



Music as Therapy International



Introduction

These pages have been put together to re-launch *Music as Therapy*. This UK registered charity's mission has long been the development and use of music therapy, as a means to relieve those living in conditions of need, hardship or distress, suffering from mental or physical disability and the effects of poverty or sickness. The reason for a re-launch is that we are now moving our focus from purely activities in Romania, to getting involved with projects around the world.

We will continue to have an 'arm' in Romania but propose to establish additional Project Partnerships with tailored support packages - see Page 4 for more detailed information about what exactly we can offer. These partnerships will be with independent music therapists who are keen to enhance the projects they are steering in unusual contexts all over the world. We are also keen to promote collaborative networking between people interested in taking their music therapy skills beyond the traditional UK clinical context. This is something we will do through a membership scheme.

***MasT* is seeking new partners worldwide, who would like to look at ways of working together to maximise the potential of their own projects.**

The information will be of interest to anyone who is looking at ways to make some of the benefits of music therapy more available to a vulnerable community. This may be a community which has been through a particular crisis or one which simply does not currently have access to professional music therapists on a well-established or permanent basis.

This information might also be of interest to people who are interested in the international music therapy scene in general, and those would like to understand how and why *Music as Therapy* is extending its wings beyond Romania, after fourteen years.

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Rationale – Why develop *MasT International*?

Over the past two years, *Music as Therapy* has been approached with increasing frequency to share resources and consult on a number of overseas music therapy initiatives. Typically these initiatives are being undertaken by individual therapists who are leading projects using music therapy in places where music therapy is not widely available (e.g. developing and transitional countries). They know the need for music therapy is there and often have varying levels of support from small charities with wider aims, church groups, schools, rotary clubs etc. People have usually got in touch with us because despite this support, they feel they'd like more focused help to plan how to implement an effective music therapy project. It has been really rewarding for us to hear that these people have felt there to be a real benefit to their project once *Music as Therapy* has become part of their support network.

In response to this growing demand, *Music as Therapy* has been offering an *ad hoc* consultancy service: offering advice and resources to other music therapists in exchange for discretionary donations to projects in Romania. In 2007 and 2008 we also ran well-subscribed Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events focusing on the challenges of international work, from which a Resources Pack has been published and is selling well.

Alongside this emerging area of work, *Music as Therapy* has reconsidered its involvement in Romania. The country continues to move slowly through stages of transition, but the grassroots approach which launched our involvement is becoming less appropriate. A need for multiple and locally-led initiatives is clearly emerging and the fragmentation is sometimes beyond our resources. Similarly as a small charity, it is difficult to justify greater investment at the intangible, strategic level (lobbying national authorities, developing local training strategies etc). We retain a strong commitment to our work in Romania, but feel we are able to scale back our activities there, whilst keeping an active presence, and take on new work.

Why might you want a formal link with *MasT*?

- You might be involved in or planning a music therapy-based project in an unusual context, or overseas.
- You (and your Local Partners¹) may have achieved great things, but you're not sure if you have the resources to do more
- You might have found it difficult to get your Local Partners or other people involved in the initiative as engaged as you'd hoped
- You might be concerned that there are ethical decisions about offering clinical input or training to an under-resourced, vulnerable community which need to be thought through carefully
- You might feel isolated by a lack of understanding about compromises and innovative practice required by the context and aims of your work, or unconfident about taking clinical risks
- You might wish you had more time and opportunities to think about the work, or support in doing so
- You might like to share the responsibility of thinking about cross-cultural implications and issues of sustainability in your work abroad
- You might know that additional funds or a fundraising strategy would help you meet your goals

**If any of these bullet points ring true for you,
then becoming a *MasT* Project Partner could be of value**

¹ Identified grassroots workers working with you to enhance what they are offering to children/adults in their care.

What is our Agenda?

Our vision is for *MasT International* to become a hub of international projects rooted in Music Therapy.

We want to help facilitate the delivery of projects which are taking therapeutic music-making to new communities across the world: Projects which, without this experienced and clinically-focused support, might not reach their true potential.

