oral History

Partners

Manchester Libraries

Overview of Project

The programme involved delivering pop-up events at The Avenue, Blakely, Newton Heath, and North City/Abraham Moss Libraries. These events offered inclusive activities such as songwriting, group singing, drumming, storytelling, and creative conversations. Celebrate culture and heritage through storytelling, oral history, and opportunities for empathy-building across generations.

Methodology & Results

Methodology:

- Quotes and feedback
- Video & pictures
- Written Feedback Forms

Engagement:

- Tuesday 25th February – Culture & Oral History – 2 participants
- Tuesday 11th March – Culture & Oral History – 8 participants
- Tuesday 18th March – Culture & Oral History – 12 participants
- Tuesday 25th March – Culture & Oral History – 12 participants
- Tuesday 1st April – Culture & Oral History – 13 participants





Evaluation

Quotes & Feedback

From the song written in week 6: 'a community is a group of people who share common goals'.

P commenting that the sessions had improved D's musical awareness, as she had recognised 'Twinkle twinkle little star', which I played to her weekly on the clarinet / flute.

P also commented that the musical warm-up game had helped D to learn commands in English.





Evaluation

Case Study: D and P – Building Confidence Through Music and Cultural Connection

D, a two-year-old girl, and her mother P attended all six of the culture and oral history music sessions held at their local library. With Polish as their first language, both D and P were initially reserved, but over the course of the programme, D demonstrated a clear and positive progression in her confidence, communication, and engagement with music.



From the early sessions, D was curious about the instruments, particularly the flute and clarinet, which she had the rare opportunity to hear live and explore by touching the keys. She eagerly participated in percussion play—shaking, tapping, and using beaters to make sound.

Over time, her response to our musical warm-up game ("Can you please stand up / sit down / turn around") improved significantly. Her mother noted that this musical structure helped D begin to understand and respond to English-language instructions, supporting her language development in an accessible and enjoyable way.

D's participation also encouraged growth in her:

- Fine motor skills – through hands-on exploration of a wide range of instruments
- Communication and social skills – by making music in a group setting with children of all ages
- Creativity and musicality – through improvisation, imitation, and interactive musical storytelling
- Language skills – particularly in English, aided by repetition, songs, and musical games





Evaluation

Beyond D's development, the sessions fostered a meaningful connection between myself and P. As an artist, P shared insights into her own creative practice, and we discussed our mutual experiences in music and visual art.

During one session, we listened together to Jada, jada misie, a Polish nursery rhyme beloved by D. This moment of cultural sharing enriched the session and affirmed the importance of representation and inclusivity. It also created space for P and D to feel proud of their heritage within the group.

By providing an inclusive, playful, and musically rich environment, the sessions not only supported D's early development but also offered P a welcoming, creative space to connect, share, and feel seen.





Evaluation

Facilitator Feedback

Session 1:

- A spontaneous music-making interaction was initiated with D (2 years old) and her mum, P, using percussion instruments. D responded positively to imitation-based musical play and became more confident throughout.
- The clarinet performance was described by P as a unique and positive experience for D.
- Introduction of a musical actions game (e.g. stand up/sit down) was a helpful language and engagement tool, though D was initially hesitant due to English being her second language.
- Attempts to engage a small group of teenagers led to a positive conversation with K (15), who tried the ukulele for the first time. Despite early promise, library closures and other factors prevented consistent follow-up.

Session 2:

- D and P returned and responded well to the familiar session routine, including musical commands and clarinet performance. D began to follow prompts with increased confidence and reduced support.
- The map-making activity helped link the session theme to storytelling and place.
- Teenagers were again reluctant to join, likely due to assumptions the session was aimed at younger children.

Session 3:

- Attendance grew significantly due to promotion from P and outreach to previous participants—around 15 children and parents joined.
- A structured session included musical games, storytelling with clarinet, instrument play, and creative activities like map drawing and colouring.
- Older early years children (3–5) began to lead warm-up games, showcasing increased confidence.
- Reflection noted that further integrating the bee character throughout the session would have created a more cohesive narrative thread.



Evaluation

Facilitator Feedback

Session 4:

- A group of around 10 attended. A balance was struck between continuity and thematic development, though the session may have included too many activities.
- The Tale of Two Giants, a Manchester folk story, resonated strongly with the 3–5 age group and prompted local heritage discussion.
- K (9) contributed creatively to the map-making and led younger participants during instrument play, fostering intergenerational connection.
- A community "Playlist for Newton Heath" was started from song suggestions by all age groups.

Session 5:

- Around 30 participants joined, including a visiting nursery group (age 4–5).
- The session was adapted with added musical challenges such as the "hot/cold" game using flute and interpretation of scale patterns without lyrics.
- Nursery staff valued the opportunity for instrument play.
- Older children developed leadership and teamwork through conducting activities using the Hoberman ball.

Session 6:

- A smaller session (8 participants) due to Easter/Eid holidays but with a wider age range (early years up to age 14).
- The session was more flexible, with older children writing and producing two original songs—one about community and one themed around football.
- Younger children engaged in nursery rhymes and instrument play, and all contributed to an "All About Us" canvas.
- Singing common songs together helped bridge the age gap, highlighting the power of shared repertoire.
- A staff member, Mark, brought his djembe and joined in, providing a culturally rich live experience and inspiring younger children to try the drum.





