Life-long learning and music: Well-being from choir music
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Philosophical Faculty
University of Eastern Finland
Lifelong learning

• “Every person, at every stage of their life should have lifelong learning opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their aspirations and contribute to their societies.”

• UNESCO

• Music is an aspiration for these choirs
• They set goals – though non-formal – and aim at reaching them
• Their contribution to the society – “musical social work”
Jaakko kulta, Jaakko kulta,
Herää jo, herää jo.
Kellojasi soita, kellojasi soita,
Pium, paum, poum,
Pium, paum, poum.

Broder Jakob, Broder Jakob,
Sover du? Sover du?
Hör du inte klockan?
Hör du inte klockan?
Ding ding dong!
Ding ding dong!

Are you sleeping, Are you sleeping,
Brother John? Brother John?
Morning bells are ringing,
Morning bells are ringing.
Ding Ding Dong, Ding Ding Dong.

Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques,
Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous?
Sonnez-les matines, Sonnez-les matines
Ding, ding, dong, Ding, ding, dong.

Bruder Jakob, Bruder Jakob,
Schläfst Du noch? Schläfst Du noch?
Hörst du nicht die Glocken?
Hörst du nicht die Glocken?
Ding-dang-dong, Ding-dang-dong.

Fra Giovanni, Fra Giovanni,
Dormi tu, Dormi tu?
Suona la campana,
Suona la campana,
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Ding, ding, dong, Ding, ding, dong.

Фра Джованни, Фра Джованни,
Ты еще спишь? Ты еще спишь?
Наступает ли звонок?
Наступает ли звонок?
Динь-дэ-донг, динь-дэ-донг.

Are you sleeping, Are you sleeping,
Brother John? Brother John?
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Ding Ding Dong, Ding Ding Dong.

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Are you sleeping, Are you sleeping,
Brother John? Brother John?
Morning bells are ringing,
Ding Ding Dong, Ding Ding Dong.

Ветер ветром, дождь дождем,
Сон читком, сон мешком.
В кружке кружка, в чашке чашка,
В чашке чашка, в чашке чашка.

Фра Джованни, Фра Джованни,
Ты еще спишь? Ты еще спишь?
Наступает ли звонок?
Наступает ли звонок?
Динь-дэ-донг, динь-дэ-донг.

Are you sleeping, Are you sleeping,
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Morning bells are ringing,
Ding Ding Dong, Ding Ding Dong.

Сон читком, сон мешком.
В кружке кружка, в чашке чашка,
В чашке чашка, в чашке чашка.

Are you sleeping, Are you sleeping,
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Survey Methods:

- Questionnaires:
  - open-ended questions,
  - with multiple-choice questions, Likert-type scale (odd), for latent constructs
  - structured interviews in two cases and
  - complementary interviews/questions
  - observations
Themes in the questionnaire

• Background
  – When started
  – Voice quality
  – Duties in the choir
  – Experience
  – Former groups
  – Other musical interests
  – Other hobbies
  – Reasons for joining the choir
Themes

• Learning experiences
• Health influences and issues
• Contacts and relations with other singers
• Experiences and memories of travels and concerts
• Best choir experiences and memories?
• Performing to the elderly – ideas.
• Performing to the young – ideas.
• Have you told to the younger members of the family about your hobby?
Do you have a musical hobby?

- Choir?
- Singing?
- An instrument?
- Dance?
- A band?
- Something else?
# Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>female</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small town choir</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City choir</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choir directors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>musicians</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Some features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Small town choir</th>
<th>City choir</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founded</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of members</td>
<td>30 + 5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages, majority</td>
<td>60-80 yrs</td>
<td>30-50 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest/oldest</td>
<td>41/88</td>
<td>19/51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official status</td>
<td>A registered society</td>
<td>Free/open civic group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of the choir leader</td>
<td>About 6 yrs</td>
<td>About 6 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting incentive</td>
<td>Needed some music programme for a mothers’ day occasion</td>
<td>Needed music programme for a kindergarten occasion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Earlier experience

