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A mixed methodology approach was used for this report including:

- Internet research
- Face-to-face filmed interviews
- Desk based research
- Direct observations

INTERNET RESEARCH

Internet research was undertaken to explore the following areas:

- History of violence in Ciudad Juárez
- History of past and current popular music of US/Mexican border cities
- Background of community music project in US/Mexican border cities

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

I interviewed a total of 45 young people, 11 parents and 13 music tutors all of whom were asked a set number of appropriate questions. I also interviewed Ccompaz staff including directors, project managers and coordinators and a number of organisations such as Entrepreneurship Foundation of Chihuahua, B.C. (FECHAC) and the Government of Ciudad Juárez.

DESK-BASED RESEARCH

Desk-based research was undertaken, exploring the recently completed 2 year evaluation of the work of Ccompaz, commissioned and funded by USAID.

STYLE OF THIS REPORT

The approach of this report is consistent to the ethos of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust fund aims and objectives. It is not written as an in depth academic report for the academic sector but reflects the views of an experienced professional. It is intentionally part way between a blog and a formal report so the personal and emotive learning are not lost in the writing of this document.
ABOUT ME

I am a composer and music educator with a track record of delivering high quality music and arts projects to educate and transform lives by building confidence, self-esteem and essential life skills. Alongside my work as a composer I am currently working for Surrey Arts and Surrey Music Hub as Partnerships and Inclusion manager. (Surrey Music Hub is currently nominated for England’s most innovative Music Education Hub Award, 2014.)

The majority of my work focuses on developing music programmes for young people who are living in challenging circumstances. For example, children who live in areas of deprivation, children in care, children with disabilities, in children’s hospitals, excluded from school or who are young offenders. Such projects have reduced local crime, reintroduced young people back into education and supported people with disabilities in realising their creative potential. In 2012 one of my projects was used to highlight ‘Best Practice’ in the Department for Education’s (DfE) National Plan for Music Education and in September 2014 another was discussed in a Lords debate as an example of best practice for working with disabled children.

THE WINSTON CHURCHIL MEMORIAL TRUST (WCMT) / BACKGROUND TO PROJECT

WCMT funds British citizens, resident in the UK, to travel overseas to study areas of topical and personal interest, to gain knowledge and bring back best practice for the benefit of others, their profession and community, in the UK. As a passionate believer in the unique power of music to support young people I was instantly excited when a colleague told me about the WCMT and the possibility to expand my knowledge in this area of work and I set to work immediately researching for my application.
“MUSIC OFT HATH SUCH A CHARM TO MAKE BAD GOOD, AND GOOD PROVOKE TO HARM.” (WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, MEASURE FOR MEASURE, 4.1.14)

My research led me to an article that was detailing the work of CCOMPAZ in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. The article spoke about the negative impact of the music form ‘narco corridos’ (‘drug ballads’) which glorifies the exploits of drug cartels and goes on to explain that whilst arts projects like Ccompaz offer spaces for positive cultural expression there are still many children away from the cultural scene who listen only to narco corridos. The article interviewed a Ccompaz teacher who talked about how the organisation teaches two essential things to deter youth violence, drug trafficking and drugs: "discipline and values."

One music tutor said, "our goal is to have a large personal space and future, from which to steal the youth of the culture of death". I was fascinated, not only by the history of Juárez, but also the crucial role that music has within the city’s rehabilitation, both positive and negative. Despite the huge difference in our cultures I could see parallels in that article with some of the negative lyrical influences in music young British people listen to and it was clear to me that Juárez would provide a unique and important learning experience for me.

Communication before my arrival had been at times confusing, partly because of my basic level of Spanish and partly because organising my movements in a city where security is very important can be complex and there are many things I didn’t understand. I had to find a balance of ensuring my itinerary will produce the opportunities and outcomes I need for my project but also letting my Mexican colleagues take control of where, how and with whom.
Juárez has gained worldwide notoriety largely because of the violence as a result of turf wars between the rival Juárez and Sinaloa Cartels and for more than 1000 unsolved murders of young women from 1993 to 2003. Unfortunately, partly because of widely alleged complicity of corrupt police, the serial murders continue and most of them remain unsolved.