However the main agenda of the existing *Music as Therapy* office team is that we would like to find ways to put the skills and experience accumulated over the past 14 years of running *Music as Therapy* into other high-impact grassroots initiatives and to share the satisfaction of each project's achievements.

We propose to do this by finding like-minded people who would like to develop and lead their own *Music as Therapy* projects, with our support but – importantly – without our interference!

We will also be developing a membership base for people with a general interest in taking UK models of music therapy into non-traditional contexts, offering information, CPD, volunteering and networking opportunities.

Endorsing our eligibility for this role, came the independent recognition of our good practice in the shape of the 2006 Charity Award for International Aid and Development. This award specifically recognises good project and operational management.



What makes a *Music as Therapy* project distinct?

Historically people have come to associate the phrase "*Music as Therapy* project" with a specific six-week skill-sharing/training initiative undertaken in Romania. Actually our activities have been wider than this for many years now and are set to become a whole step wider still with the launch of *Music as Therapy International* in October 2008.



What makes a *Music as Therapy* project distinct is not its structure, but certain parameters, values and principles of good practice:

***Music as Therapy* projects are never about what we can do in the moment, but about what our Local Partners can do in the future.** They have a sharp focus on the role of the project within the wider context of a developing community. This means that not all our decisions are clinical. Many of them are operational or strategic with one eye carefully kept on the bigger picture of life in the community we are working.

Every *Music as Therapy* project will always contain an element of training or skill-sharing and critical to this is ongoing support for Local Partners who are developing new skills.

This is unsurprising, perhaps, given the fundamental emphasis we place on sustainability and the lasting impact of any such training. At the same time we know that such support is also very important for the professional Music Therapists who deliver any such project.

Willingness to explore innovative practice and to value Local Partners' potential, whatever their starting point, is fundamental to any *Music as Therapy* project. In the early days our approach challenged opinions within the profession as we explored the extent to which aspects of music therapy can be taught to low-level workers, who have minimal education or even literacy, who work under isolated conditions for poor pay, and definitely do not consider themselves to be

musicians. We have discovered there is enormous scope for making therapeutic music-making accessible to people where the more traditional UK clinical model is a long way from being available.

A further characteristic of a *Music as Therapy* project is its ability to be responsive to the community to which the project is going. Whilst every project has clear aims and structure, its implementation and the devising of this structure will be flexibility. The ability to revisit the structure and method of delivery time and time again ensures maximum success of any project.

These reflections on what a *Music as Therapy* project actually is, can be distilled into a number of values which shape the ways in which we plan our projects and how we behave while we implement them:

- **Sustainability** Every *MasT* project aims to have an impact that lasts longer than our active presence within the participating community. We believe effective partnerships between employees, volunteers and Local Partners are fundamental to sustainability. We make every effort to enable Local Partners to build on our investments in their communities. We share our resources with others working in related fields to broaden the impact of our work.
- **Integrity** We are honest and ethical in all that we do and engage in responsible decision-making that reflects the highest standards of conduct. This ensures that our credibility, leadership and use of charitable funds is never in question. We demonstrate best practice at all times, guided by a professional code of ethics.
- **Respect** We are passionate about understanding the real needs of communities we work in and believe sensitivity to local culture and customs are vital. Time allowed to listen to, observe and learn from our Local Partners is integral to our projects. A collaborative approach is paramount.
- **Innovation** Making concepts of music therapy accessible to people in non-traditional contexts requires creativity, compromise and vision. We encourage innovative practice to achieve this and strive for continuous organisational development as we learn from each project.

How do you investigate becoming a Project Partner?

If the values above resonate with the values of your own project, then this is a good start. The next step would be to set up an initial assessment meeting, which is definitely a very 2-way part of our partnership process. This would take place with Alexia and/or Jane. We are keen to learn as much as we can about what your project entails and to look at the potential areas of useful skills or resources *MasT* may be able to offer.