Evaluation

Meeting the Project Aims

1. Intergenerational Connection

Sessions successfully brought together a wide age range of participants, from toddlers to teenagers and parents/carers. There were multiple moments of connection across ages—for example, in Session 4, K (9 years old) conducted the younger children during free play using the Hoberman ball, and older children led songs and supported peers. In Session 6, older participants helped write songs while younger children played along—culminating in shared music-making through familiar songs like When the Saints and If You're Happy and You Know It.

2. Creative Expression and Storytelling

- Musical games like “Can you please stand up” and instrument free-play
- Drawing activities (e.g. maps of favourite places, handprints and stories)
- Original songwriting around community themes (Session 6)
- Story-based musical performances, such as Ben the Manchester Bee and The Tale of Two Giants – directly linking to Manchester folklore and oral storytelling.

3. Celebrating Local Identity

Local themes ran throughout the sessions, from folk stories to community map-making and Manchester bees. The map activity helped children reflect on their local area, while older participants used songwriting to explore the concept of community. These activities grounded the sessions in a strong sense of place and local pride.

4. Inclusion and Cultural Exchange

The sessions created a safe and inclusive space for all participants. The case study of D and P highlights this: as a Polish family, they felt welcomed and represented. Polish nursery rhymes were listened to, and music was used to support D's understanding of English in a playful and effective way. Live instruments and music from a range of cultures were performed in later sessions.





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The background is a solid yellow color with various musical instruments and notes scattered across it. A large acoustic guitar is centered, with its body and neck visible. To the left of the guitar is a bass guitar. Above the guitar is a microphone. To the right of the guitar is a drum. Below the guitar are two maracas. There are also several musical notes and a sharp symbol (#) scattered around the instruments.

The Avenue Library
February - March 2025



Evaluation

Dates of Delivery

Saturday 29th March – Culture & Oral History

Partners

Manchester Libraries

Overview of Project

The programme involved delivering pop-up events at The Avenue, Blakely, Newton Heath, and North City/Abraham Moss Libraries. These events offered inclusive activities such as songwriting, group singing, drumming, storytelling, and creative conversations. Celebrate culture and heritage through storytelling, oral history, and opportunities for empathy-building across generations.

Methodology & Results

Methodology:

- Quotes and feedback
- Video & pictures
- Written Feedback Forms

Engagement:

Saturday 29th March – Culture & Oral History – 30 participants





Evaluation

Facilitator Feedback

At The Avenue Library, we welcomed around 30 participants, primarily children alongside approximately six adults.

The session began with a warm-up, followed by a lively song and dance to get everyone engaged and comfortable. We then moved into a creative activity where participants created community-themed drawings. This became a lovely social moment, with children and adults working alongside one another, chatting and sharing ideas as they drew.

A highlight of the session was a solo performance by one of the younger children, who confidently sang while others were still busy with their artwork, she clearly loved the spotlight, and the group responded supportively.

To finish, we all joined in for a group singalong and dance session. Several children took the lead, teaching us their favourite dance moves, which brought a real sense of joy and shared energy to the room.

The atmosphere was warm, fun, and collaborative, and several participants expressed interest in attending more sessions in the future.





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Conclusion & Learning

The oral history and community music sessions delivered across the libraries were a clear success in engaging diverse age groups, promoting creativity, and fostering connection through shared musical and storytelling experiences. From early years children to teenagers, parents, carers, and community members, the sessions created a welcoming, inclusive environment where people could express themselves, explore music, and learn from each other.

Key learning and outcomes:

- **Intergenerational Connection:** Through shared activities like drawing, storytelling, and music-making, participants of all ages built relationships. Older children led younger ones in dancing and conducting, and adults shared cultural stories and songs with the group.
- **Language & Communication Development:** Activities such as musical command games and singalongs supported language acquisition, particularly for children like D, who spoke English as an additional language. These musical moments helped bridge communication gaps and boost confidence.
- **Celebrating Cultural Diversity:** Sessions intentionally embraced global music traditions—from Latin American drumming to Polish nursery rhymes and Tigrinya songs—creating space for cultural expression and learning. Language Day celebrations in particular demonstrated the power of music to bring cultures together and highlight shared human experiences.
- **Creative Confidence:** Many children who were initially hesitant grew in confidence, whether through solo performances, conducting, singing, or trying instruments for the first time. One participant even described trying the ukulele as “the best day of my life.”
- **Community Engagement & Curiosity:** Multiple participants and parents expressed a desire for more sessions, with some actively seeking future workshops. This shows the sessions resonated and met a genuine need for creative, community-focused programming.
- **Flexibility is Key:** Facilitators adapted sessions based on attendance, age range, and interests. From unplanned ukulele demonstrations to modified group games, being responsive helped keep participants engaged and catered to a wide range of developmental needs.

Overall, the project successfully met its aims: bringing generations together, encouraging storytelling through music and art, and celebrating the diverse cultures of the community. The sessions reinforced the role of creativity and music as powerful tools for connection, education, and joy.

Written by IMM www.imm-music.com

April 2025