

# Music for Peace, a Model for Socialization

Mina Fenercioglu

**Abstract**—This study discusses a Turkish music education model similar to its Venezuelan counterpart El Sistema, in which socialization and human development are the main goals. The Music for Peace (Baris Icin Muzik) model, founded in 2005 by an idealist humanitarian in Istanbul, started as a pilot project with accordion and today makes symphonic music education. The program aims to offer social change through free-of-charge.

In such a big city like Istanbul, in a deprived inner city center people have poor economic, social and cultural conditions. In that Edirnekapi district people don't have opportunities to join the cultural and social life, like music or sports. It is believed that this initiative covered a part of this gap by giving children the opportunities to participate in social and cultural life.

In this study it is planned to understand what social changes could music education could make in children's lives. In the complimentary music lessons children works in groups, which helps them to learn the feelings of solidarity, friendship, communion and sharing.

By Music for Peace project children connect with the community, they have the belief to succeed in life because they feel that they are loved by their friends, instructors and families. In short they feel that they are important, thus brings the success in life. Additionally, it is believed that, this program has achieved success. Today approximately 400 children participate in this programs orchestras and choirs. Some of the students get into the conservatories. And the center is not just a place where they get music lessons but also a place where they get socialized. And music education helps children to have strong sense of identity, self-confidence and self-esteem.

**Keywords**—El Sistema, music education, Music for Peace, socialization.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**M**USIC for Peace Foundation, which is a social music education program in Istanbul, Turkey, is now a part of El Sistema, El Sistema Nacional de Orquestas y Coros Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela, a Venezuelan social development program through music, established by José Antonio Abreu in 1975. Today, this program annually provides 400.000 children with instruments, approximately four hours of daily lessons in Venezuela. By comparison, in Turkey, the numbers are approximately annually 400 children are supplied musical instruments each year, with four active orchestras working in a centre and three primary schools.

In this paper, a system, which has succeeded in social change and integration through music, will be discussed. In the centres, children learn to play instruments together despite their differing social, economic or cultural backgrounds. Having the same goals, Music for Peace Foundation also tries to achieve similar positive outcomes, and make positive differences in children's lives.

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The Music for Peace (Baris Icin Muzik) program, founded in 2005 by an idealist humanitarian in Istanbul, started as a pilot project with accordion and then with flute in ensembles at the Ulubatli Hasan Primary School, a school comprising mostly underprivileged children [1]. The program offers complimentary music lessons particularly to deprived children, who at the beginning were prone to crime. Following music education, positive changes could be observed in the attitudes of these children. They learn to share and to be more social. The aim of this initiative is to provide social and cultural awareness, which serves the same mission as the world known El Sistema.

In 2009, the Music for Peace project received Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award, a prize presented to enterprises that improve the quality of life in urban environment [2]. Since 2010, the Music for Peace continues symphonic music education at its own central building. In 2011, Music for Peace transformed into a foundation and started to accept donations as musical instruments for children who attend the courses. On July 2013, IKSIV (Istanbul Culture and Arts Foundation) became the institutional partner of Music for Peace Foundation and in June 2014, the foundation signed up to join El Sistema's global program.

Now in 2015, the foundation has three ensembles: the Music for Peace Orchestra, which consists of two orchestras practicing and performing in different levels; the Music for Peace Chorus, a participant of Istanbul International Polyphonic Choruses Festival; and the recently established Music for Peace Brass Ensemble [1, p.6, 21, 36].

In this study, descriptive methods and qualitative methodology have been used.

Sociologist Anthony Giddens says, the primary channel for the transmission of culture over time and generations; "the process by which children, or other new members of society learn the way of life of their society is called socialization" [3]. In Music for Peace initiative, socialization processes are being made in music making. Children learn social rules and norms, by taking part in music groups like choirs and orchestras.

By enhancing feelings of solidarity, friendship and belongingness, in participants of El Sistema and El Sistema inspired programs like Music for Peace, children learn to be disciplined, respectful to others, and focused on excellence.

In brief, in this paper, first, El Sistema will be introduced. Then, the concept of socialization will be discussed, and finally, an El Sistema inspired Program, Music for Peace will be presented. Such these two music education programs with a focus on social development have proven to help children to become more successful in life by giving them the ability to live peacefully in a community.

## II. EL SISTEMA

El Sistema is a Venezuelan music education program, which has started as a social project forty years ago, in 1975; and today it has transformed a community.