We have a good idea of the inputs that our experience tells us are vital to the success of any *Music as Therapy* project. These fall under the following categories:

- **LOCAL KNOWLEDGE**
- **CLEAR DIRECTION**
- **PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION**
- **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**
- **ADMINISTRATION**

At the initial meeting we would assess jointly whether your project has access to all the inputs it needs to deliver the results hoped for. In some cases where some of the inputs are not yet in place, we could consider supplying these for you.

The bottom line is that as long as all the relevant inputs are in place – whether supplied by you, *MasT* or additional parties – we will be confident that the project could become a *Music as Therapy* project.

If you decide that becoming a Project Partner is of benefit to you, you could then call the project “Mrs. Jones’s *Music as Therapy* Project” or “St. Stephen’s *Music as Therapy* Project, Timbuktu”

and together we would shape our partnership 'package'. You might choose to use our name and logo to endorse your project, but such branding is optional. The size and scope of this 'package' is something we would discuss together. However, the bare minimum is briefing and debriefing supplied by *MasT* prior to and following the project and a report on the project submitted to *MasT* by you (within an agreed timeframe). This is because we have to report in our turn to our donors and Trustees.

What are the Financial Implications?

There need not be any financial implications for your project. Certainly *MasT* is not using these partnerships as an income stream for the charity. However, we are not primarily a grant-making organisation.

Once we have identified if there are any inputs that need to be put in place for your project to fulfil the criteria of offering a *Music as Therapy* approach, we will then help you to think about where and how you might source these.

MasT has a range of 'services' that you might like to take advantage of, all offered on an at cost basis. These include briefing, debriefing, clinical supervision, volunteer recruitment, assistance with project development, fundraising help, use of our London office administrative resources etc.

With planning you may put in for financial support from the Trustees of *MasT* to meet some of these costs, or other costs of your project. Applications for funding are considered on a case by case basis and will involve careful analysis of the 'fit' between the project proposed and *MasT*.

If you have any other questions that have not been answered by this information pack, please don't hesitate to ring for a chat or email us. Details on the team are given overleaf.

Who are the people behind *MasT International*?

As a registered charity, there is a hierarchy of supervision to keep *MasT International* operating in the ways which have been agreed in a legal Trust Deed, registered with the Charity Commission. It is this structure of support which means that the volunteers and partners are answerable to the Projects' Co-ordinator who is answerable to the Director, who is answerable to the Trustees, who are answerable to the Charity Commission! We have also benefited from the combined wisdom of a fantastic Advisory Panel of Music Therapists (details on our website), who have helped steer our organisational strategy.

The following people are those you are most likely to come into direct contact with:

Cleo Jordan (Administrator): Cleo was a music graduate who joined the *MasT* team in 2007. She runs the office, leads the fundraising and is our webmaster and desktop publishing expert. She is a font of wisdom when it comes to grant applications or event organisation, as well as designing and formatting in-house publications for maximum impact.

CONTACT: cleojordan@musicastherapy.org

Jane Robbie (Projects' Co-ordinator): Jane has always organised all the practical aspects of *Music as Therapy* projects in Romania. She has a huge amount of experience in developing and fine-tuning projects, both in planning and implementation stages, backed up by hours of hard slog in field work in Romania. Alongside the very practical elements of her role, Jane plays an important part in shaping the strategy and direction of the organisation.

CONTACT: janerobbie@musicastherapy.org

Alexia Quin (Director): Alexia founded *Music as Therapy* in 1995. Her responsibility is to identify project partners and make sure everything necessary is put in place to turn a project from a dream into an effective reality. She must be able to demonstrate how this has been done and funded. We've lost track of the hours she's put in in Romania, but her experience of working in challenging contexts explains the value we place on induction and debriefing. She is also a music therapist currently working with adolescents with severe learning disabilities.

CONTACT: alexiaquin@musicastherapy.org

For more information, please contact any of the team by email or on 020 7735 3231

**You might also be interested to see our website which reflects the way we have approached our work in Romania and will soon be updated to launch *MasT International*:
www.musicastherapy.org**

TRUSTEES: The Rev. Patsy Kettle, Gerald Orman, Michael Atkinson CMG, Sarah Clarke, Lady Catherine Lester, Chris Bloomfield, Dr. Hannah Reid

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