The Importance of Cooperation Between a Music School and its Environment

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Summary

Schools cooperate with various external stakeholders − parents, founding municipalities, cultural institutions, libraries, other schools, local communities, businesses and many others, providing a variety of benefits to each of them. In the first part, the paper deals with the characteristics and the importance of cooperation between schools and their environment, on the basis of the examined scientific literature and studies. The second part of the article presents the findings of qualitative research, a case study about the

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cooperation of the music school selected with parents, founding municipality and public cultural institutions. Analysis of interviews and documentary material showed that the participation of the music school with its environment enables survival of the music school, helps in the education and development of children and provides care for cultural life in the city and beyond. Cooperation of the school with its environment is therefore an important factor in the success of the school, as well as of the environment in which it operates.

Keywords: school, environment, cooperation, head teacher, parents, founder, cultural institutions

1 Introduction

Each school establishes relations and cooperates with its environment, no matter if it so desires or not, and whether it has an organized program of cooperation or not (Hughes and Hooper, 2000., 162). Today, most schools are aware that due to demographic and economic changes in society deliberate cooperation with the environment is essential if a school is to have satisfied users of its services, enhance its reputation within the environment, allowing for better financial and material conditions, and thus contributing to its long-term existence (Trnavčevič, 2006., 4). Schools therefore intentionally cooperate with their environment in order to realize »their vision, mission and goals, arising from the needs, interests, requirements and desires of the direct and indirect users of its services« (Žuraj and Zupanc Grom, 2006., 7).

For cooperation between a school and its environment at the beginning of the 20th century the term *public relations* was used (Bagin, Gallagher & Moore, 2012., 13), the purpose of which was simply to inform the public about educational programs.

Nowadays, the term *cooperation between a school and its environment* is mostly used, which emphasizes two-way communication and involvement of citizens in the operations of the school, thus enabling better learning outcomes of its students (Cutlip, 1994., in Pawlas, 2005., 23). Involving citizens provides an understanding of what a community wants for its children and enables a closer cooperation with the founders and other organizations (Bagin et al., 2012., 13).

The manner of cooperation with the environment is especially important for each school, whether it will intentionally establish a cooperation program with which the public will be constantly informed about accurate information on the operation of the school, or will its participation be based purely on rumors, misinformation or misunderstanding (Williams, 1989., 18).

2 School − an organization opened to its environment

According to the systemic theories organizations depend on their environment and its various impacts on the former (Koren, 1999.a, 47). Schools are part of the overall external environment, macro-environment, and the immediate environment, the local environment (Hughes and Hooper, 2000., p. 34). The elements of the macro-environment include the state and its institutions that pass the laws and regulations, as well as economic, technological, demographic, social and natural environment. One the other hand, local environment is represented by the municipality, local community (residents, parents, students) and organizations in the immediate environment (Žuraj and Zupanc Grom, 2006.).

School in relation to its environment is by no means an enclosed and independent social system (Hughes and Hooper, 2000., 35), but should operate as a slightly interconnected, open system, which promotes the exchange with its environment (Bush, 2010., 34). Schools are constantly involved with their environment, receiving human and material resources, forming them in the process of teaching and learning, and then passing them back into the environment with added value in the form of knowledge (Sentočnik, 1999., 4). Since every school is interdependent with its environment, it will operate efficiently and survive in the long-term if it is able to adapt to the changing external environment (Hoy and Miskel, 1989., 29). Schools that are able to quickly learn from their environment and are able to adapt to the expectations of the latter will be more successful than those who are not capable of doing so (Koren, 1999.b, 45). Schools need to, therefore, create solid bonds with their environment, as equal partners in the educational process, enriching the personal, social and cultural life of students and adults in the community (Williams, 1989., 161).

Strojin (1992., 35) claims that: »Open schools are not without problems, on the contrary, they perceive problems, experience conflicts and mistakes, as well as obtain comprehensive potentials for solutions and improvement«.