*Fundacion del Estado para el Sistema Nacional de las Orquestas Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela 'FESNOJIV'*, nowadays FundaMusical, widely known as El Sistema, has a main objective of social development through music education. In Venezuela crime rates under 18 are very high. Thus, this project aims to enhance youth crime prevention by engaging the young population in music and also help them better integrate with their community through their improved social skills. El Sistema's goal is to help the children and young people to be good, disciplined citizens and also to teach them how to work as a team, and to experience and internalize feelings of solidarity in the society.

In February 12, 1975, in the middle of a central district of Caracas, fifty music stands with the score of Mozart's *Kleine Nachtmusik* had been set up in an underground garage [4]. Eleven young music students came to the first orchestra rehearsal to play together and by the third night, they were seventy. In forty years, this system has reached about 400,000 children and young people in Venezuela.

This program is mainly a social development program rather than a music education program. Founder economist and musician José Antonio Abreu says, "To me, an orchestra is first and foremost a way to encourage better human development within children. That is why I always said, and I say today, that this is not an artistic program but a human development program through music. It is very important to be clear about this. Because, everything that happened then, and everything that has happened since then, has a direct consequence of this concept." [5].

El Sistema and El Sistema inspired programs give children free music education but more importantly, as a social development program they give children strong self-esteem, emotional security, coexistence and solidarity; some of the virtues that give people a chance to live more easily and peacefully in society.

"We never forget that we are a social program first.

The kids work in groups because we want them to learn to work in community. They work together five hours a day, six days a week [5, p.34].

El Sistema's overarching goal is to rescue children from the multiple dangers of poverty, and most importantly from the sense of hopelessness and low self-esteem that can lead to gang membership, drugs and violence" [5, p.prelude X].

In the system children need to work as a team in order to achieve success. They learn how to play an instrument, how to behave, how to correct their own and others' mistakes with tolerance. In the program every student joins at least two ensembles. One is an ensemble that she or he works together as a group, for example strings, or violins. The other is an orchestra where they have a part in.

## III. SOCIALIZATION

Giddens assumes that socialization is not a cultural programming. "Socialization is therefore, is a process whereby the helpless infant gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture into which she or he is born" [3, p.27]. This process could take place in home or in school or after school programs like El Sistema and El Sistema Inspired programs.

"Socialization connects the different generations to one another" and "it should be seen as a lifelong process in which human behaviour is continually shaped by social interactions." [3, p.28] As an El Sistema inspired program Music for Peace also connects different age groups to one another with its four different level orchestras. It allows individuals to develop themselves and their potential socially, to learn and to make adjustments.

As to Giddens, socialization is "the social process through which children develop an awareness of social norms<sup>1</sup> and values; and achieve a distinct sense of self. Although socialization processes are particularly significant in infancy and childhood, they continue to some degree throughout of life. No human individuals are immune from the reactions of others around them, which influence and modify their behaviour at all phases of the life cycle" [3, p.699]. The participants in Music for Peace also get involved in socialization process and make positive outcomes in life socially. The children learn how to behave in public, how to show tolerance, how to share in a group. Also they learn to work for the same goal together.

Socialization is a process of integration with a group or society which an individual internalizes with his own behaviours, ideas etc. [6]. El Sistema and El Sistema inspired programs also support children to participate in socialization processes through orchestras and choirs. Besides when they join the groups, they gain a sense of belonging; absorb the values of the group.

Music has an impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children, which is enormous and growing [7]. "Programs such as El Sistema become very appealing as a fine cause that leads to a positive cost-benefit outcome." [7, p.5]

### A. A Recipe to Decrease Poverty

As to Giddens, social change is difficult to define. Since everyday is a new one, every moment would be new [3, p.42].

According to Elliot Currie, an American sociologist, "there are several main links between the growth of crime and social exclusion" [3, p.331]. Relative and absolute poverty in public; local communities suffer from a loss of stable livelihoods, economic deprivation and its impacts on the family.

"Due to a lack of skills, an absence of motivation or a moral weakness, the poor are unable to succeed in society" [3, p.341]. "Poverty means loneliness, sadness, anonymity. An orchestra means joy, motivation, teamwork, and the aspiration

<sup>1</sup>Norms: "Rules of behaviour, which reflect or embody a culture's values, either prescribing a given type of behaviour, or forbidding it. Norms are always backed by sanctions of one kind or another, varying from informal disapproval to physical punishment or execution." [3, p.695].

to success,” [8] With orchestras and choirs, poverty could be decreased like El Sistema has been doing for the past 40 years. Also in Turkey Music for Peace Foundation has the same purpose.