After the homicide rates escalated to the point of making Ciudad Juárez the most violent city in the world, the city has seen a significant and steady decline in violent crime. In 2012, homicides were at their lowest rate since 2007. That trend has continued in 2013 with 497 homicides reported, the lowest amount since 2007, dropping Ciudad Juárez to the 37th spot of most-dangerous cities. As of January 2015, Juárez’s murder rate is still placed #37 of the highest reported in the world at 38 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. This marked a decrease of 70% compared to 2008 when the rate was 130 murders per 100,000 inhabitants and represented #1 in the statistic and exceeded second-place Caracas’ statistic of 96 murders per 100,000 inhabitants by 35% for the same period.

The violence is clearly well documented. There are a multitude of papers, books and press reporting as evidence but I wanted to use my trip to try and understand more about the city, past and present from a music and arts perspective. What part does music, and music education, have to play in the city’s rise and fall in violence and importantly, what can we in the UK learn from those working through music to engage with the city’s young people.

It’s worth noting that historically large parts of southern USA were actually Mexico until recently and many people I spoke to from Juárez to this day feel northern Mexico has been sacrificed non-consensually. (El Paso was annexed around 1848, the vast desert somehow making the border town more remote and less connected/valuable.) That said, the border cities are also the gateway to “the dream land”, which in itself creates a complex and insurmountable range of problems and opportunities. In fact in 1940’s Juárez was well known for it’s live jazz scene and even original plans to create Las Vegas were originally designed for Juárez.

During my time in Juárez I met with Chabello, an incredible percussionist/musician and the founder of a peaceful music movement for border city bands called Alianza Fronteriza, (Border Alliance). Chabello took me to The Kentucky Bar, which is where the famous Margarita was invented. He spoke openly and passionately about the music scene in Juárez, past and present. The walls were littered with pictures of American icons such as Marilyn Monroe, John F Kennedy, Elvis, Johnny Cash and more. After a swift and unreasonably strong
Margarita we walked around the downtown area and visited another couple of other bars which all had signs that said no drugs, guns or minors, which for me seemed a curious thing to insist upon, like it might not be a given. Chabello seems to be known to everyone, everywhere we go, and for me he embodies the spirit of the youth of the city and their desire to be known as so much more than their negative reputation. Later in my visit I watched his concert and whilst his band are absolutely amazing I will always remember his vocalists climatic comments down the microphone towards the end of the concert…. “Juárez wants peace, Juárez wants arts and culture, Juárez want to move forward…. what happened to those poor women (referring to infamous femicides) was a long time ago, we will remember them always but we need to move on…..” The crowd roared and the music got more intense.

The next day a few colleagues and myself visited a place called ‘La Cucaracha’ (The Cockroach) also downtown. The bridge that takes you into El Paso (USA) is literally yards from the doors of La Cucaracha yet despite the close proximity, the river that divides the cities represents a deep and distinct cultural divide. In recent years small time drug dealers and street beggars sit in the doorways of the crumbling and naively optimistic music hall venues. The Cucaracha itself would have once been a lavish, beautiful and vibrant music venue with a capacity of around 750 with an ornate and decorative surround balcony. It’s 11pm, Friday evening and we are the only three people in the venue. The walls are dressed with an impressive range of dusty stringed instruments. Old cardboard boxes are stacked in all corners, the bar’s only pool table had become a dumping ground for old percussion about 30 years old and an ‘out of order sign’ in the men’s toilet looks like it was put there about the same time. The owner sits in a dirty red t-shirt watching a game show from a big old analogue TV in the centre of the bar and when I cheerfully ask him to recommend a drink he begrudgingly gives me the best tequila I’ve ever tasted. He is probably the most miserable and depressed shell of a man I have ever met and yet for some reason I like him. Eventually we talk about music and out of the blue he starts playing English Victorian children’s songs and nursery rhymes on a beaten up old piano before equally going back to his TV without warning.