The openness of a school toward its users, pupils, parents and the local environment, as well as their expectations is also dealt with by Troha (1992., 246), who mentions that opening the school to the students is reflected in the didactic and methodical procedures that are adapted to the abilities of the pupils and promote their internal motivation, as well as by meeting pupils' needs through a broad and high-quality program offer, which caters to the interests and aspirations of pupils, while also creating the possibility for learners to influence the quality of the educational work of the school and their own well-being.

Parents should be allowed to influence the management, programing and organizational functioning of schools and to fulfil their desires and needs regarding »what the school should provide their children and how« Troha (1992., 247).

Local environments, represented by municipality as a founder, citizens and various organizations operating within the local environment, are interested in cooperation with schools in order to help the development of the environment, with their program offer including content specific to local communities, involving students in the activities of local environment, and motivating residents of local communities to engage in various fields of cultural and economic life (Troha, 1992., 248). Local environment should also be concerned for the management and organization of schools, the securing of better material and financial situation of the latter, and the modernizing of educational technology (ibid).

3 Purpose of cooperation between a school and its environment

Cooperation between a school and its environment is a »planned, systematic management operation, which helps to improve the programs and services of educational organizations« (NSPRA, 2002., 1), with the main purpose of understandable two-way communication with internal and external stakeholders, aiming at promoting better understanding of the role, objectives, requirements and needs of the school and its environment (Trunk-Širca, 1999., 31).

The main objective is to find ways of integrating the environment in the education process that will help students to learn more efficiently and improve their learning achievements (Cutlip, 1994., in Pawlas, 2005., 24). Experts have proved that the learning achievements of pupils improve if schools turn outwards into the environment (West-Burnham, 2011., 9), therefore, cooperation of schools with their environments is essential for successful education of children (Ozmen and Canpolat, 2010., 1947).

A school can not achieve the objectives of cooperation with its environment only by informing the public about its good sides, but should provide for two-way communication with internal and external audiences, address the handling of possible rumors, criticisms and public attacks on the school, behavior in crisis situations, as well as include close cooperation with the users of its services: teachers and other school staff as internal users, students as the primary users, parents as secondary users, and organizations, companies and other citizens as tertiary or external users (Pawlas, 2005., 29).

4 Forming of cooperation programe between a school and its environment

Schools that wish to successfully participate in the long term with families and local communities should develop a planned program of cooperation aligning the expectations and requirements of its users, considering mutual interests and establishing trust (Trunk-Širca, 1999., 33). All three parties involved in the partnership should strive towards a common goal of improving children's learning (Cox-Peterson, 2010., 5).

For a successful cooperation program between a school and its environment, the school needs to ensure good personal relationships between staff, pupils, parents and citizens, systematically and continuously strive for and realise communication with internal and external stakeholders, taking into account the objectives, needs, program and achievements of the school, as well as systematically and continuously establishing the opinions and needs of citizens regarding the education of children, and actively involving citizens in decision-making about school programs and programs enabling school to attract the community (Bagin et al., 2012., 14).

To assess the needs of individuals and to analyse current developments in cooperation between a school and its environment Hughes and Hooper (2000., 201) recommend using the answers to the following questions:

– What is the general opinion of parents and citizens about the school? How do you know that?
– Which three or four groups of external stakeholders are the most important for your school?
– Is the communication mainly written? How do you ensure the possibility of a feedback in case of written communication?
– Do all employees, parents, students and citizens know whom they should contact if they wish to obtain or share information?
– What are the specific characteristics of the education program at the school?
– Are there any links with the extra-curricular programs or community programs?
– What matters are usually published routinely (curriculum, events, achievements of teachers, students, community members, general news, schedule)? What are the means used for such publications?
– Is there an advisory committee cooperating with the school and providing information on what is happening in the community and whom they need to communicate with and about what?

– Is there a comprehensive plan for cooperation of the school with its environment?
– Is the success rate of the current program of the school's cooperation with its environment being systematically and regularly evaluated?