#### IV. MUSIC FOR PEACE

Music for Peace project has put into practice by architect Mehmet Selim Baki in 2005. Seven years later in 2011, Music for Peace, whose main purpose is to give complimentary music lessons to as many children as it can be given, has gained foundation status. With the ideals of peace and justice, this program has reached to 4000 children today. Among its objectives there is also the creation of common social and cultural living quarters, in which children can participate in arts. This foundation has been a centre of solidarity and communion for the children and their families in Edirnekapi district, Istanbul.

Music for Peace Foundation's principles overlap with United Nations Children's Rights Convention; "every child has a right to get involved in art life". Arts and music are the best ways to express and to reach ideas like peace, justice and freedom for masses. With this faith Music for Peace Foundation has been working in their central building and in some governmental primary schools to give music education: workshops and orchestra lessons.

##### A. Goals

The education model of the foundation is based on orchestras as in the El Sistema model. Children who take instrument lessons take part immediately in an orchestra. In every registration period, new orchestras are being formed. In the first two years of orchestra lessons, kids learn how to play in an orchestra as well as become a part of a group, uniting for an aim, moving as one. This process helps children to enjoy music, to reveal their energy and capacity. After two years of work in an orchestra, children could try to join for higher-level orchestras.

Recently, Music for Peace has four orchestras in different levels. The main goals of the program includes, training their own trainers, removing the obstacles in arts, upbringing good citizens, and helping children to grow old as, happy men and women. This program is a social development program through music, with which music signifies unity, solidarity and harmony.

##### B. Working Model

Music for Peace Foundation and El Sistema signed a treaty of friendship that support children's social development. The foundation has started to take advantage of El Sistema's experience. It's not obligatory to choose a profession as a musician. With music lessons, children learn to listen, understand, become a part of an orchestra and live in harmony without making concessions of themselves.

The first practice of Music for Peace was solfeggio and accordion lessons after school hours, five days a week in Istanbul, Ulubatli Hasan Elementary School for children between 6-14 years old. In Edirnekapi district, the pilot field

survey revealed that many children had poor economic and social backgrounds. The project was initiated with 3 teachers and 20 students, spread out over five days a week.

As music has social, musical, positive impacts on children, this project continued to attract more children every day. And the foundation received demands to open up more workshops for the children in other nearby schools. Music for Peace has initiated another music workshop in Muallim Naci Elementary School and in 2010, had its own building with classes, rooms, and rehearsal areas, library and dining hall. In 2012, the third Music for Peace music workshop was created in Hattat Rakim Elementary School.

Today in 2015, the centre and three school workshops have approximately 200 children involved in music. And with music, social bounds and feelings of solidarity are growing stronger. Recently instruments like violin, viola, cello, contrabass, piano, percussion, clarinet, flute, trombone, trumpet, English horn, instruments of symphonic music have been added to the education program. And also the staff of the building could be the parents of the children, with which a macro-economy has been created.

Music for Peace is an intervention in Edirnekapi, one of Istanbul's most disadvantaged inner-city neighbourhoods, that brings free musical education to local school children from the ages of 7 to 14 and has realized a new facility for musical training and performance for talented teenagers at the heart of their community.

Apart from its undoubted social impact on the children and their families – many recent immigrants from poorer regions in Turkey – the project constitutes a commitment to an inner-city area that is suffering from disinvestment and increasing deprivation. The design and construction of a new three-storey building with music rooms and a 90-seat performance space in the tight-knit urban fabric of Edirnekapi will change local perceptions about the neighbourhood, ensuring that young people will stay in the area rather than move away to pursue their musical talents.

The project is an innovative investment in human and social capital, which uses arts and culture in a highly pragmatic and unsentimental way to promote urban regeneration in an area of Istanbul that most needs it [2].

The winning project, Baris Icin Muzik / Music for Peace is impressive in its simplicity: teach children the basics of music and to play the accordion after their school day, feed them, instil pride, and send them out in the community. This is in a depressed inner-city neighbourhood where extra-curricular opportunities are not ordinarily available. The commitment and the selflessness with which this project is run (primarily the effort and finances of one person) are commendable.

Music is an essential element of urban life, in streets and other public spaces, connecting people and catalysing the best of a city's potential. This project brings a remarkable quality to the neighbourhood: not only to the children themselves, but also to their families, and their local community. They are proud and their music creates a communal spirit, bringing together officials, educators and families.

The Music for Peace Orchestra also participated in Sistema

Europe Youth Orchestra Camp in 2013, in Salzburg. And last year, 2014 has hosted the second Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra Camp in Istanbul.