I’ve written in detail about La Cucarracha because for me, it represents the feeling of abandonment of downtown Juárez, and where dreams and drugs are pushed up through Latin American and now congregate in this bottleneck, somehow frozen in time.
I’ve been told upon a number of occasions that Juárez is a multicultural city and a place where immigrants settle. When I dig a little deeper it seems this mostly means people from Southern Mexico who are on their way to USA or to find work in the factories. This is strange for me because the thought of a Cornish person settling in Durham and being called an immigrant would be laughable but I have to remind myself that England is about the same size as the state in which Juárez sits, Chihuahua. In the latter part of last century Juárez saw a huge influx of single parents, mostly women who came to work in the sewing factories making clothes for the USA market who would then sell the same items back to Mexico at an inflated price (even now many people from poor Juárez communities will go over the border to buy clothes that have often been made in Mexico to resell them on street corners to make some money). During these times the women worked long and hard shifts, their children were left at home and the barrios became swamped by young people from single parent families. These children, feeling alone and abandoned, craved to belong to, and feel part of something. The toxic mix of a surplus supply of drugs, powerful drug cartels and barrios teeming with adolescent, frustrated, poor and lonely children fused to create some of the worst violence Latin America has ever seen. I don’t want to oversimplify things but Ccompaz’s approach to violence is not rocket science; it’s the same feeling of wanting to belong, from the same children, only now they have positive and nurturing activities to take part in.
THE CCOMPAZ MUSIC EDUCATION MODEL

CCOMPAZ translates to *Citizens Committed to Peace* in English and their purpose is to "utilise the arts to harvest a culture of peace for children and adolescents at risk of crime and violence ". The organisation’s delivery model is implemented through an after-school programme of activities to support academic performance and give participant’s positive values and strength to achieve their objectives. The project aims to develop self-esteem and self-confidence as well as providing the tools to nurture a peaceful coexistence, counteract the daily hardships and maintain a healthy lifestyle by encouraging young people to be responsible for their own physical and social health.

To this day I remember my first conversation with the CEO of Ccompaz in March, Alma Rosa Gonzalez, back on 13th December 2013, which summarises this perfectly. She said to me;

“*when a child plays in front of hundreds at a concert, when he hears the applause, the ovation, the sense of belonging he becomes so strong that no drug dealer will be able to break through and corrupt his spirit*”...”*that’s how music can change the future of children, and that’s how CCOMPAZ is changing Mexico, one concert, one note at the time...”*

To achieve this goal the organisation works with children in a position of disadvantage such as family break up, at risk of influence from hard drugs and gangs and living in areas associated with violence and poverty. None of the children attending the programme has had previous music education or performing experience.
• The organisation is currently working with eight schools in Juárez and in two local government run community centres with children between the ages of 9-16 years old.
• The number of children they regularly work with total 700 daily, 3500 weekly, 14000 monthly, 112000 annually.
• The program offers 4-hour sessions, 5 times a week, term time only usually from about 1pm – 5pm, Monday to Friday. Two hours are allocated to music education, one hour to physical education and one extra hour to school homework.
• The music offer includes classic and contemporary music delivered by a total of 12 music teachers and 2 music directors.

THE CCOMPAZ ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM USAID COMMISSIONED TWO YEAR EVALUATION REPORT.

The USAID evaluation report provides very useful and detailed, quantitative and qualitative information on socioeconomic indicators, musical skills, health, nutrition, academic performance, factors related to interpersonal relationships, violence, self-esteem and social responsibility. The full report can be found here.
This report highlights a small number of interesting and relevant statistics.

The USAID evaluation finds that the programme directly reduces violent activities, this is not only because it teaches positive values, but also because the project occupies free time (entire afternoons because of school finishes at midday). Consequently there is less chance of young people joining gangs or groups that by definition engage in violent activities. This may seem a little simplistic but it’s a vital element bearing in mind my earlier reference to the history of violence being largely attributed to young people with nothing to do and feeling abandoned.

Within the programme young people are provided with a healthy meal and physical exercise. Evaluation at the start of the programme indicates that none of the children eat to the government’s recommended nutritional standards and that diet is largely based on protein, carbohydrates, fizzy drinks and junk food. Upon completion of the programme the young people’s diet is more balanced. The increased consumption of fruit and vegetables has led to reduced rates in the stunting of the children’s height and weight.