An effective program of cooperation between a school and its environment is represented by a planned, systematic two-way process of communication between the two. Therefore, it is necessary to look for the sources of the common searching for true understanding and satisfaction of both sides in reconciliation of relations between the head teachers, teachers, parents, employees and others within the local communities (Williams, 1989., 161), in order to develop awareness, good will and support for cooperation and trust between various stakeholders (Pawlas, 2005., 28).

5 Research methodology

5.1 Qualitative research and case study

In the research there were used procedures that are characteristic of qualitative research, with intention to gain a deeper insight into the addressed issues (Merriam, 2009., 19) of school's cooperation with its environment. Research in the paper presented was conceived as a case study recommended by Merriam (2009., 41) for research in the field of education. The study unit was a music school.

5.2 Short description of the music school studied

The music school studied began operating in 1946 and is now one of 52 public music schools operating in Slovenia. The school operates in a municipality with 24,500 inhabitants, of which three quarters live in villages in rural areas, while the town where the school is actually located has the population of approximately 6,500 (SURS, 2012.).

The founder of the school was the municipality, providing material conditions (space, investments and maintenance), while the Ministry of Education provides funds for the salaries of employees.

The music school is attended by 335 pupils, taught by 27 teachers (Music school X, 2011b.), for the following instruments: piano, accordion, violin, cello, guitar, block flute, flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, baritone, horn, trombone, percussion, zither, tamburitza, diatonic accordion and singing. Twice a week the music school offers individual lessons and once a week group lessons (both at lower and higher levels). According to the age group, pre-school children attend pre-school music education

or music apprenticeship, and all students who play instruments or learn how to sing attend mandatory group lessons in music theory.

Once a week, the students who attend musical instruments lessons also attend chamber music lessons and play in school orchestras: symphony, string, woodwind, accordion, zither, tamburitza orchestras. The school also includes a school choir.

Students appear at internal, public and extracurricular performances. Internal performances are held in the hall of the music school and are intended for parents, as a way of monitoring their child's progress. Public performances are performances by soloists and chamber groups, as well as orchestras in the music school's hall or outside the school. During the extracurricular public performances the students use music program to accompany events of various organizations within the municipality. Students also perform outside the borders of the municipality, as each year they attend national or international music competitions.

5.3 Research purpose and research objectives

The purpose and objectives of the research were wider than those considered in this article. Because it seems important that a reader gets an insight into the overall design of the study, in this section the study will be presented in its entirety. Nevertheless, the research results in this article will relate only to the topic addressed. Other topics will be presented in the following publications.

The purpose of the study was to examine the meaning and forms of cooperation of a selected music school with its environment, thus obtaining a deeper insight into the cooperation at the school itself.

The research objectives that were pursued in the study were interrelated with a purpose. In this study the research objectives were:

Examine the meaning and form of cooperation between the school and its environment based on the scientific literature and published studies;

– explore forms of cooperation with the environment, which appear at the music school selected;

– determine the role of the head teacher in cooperation of the music school with its environment;

– determine how cooperation between the selected music school and its environment is perceived by external actors of education: parents, the founder and representatives of cultural institutions.

The theoretical and empirical part of this article provides answers to questions about the importance of cooperation of the music school with its environment.

5.4 Research questions

Since the research was based on a qualitative paradigm, research questions were selected to clarify the research purpose (Creswell, 1998., 99).

The research questions selected were the following:

1. What significance the cooperation with the environment has for the music school?
2. What forms of cooperation with the environment occur at the selected music school?
3. What is the role of the head teacher in cooperation of the selected music school with its environment?
4. How do the external actors perceive the participation of the selected musical school with its environment?

In the present article the first research question about the importance of the music school's cooperation with its environment shall be answered.

5.5 Research sample

The reasearch focused on the music school which was established more than 60 years ago, with the same head teacher for the last 20 years. The researcher knew the head teacher from the time of her own education, and was sure that it would be fairly easy to arrange for the research to be carried out at this school. The sample was therefore purposive (Merriam, 2009., 61; Tratnik, 2002., 70).