• Majority of the singers had earlier music experiences
  – Earlier in
    • Choral singing in various choirs or
    • Singing in small groups,
    • Bands
    • Playing an instrument
  – Other musical experiences like
    • singing lessons,
    • theatre experience etc.
The reasons for joining a choir

• Reasons for joining the choirs
  – Friends’ recommendations/invitations
  – The groups had looked attractive
  – Now – a chance to join a choir – an old wish
  – Because the choir had a band
  – Because the wife was there!
  – Because of singing together!
  – For social contacts
  – New challenges
  – Jungle radio – jungle drums
Other interests

• Other hobbies often music related activities
  – Concerts, other groups, folk dances, physical activities, theatre, charity…
  – Most members have several hobbies or activities
  – Accumulation of hobbies/interests

• Active citizens!
**Question 22.**
Read the statements below and put a cross in the appropriate column that corresponds to your opinion on the scale. Think of the whole time you have been in the choir.
(PNA=prefer not to answer)

**Totals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A lot/often</th>
<th>rather a lot</th>
<th>Neutral undecided</th>
<th>somewhat occasionally</th>
<th>a little slightly</th>
<th>PNA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I have learnt new things about music.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Choir has brought activity in my life.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I have learnt to know new people.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I have made friends with other choir members.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Choir activities bring interests in my life.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Choir activities bring well-being in my life.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. I am now more active than I would be without the choir.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. I am happier after the rehearsal.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Sometimes I find it difficult to go to the rehearsal, but afterwards I am more satisfied/ happier.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Choir activities give me energy.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>
What have you learnt in the choir?

• Doing something together, the importance of being part of something

• Social skills, being in a group etc. (9/29)
  – Tolerance to others, enjoying of common efforts, tolerating disappointments, It’s nice to do things together.

• Music, singing and stories activate social contacts

• Contacts in music

• Musical contacts between generations
Music related comments:

- Singing techniques, use of voice
- Learning to sing with others and not being bothered of other voices
- Voice improvement
- Learning to sing accompanied
- Learning to read music, memorizing words
- Listening skills
- How good singing is for a human being.
- Choir directors’ comments concentrated mainly on improving their professional capacity
- The importance of social interaction in the choir
Are you aware of any health benefits from being in the choir? If so, what?

- Mental well-being, affecting moods in a positive way (17/29)
- Helps to recover from a trauma
- Positive effects after surgery, two cases, quicker recovery or some other help
- Helps to forget your aches, pains and ailments
- Increases lung capacity and improves breathing techniques

Nocturne
Words Eino Leino
Music Taisto Wesslin
Both choirs spend time together on social occasions, parties, Christmas parties, birthdays.....

- Increases the feeling of togetherness, social well-being and cohesion

All photos retrieved from choir netpages or choir facebook
Good and satisfying experiences of choral singing

- A journey to Tampere to a choir competition – feeling of being successful
- Participation in a choir festival in Lisbon
- Performing to children and the elderly
- Art goes Kapakka! Very excited audience
- Collecting money for the kindergarden
Good and satisfying experiences of choral singing

- Travels to Germany, Hof, Iceland, Russia, Estonia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden Linköping… and concerts there
- Concerts and theatrical products in Joensuu and around
- Performing to the elderly etc.
Estonia, Tallinn 2011, visiting a twin choir

Remembered by members as a very demanding project in 2006-2008 – members were 10 years younger!
School activities – extra curricular activities in music

- Used to go and sing in a local nursing home for nearly 10 years with my pupils – once before Christmas and once in spring
- My colleague went to another
- The high school had a project in 2014-2015 arranged by two teachers together going to sing in a nursing home
- These types of activities are encouraged in the new curriculum for high school
- activities between the school and the society
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Dormi tu, Dormi tu?
Suona la campana,
Suona la campana,
Ding-dang-dong,
Ding-dang-dong.

Фра Джованни, Фра Джованни,
Дорми ть, Дорми ть?
Суонна ла кампана,
Суонна ла кампана,
Динг-дэнг-донг,
Динг-дэнг-донг.

Fra Giovanni, Fra Giovanni,
Dormi tu, Dormi tu?
Suona la campana,
Suona la campana,
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Coda

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Coda
Thank you!
References

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