The report shows that music education has a positive psychological impact and that the profound internal changes in the student not only has a significant personal effect but subsequently impacts on wider society and has been partly responsible for the reorder of the social structure in Juárez.

By far the most interesting observation of the report was that the suicidal tendencies of the children interviewed had dropped from 72% at the start of the programme survey to 23% by the end of the report (a two year period).
As a contemporary composer and songwriter myself I will always feel passionate about the importance of offering young people music education that is current and relevant to them. Before I talk about this in more detail in the next section I wanted to highlight why classical music is also of particular importance.

When asked about why the music sessions are important to them all the students and their parents talk very eloquently about local problems with drugs and gangs and how music is a powerful divergent to them. There seems to be something very unique and special about the cross-curricular, educational, creative and aspirational benefits of classical music for these young people. The educational and creative outcomes are well documented but there’s something else. No matter how subtle or overt the implication, classical music is so often seen as an additional privilege for the well-educated middle and upper classes. There’s a societal assumption that “more accessible” (which is code for "easier") music forms like rock or electronica would be more appropriate for these communities (note I put 'easier' in inverted commas). These children have had to first overcome the negative stereotypes that Mexico and the world gives to Juárez communities, then learn how to read music, master technically difficult instruments, learn the dynamics of playing as an orchestra and then go on to perform in a prestigious venue in the city. All of this on instruments that are literally falling apart. I think it's that whole process that plants a seed of aspiration very, very deep and it stays and grows with a child and simply overpowers negative or superficial aspirations. It's clear also that music itself has something special, it attaches itself deep in the soul whereas many other types of community projects only light up the surface of the skin and then dissipate until the next project comes along.
TWO CONDENSED, INCREDIBLE STORIES OF MANY I HAVE BEEN TOLD:

There was a flood during the height of the violence. Alma told me about how the warehouse, which stored the instruments, was being flooded by torrential rain. At the same time as rival gangs where killing each other on the streets the young people where risking their lives literally swimming through buildings to rescue instruments.

Again during the violence an armed gang entered and closed down a local school. Alma was called by frantic parents and asked to help get the children out. Eventually many of the school children were gathered in a Ccompaz building. Whilst the parents desperately waited for news of their trapped children, the rest of the children calmed themselves by playing whatever instruments they could find.

What can UK based music education learn from CCOMPAZ?

During the weeks I spent shadowing the work of CCONPAZ I found that a number of things stood out to me as different and potentially better music delivery models.

1. Their classical music programme initial point of access is genuinely ‘accessible’ regardless of the participant’s age. To achieve this, classical music scores and contemporary songs are carefully chosen to inspire but also be achievable to young people. The scores are then broken down further and simple entry-level parts created so that even with no prior experience whatsoever there is an appropriate part for every child. None of this is exceptionally new; in fact, in the UK we are quite good at making classical music more accessible at entry level, typically at key stage 1 and 2 through programmes such as Wider Opportunities⁸ and BBC Ten Pieces⁹. However, I believe there are a lack of accessible classical music opportunities for older young people to access ensembles, including DfE supported Music Education Hub (Music Services) ensembles at an older age. This eventually leads to an inequality in classical music education and the majority of youth orchestras being predominantly accessed by the same ethnic and social groups.¹⁰
So why do organisations in other parts of the world adopt this accessible approach? I think it’s because at the heart of their work the first priority is to engage children young people and then work to implement societal change. Musical attainment is seen as one of many important outcomes and is viewed equally to but not greater than outcomes we would call ‘soft skills’ such as working in a team, creative problem solving, communication, decision making leadership. In reference to my section on classical music, until classical music in the UK is made more accessible and relevant it will continue to be a protected pursuit for the privileged and thus falling way short achieving it’s potential to initiate long lasting and meaningful change for those who are in most need. In addition, I feel that our current model only goes to deepen social and musical divides among young people and encourage musical snobbery from all angles.