### *C. Music for Peace Working Principles*

#### 1. Music is an Efficient and Enjoyable Tool for Social Change and Peace.

Music for Peace Foundation's purpose is to contribute to children's social development by making music together. Students are encouraged to involve in making music process and taking responsibilities in the program. Mostly, children teach their friends. Thus friendships, participation, communication, sharing skills are being improved. Music is a way to express joy, happiness, passion and excitement. Within the program these feelings are the most focused concepts, then the program focuses on technical studying.

#### 2. Inclusive Works and a Way to Perfection

Music for Peace Foundation's aim is to reach as many children as possible, to give them a chance without taking into consideration their abilities in music. These children have intense programs. In the program, the will to succeed, musical abilities and efforts are merited. They are encouraged to instruct in orchestras in order to improve their leadership skills. So that on the one hand every child has his own pace, on the other hand there is a sensitive balance in the way to perfection in music and as in social development.

#### 3. Free of Charge and Open to Everyone

Music for Peace, gives free music education in its foundation building and vicinity schools. Every child and young person can join the classes.

#### 4. Music Workshops

Music workshops take place in the schools where children and young people attend. These workshops have the same visions and principles as Music for Peace has. Friendship, solidarity and security are the most important concepts where every child has a feeling of belonging with love, happiness and joy.

#### 5. Intense and Disciplined Work

Students spend long time in the centre and in the workshop areas. For making good music, they spend minimum 4 hours a day, 6 days a week. Rehearsals are very active, rigorous and disciplined. With the program, children and young people learn to bear long hours of studying, responsibilities, work ethics. With the frequently organized concerts, children have a chance to share their abilities with friends, families and the community.

#### 6. Importance of Group Work

Learning is based on group experience in Music for Peace Foundation. Group work is balanced with individual attention. Orchestra is a group, a society with leaders and citizens. Children share, perform and achieve harmonious sounds. Orchestra is a community where children get together to compromise. In the program, group and choir also work with

the same ethics.

#### 7. A Total Development

Everyone has different duties and roles in the workshops. Instructors are artists, as well as students, teachers and world citizens. They work with the responsibilities of being good citizens, good examples and a good role model for the students.

Students also share their knowledge with the ones younger than them. Thus the process of learning continues with communion and friendship. Hence, enabling instruction, and sharing to become a natural activity for the children.

#### 8. Lifelong Sustainability

Music for Peace targets a continuous education process in childhood, adolescence and youth, which support the development of the students. Children work in different workshops with a common program and learning methods. That gives a chance for the students to participate in a higher-level orchestra.

#### 9. Families and Social Environment

The participation and support of the families and the community is highly asked for in order to continue the process. In the concerts and recitals families, neighbours, schoolteachers and managers are asked to join. The activities unite the students, families and community to have peace and solidarity.

#### 10. Partners

Music for Peace Foundation is partners with worldwide known El Sistema, Sistema Europe, Istanbul Culture and Arts Foundation (IKSV), and other institutions, corporations, which has the same aims and principles in the world. This collaboration gives mobility and empowerment with a world vision and on the other hand, the flexibility and originality. With these collaborations the foundation has a chance to participate in festivals, to organize seminars and organize music activities, to share and equal the knowledge and repertoire for orchestras and teacher exchange activities.

### *D. Music for Peace Foundation Ensembles*

In the foundation there are three main ensembles: Music for Peace Orchestras, Music for Peace Choir, Music for Peace Brass Ensemble [1, p.6, 21, 36].

#### 1. Music for Peace Orchestra

Music for Peace Orchestra is made up of 90 students between the ages of 7 and 18. This orchestra is a high level orchestra called "A". Considering the musical and technical facilities of this high-quality orchestra, its repertoire consists of pieces from Beethoven, Mozart, Marquez, Grieg, and Rossini etc. The members of orchestra A have a chance to work with international and national professional musicians who visit the centre. Besides these children who play in "A" orchestra are accepted as potential instructors. They have the responsibility to share their knowledge and experience with new students. They also represent Turkey in national and international concert organizations. The orchestra, which also

has members who plan to become professional musicians, has been invited to many organizations like, First Sistema Europe Salzburg Festival “El Sistema Week” concert (2013), Second Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra concert (2014), 42<sup>nd</sup> International Istanbul Music Festival “El Sistema Day” concert (2014) and so on.

The orchestra’s new music director is Sascha Goetzel since February 2015, who is the music director of Borusan Philharmonic Orchestra. Also Bruno Campo (Guatemala, Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra musical director), Etienne Abelin (Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra musical co-director, co-founder Superar Suisse), Samuel Matus (Guatemala), Cem Mansur (conductor, advisor of Music for Peace Foundation), Güler Aykal (conductor) have worked with the orchestra.