2. Numbers were very high in all the music sessions I visited. The sight of 10 children queuing up to play one old keyboard and an equal queue for the centre’s only drum kit was poignant for me as I’ve recently spent a year working with colleagues desperately trying to encourage overall take up in youth clubs into double figures. CCOMPAZ have developed an interesting model to cope with having over thirty music students to one music teacher. Older young people who have come through the programme act as assistant music tutors helping the younger ones and thus allowing the lead tutor to float and focus on those who need most attention. I think the hidden genius to this is that these roles are often given to the most challenging children. Most of us who have experience in this kind of work will know that by doing this the child will usually channel their energy and rise to the task. Often it’s a very rare opportunity for the child to show their positive side and an important moment for the child to be believed in by an adult and professional. In referring back again to my comments about the times when children were left feeling abandoned en masse and this leading to the violence in the city, I think that the importance of these moments of positive empowerment are probably underestimated.

3. I will never forget watching thirty cellos hammer out the baseline to Billy Jean with determined and serious intent! Having regular concerts that bring all the contemporary and classical programmes together and having a section for all performers to perform together was very powerful and important to the children and young people and their sense of shared identity. From my experience I would say that in the UK the music education sector has predominantly built a network of genre separated youth ensemble performance opportunities.
4. Pedagogic Approach. I love that a teacher arrived in full mariachi costume and I think that traditional dress and I mention her not only because of the amazing rapport she has with the children but also because she led a physical activity after the music lessons. As highlighted in the USAID funded evaluation, the music lessons form only part of what Ccompaz provide. There is a healthy meal ready for when children arrive, musical lessons in different genres, physical exercise to end with and when needed, psychological support. I am often involved with conversations about how to make music education more inclusive. I am not suggesting that the Ccompaz model is the ultimate example of inclusivity but I think they start from the right place. They have a pedagogic starting point and ours is often musical, even genre based. As we look to make our UK ensembles more accessible we need to be prepared to wrapping those projects around the personal needs of every child. Our youth orchestras might need to include access support workers, child psychologists and youth workers working along side music teachers and healthy food being as important as violin bows or access to a assistive music technology.

5. This particular difference is unique to the history of Juárez not something that cannot be replicated. To this point I have interviewed ten music tutors separately and there is a very common theme. All of them are of an era when their city was ravaged by violence at the moment when normally young people are at their creative most potent. At this time (2009-2012) there were no opportunities for young people to play or to learn and many people fled the city. These young musicians stayed, they were surrounded by violence, poverty, killings and fear. Now these same music tutors all view their role as part of a movement, an honour and an absolute duty. There is something incredibly selfless in their approach, they see music as a vital part of the city's rehabilitation and they are unfaltering in their commitment to ensure the next generation has the opportunities that was denied to them.
6. Happiness. My Mexican colleagues have asked me a number of times about the kind of deprivation that face young British people. I go on to talk about how deprivation has many different forms and is not just socioeconomic but upon seeing a school that has no toilet, only a large pit my words feel hollow somehow as I speak them. On reflection however, I think young people seem genuinely happier here, friendlier and more content here. I think there’s something about the changing environment in Juárez and the want for cultural change. Every parent, politician, classroom teacher, musician, head teacher and organisation I speak to believes passionately in the importance of arts and culture within education and change. In contrast, it could be said that in UK we are currently viewing good education in ‘future earning’ terms and subjects which support happiness, wellbeing, and teamwork are being devalued, even scrapped. Earning a living is important but whilst we are easily appeased and satisfied by shallow consumerism we can forget the importance of the need to feel that, as an individual, you are ‘part of’ something; that you have a valuable function and role in life; that you are part of a human race working together. Our education approach has become complacent about helping the next generation to succeed in life, as rounded, well-developed people.  

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What can Ccompaz learn from UK based music education?

“THERE IS NO EVIL THAT WILL LAST A HUNDRED YEARS.”

“NO HAY MAL QUE CIEN AÑOS DURE,”

1. Song writing.

I learnt that CCOMPAZ contemporary music students have an impressive love and knowledge of traditional British music like The Beatles, The Stones, Pink Floyd etc, to the extent that I regularly spent time signing autographs and being forced to sing old rock songs. Another prominent music form is ‘Narcocorridos’. Narcocorrido lyrics refer to particular events and include real dates and places and glorify the illegal activities of the cartels such as murder, torture, racketeering, extortion, drug smuggling, illegal immigration. Whilst my interviews showed that this music is not as important to young people as my research had led me to believe it is still a huge US backed music industry and an extremely negative influence on communities in Northern Mexico. It is worth remembering that there have been a significant number of murders of musicians related to this music form, either for speaking out against a cartel, or for being related to a rival cartel.

To counteract negative youth influences CCOMPAZ staff are currently receiving training in the ‘Education for Peace’ model, which has been developed by Jorge Lozano from Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez. The programme teaches young people about respect, positive expression, the power of listening and techniques for conflict resolution. When I interviewed Jorge we spoke in depth about exactly how the work might be delivered in a musical context and whilst I know Ccompaz will deliver the work with passion, intelligence and conviction I believe that song writing programmes similar to ones I’ve worked on in the UK would provide a more targeted delivery vehicle for the ‘Education for Peace’ programme.

The importance and impact of music is well documented but using song-writing as a specific delivery tool for me is like having access to a physicist’s magic (musical) ball. The magic ball when used correctly, and in a safe and creative environment, allows the participant to positively express emotions that might be on the surface or might even have been buried away. If this is starting to sound like music therapy, it’s intentional. Whilst the aims and approaches of music therapy are very different,
community music approaches will always be therapeutic and as such a significant amount of training and safeguarding measures are always needed in order to appropriately deal with issues as they arise. A songwriting programme would cover all the benefits of the current programme but would also give an opportunity for young people to produce a regular CDs/MP3s and/or performances. This provides young people with an opportunity to receive affirmation from friends, family and peers and a platform for their authentic voices to be heard. The lyric writing process itself develops a capacity for self-expression and a stronger sense of self-awareness and the sheer joy and sense of achievement that comes in creating and then owning a CD with your own original music is extremely powerful. It is a sense of pride captured eternally through the music file and can be kept with the individual at all times no matter where they go or what they are going through and I would say on par with performing at a concert and with developments in technology, arguably more accessible.

In addition, Juárez has a vibrant independent music scene, the aforementioned ‘Alianza Fronteriza' music movement involves many musicians already acting as positive role models for the young people as Ccompaz music teachers. It would be fairly straightforward and very powerful to create a musical pathway for these young people but the most important possible outcome of a widespread songwriting programme is empowering the young people to literally re-write the perceptions of Juárez and to re-identify themselves musically through the process.

“HE WHO SINGS FRIGHTENS AWAY HIS ILLS,” MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA.

2. Singing.
During acute stress the fight-or-flight response is stimulated and the hormone cortisol is released into the brain encouraging primal responses and reducing our ability for rational and calm thinking. Singing connects neural pathways in the brain to have astonishing benefits for dementia sufferers or those with trauma-related speech problems. It exercises major muscle groups in the upper body. It is an aerobic activity that improves the efficiency of your cardiovascular system and encourages you to take more oxygen into your body, leading to increased alertness. And so the spiritual, physical, educational and cognitive benefits of singing both as an individual and as part of a group are well documented and organisations in UK such as Youth Music and ‘The Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health’ provide excellent research and evidence which I have used on numerous occasions to support funding applications.
CCOMPAZ don’t currently include singing in their programmes and I think that is a huge missed opportunity. I questioned this on a number of occasions and was told by senior staff that they had stopped including singing after “a bad experience”. However, during my visits to music sessions the young people consistently asked me to sing songs with them and when I did they immediately sung with sheer delight and without restraint. Singing with other people can help individuals connect to each other, and to their environment whether it’s parent to child, at seasonal events, at church or even karaoke. When it happens there’s an excitement, you feel part of it and for me it’s vital that Ccompaz embrace singing as part of it’s programme.