Some of the future organizations Music for Peace Orchestra plans to participate in are, 43<sup>rd</sup> International Istanbul Music Festival concert, El Sistema Venezuela visit and Caracas Turkish Embassy concert, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra Camp (Italy).

## 2. Music for Peace Choir

Music for Peace Choir, which has 52 students between the ages 7 to 15, was founded in 2012. In the choir’s repertoire, there are national and international children’s songs, traditional songs, and famous film songs. The rehearsals are held in Edirnekapi Hattat Rakim Primary School.

The choir performed songs with 400 children from various European countries and Venezuela Youth Orchestra at Salzburg in “El Sistema Week” in 2013. Also in 2013 and 2014 the choir participated in Istanbul Polyphonic Choir Festival and got an award in 2014.

## 3. Music for Peace Brass Ensemble

In March 2014, this ensemble was founded, which has approximately 30 students playing trumpet, horn, trombone, tuba and percussion. The ensemble’s repertoire consists of classical, jazz, Latin, baroque and ethnic music. Some of the concerts they have given are: 42<sup>nd</sup> International Istanbul Music Festival “El Sistema Day” concert (2014), Boğaziçi University concert (2014), Istanbul Culture and Arts Foundation (IKSV) special event concert (2014) and “Music for Peace Week with Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra” (2014).

## E. Awards and Partnerships

### 1. 2009 Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award

In 2009, Music for Peace was awarded the 2009 Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award, given to a social responsibility project every year in a different city of the world. According to the jury, the reason Music for Peace was awarded is the success and sustainability of the system and also because it presented a positive model for the world. This international award aims to draw attention to the common problems of the world and also to support creative solutions to these problems. That is why this award is given to projects and works, which help to simplify the everyday life of neighbourhood residents in the districts of the city.

Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award brings citizens, local management, government, private sector institutions and non-governmental organizations together. In the 21st century, urbanization era, this award helps the citizens to take action and responsibilities for the city they live in. Also, Urban Age Conference is being convened in different countries of the world and the award is presented to the projects of the city where the conference has taken place. Award organization is an initiative with London School of Economics and Political Science and Deutsche Bank with the International Urban Age project.

### 2. Pioneer Corporate Partner: Allianz

Allianz is the pioneer corporate partner of Music for Peace Foundation that remarks they support especially music projects that transform the society.

### 3. Corporate Partner: Istanbul Culture and Arts Foundation (IKSV)

Istanbul Culture and Arts Foundation is the corporate partner of Music for Peace Foundation since 2013. IKSV supports Music for Peace’s communication and marketing activities in order to have sustainability and recognition of Music for Peace. In this context, El Sistema Venezuela and Music for Peace has signed a friendship convention in 2014, by which kids of Venezuela and Turkey was announced as siblings and all the children have opportunities to work together. Additionally, Istanbul Kalkınma Ajansı (Istanbul Improvement Agency) is a project partner of Music for Peace Foundation. Apart from these, Music for Peace is working to establish Sistema Europe with 5 partner counties (Austria, Bosnia, Italy, Turkey and United Kingdom) for two years.

## V. CONCLUSION

Music for Peace Foundation’s philosophy is beyond class, ethnicity, or talent and it is open to everyone. In the program participants are both from high and low socioeconomic backgrounds. Music for Peace was built in a low-income district, because the parents believe that their children have a chance to succeed in life.

In conclusion, El Sistema and El Sistema inspired programs succeed in social change, makes people respectful to each other since 1975, starting with El Sistema. It helps to develop feelings of solidarity, and makes people better, stronger, and more sensitive individuals to social problems. By these good abilities children and young people could be kept far away from trouble. And also these talents give them a chance to be excellent citizens that make them succeed in their future life.

With social development based music education, feelings of belonging, respect, responsibility and tolerance increase; individuals become more sensitive to everything in life. In addition spending more hours with the instruments makes the children more successful, thus they become more confident, which brings respect in life. By these behavioural changes, they have the inner power to stay out of trouble in life. Also group music education helps children to have strong sense of identity, self-confidence and self-esteem. Another positive

outcome is that some of the children decide to be musicians, thus they enter conservatories.

In the end, music can be seen as a socialization element. It can be considered as a platform of harmony, solidarity, sharing the same feelings. Thus, children understand that they are important. Having such feelings give them the power to be successful in whatever they do in life. With the synthesis of reason and knowledge, with projects like El Sistema and Music for Peace, life can be changed in a positive meaning: being and living in peaceful and equal communities could be possible.

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