However, my argument for Ccompaz making better use of singing within their work started during my trip, with some shocking news involving the violent death of a well-known music teacher that directly and profoundly affected everyone I was working with. I was due to deliver a training workshop the day after this news had broken and although I was utterly impressed that the entire workforce had turned up I quickly saw that my plan had to be dramatically altered and based on singing or playing. As difficult as the day was is was the singing, breathing and vocalising that provided important moments of healing, safe reflection and comfort for the group.
I’ve since had the opportunity to have a number of conversations about what has happened and they all feed into a notion that in many ways Juárez is a city suffering from societal post-traumatic stress. It’s a term I hadn’t come across before and yet it’s indirectly and subconsciously referred to quite often within my conversations. The people I have been working with didn’t flee the city when the violence was at its height like so many did. They gritted their teeth and persevered with making a positive change through music in challenging and stressful settings. They witnessed horrific things within their communities done to people they knew but stayed the course and by doing so strengthened their resolve. Thankfully those days appear to behind them but there are still very recent memories, there is still stress, poverty and fear. All of these elements can bubble below the surface until one day they explode. A local newspaper stated that the stats demonstrate this with 6 of the 40 deaths in October 2014 being related to domestic homicide.

The reality is that Juárez is vibrant city full of creativity, arts and culture but its attributes are silenced by history, geography, ignorance and misconception. It’s my strong belief that singing (as well as song writing) could play an important role in giving voice to communities in Juárez, deepening community cohesion and providing a positive and peaceful outlet for the stress and pressure that many communities feel.

Community Singing.
It is of course, important to focus restorative music projects on young people to ensure long lasting and positive change but there is another opportunity here through singing. 100% of all the parents I spoke to or interviewed indicated that they would like to take part in music making after seeing the benefit in their children. Whilst previous and current governments and non-government organisations are supporting a number of cultural youth programmes I haven’t come across any that support intergenerational social cohesion and yet the work of CCOMPAZ has generated the perfect target group who could not only instigate change as a group but also ensure that the legacy lives on via the generations below them.
My time in Ciudad Juarez has not only reaffirmed my belief in the transformative power of music it has taken that belief to a new level of understanding especially concerning the benefits of classical music. In addition my experience has shone a bright light on those things we do exceptionally well in the UK and all the things we still have to learn. With a reignited enthusiasm I look forward to sharing these experiences with the music education sector over the coming weeks and months and I hope my recommendations for Ccompaz will also be realised.

Summary of Sharing to Date (22nd March 2015)

I am delighted to announce that I have managed to secure funding to invite colleagues and young musicians from CCOMPAZ to visit the UK in July 2015 as part of a cultural exchange project to further exchange best practice and learning.

Since writing this report I have presented my findings at the following events;

- November 2014 - meeting at The Mexican Embassy London
- November 2014 – presentation to south east music charity Rhythmix
- December 2014 - Surrey Music Education Hub – board meeting
- January 2015 – meeting with Arts Work, a ‘Bridge Organisation’ that ‘connects arts and cultural organisations, children and young people, families and schools across the South East of England.’
- February 2015 – Young people in challenging circumstances advisory group Surrey
- January 2015 – presentation to the National Foundation for Youth Music
- February 2015 - SALDO (Surrey Arts and Leisure Development Officers – January board meeting
- February 2015 - Our Future
- City development day, a major investigation seeking to improve the lives and life-chances of children and young people in Brighton through cultural engagement and creative skills. Led by Marc Jaffrey OBE.
- March 2015 - Presentation at The Music Education Expo, the UKs largest exhibition and conference for music teachers.
- Extensive sharing of a short documentary via twitter, facebook, blogging, and other online networks. [https://vimeo.com/115966082](https://vimeo.com/115966082)
Out of Mexico's Violence, New Cultural Expressions Emerge Along the Border


"Juarez shedding violent image, statistics show", CNN. 2014.

"Homicide rates in Juarez dropping but do residents feel safer?", KVIA. 2014.

"Juarez falls to No.37 on world's most violent cities list". El Paso Times. 2014.


NAT/AKM (August 27, 2009). "Mexican city world's murder capital". Press TV.

"Music Can 'boost wider learning" http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8485690.stm

BBC Ten Pieces project. http://www.musicmark.org.uk/resources/bbc-ten-pieces-project

Elizabeth Day: Why are our orchestras so white?

www.theguardian.com/culture/2008/sep/14/music.classicalmusicandopera

Ken Robinson, How Schools Kill Creativity www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity


Debating the Winds of Change in Community Music Therapy by Anna Maratos


The Alzheimer's Society group 'Singing for the Brain'. www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01cjwtn

Singing With Young People in Juarez https://vimeo.com/116049442