The study included the following participants:

– Head teacher of the music school;
– five parents of the 6th grade music theory pupils, who of all the parents cooperate with the music school the longest and therefore have extensive experience in the field of cooperation with the school;
– external stakeholders: mayor of the founding municipality, directors of cultural institutions, which have the status of a public institution.

5.6 Data collection methods

Since this was a qualitative research, the researcher was regarded as the primary instrument of data collection. In the research qualitative techniques of data collection were used, namely:

– interview, therefore the data collection was characterized by communication between the researcher and research participants (Sagadin, 2001., 15), and
– documents analysis.

The intention in this paper was to gain deeper insight into individuals' participation in the cooperation of the music school with its environment by using interviews. In order to do so, information on the views, opinions and experiences of cooperation between the music school and its environment were compiled, with the help of:

– individual semi-structured interviews with the head teacher of the music school, mayor of the founding municipality and 3 directors of cultural institutions, which have the status of public institutions;

– group semi-structured interview with 5 parents of the 6th grade music education pupils.

As a method of data collection the analysis of documents, which are the source of many data and information, was also used (Trnavčevič, 2007.). The relevant domestic and foreign scientific literature, legislation in the field of music education, and other resources were reviewed. The remaining secondary data were acquired from the annual reports of the music school and the participating institutions, and from the publication of the music school.

5.7 Ensuring the credibility of research and the ethics

Internal validity of research was ensured by a triangulation of the sample (Merriam, 2009., 204), for which the following sources of information were used: the head teacher of the music school, parents of the music school's pupils, other external participants (representative of the municipality, representatives of cultural institutions). As the case study represents an in-depth examination of a certain phenomenon on a small sample, generalization of the research results was not possible (Tratnik, 2002., 46).

The reliability of a research means, that it is possible to obtain similar results by repeating it (Moon, 1998., 147). However, a case study can not be repeated, as it is inevitably different for each repetition (ibid). Reliability of the case study was improved with a description of a researcher in relation to the researcher's own hypotheses and assumptions, informants and selection criteria, as well as with an exact description of the data collection and the formation of categories (Merriam, 2009., 206-207). The researcher categorised data, the coding was done in cooperation with a mentor, Dr. A. K.

In the process of obtaining consent for the participation in the research, the research participants were presented with the content, purpose and objectives of the research, the research conduct itself, the methods of collecting and processing data, the manner of reporting on results, as well as the mode and duration of data storage (Trnavčevič, 2007.). Anonymity of the research participants was secured, they were also asked for the permission to record the interview. The typed text was used as

a source for the analysis and interpretation of data. There was pointed out that the interview may be terminated at any time if they so choose, and that they do not need to answer any questions if they do not want to do so.

5.8 Data analysis

In qualitative research data collection and analysis take place at the same time as the researcher analyzes the data simultaneously with the data collection and continues the analysis after the end of the collection (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998., 141).

After each interview, thoughts were written down first. The typed material from interviews and data from documents were analyzed by creating categories, proposed for qualitative analysis by Merriam (2009., 180). In this process the data is first coded and then combined into groups, so-called categories (Tratnik, 2002., 83). Data coding means that different types of data are assigned a particular designation, which can be a word, letter, number or phrase (Merriam, 2009., 164).

Specific words and phrases were used and written at the right edge of the text. When the first transcript was read, research objectives were written on top of a new paper, under which all the codes from the text were transcribed. Semantically related codes were formed in sets of baseline subjects, where a researcher focused on recurring themes. According to semantically equivalent meanings the baseline subjects were grouped in organized topics that were related to the research objectives. The next interview was read and analyzed in a similar manner, focusing on baseline and organized topics from the first interview, checking for their occurence during the second interview. These two lists of codes, and the starting and organized topics were then curtailed to a common theme or category on the basis of consistent substantive meanings (Roblek, 2009., 61).

5.9 Research limitations

The first limitation of this study was the lack of scientific literature and research on cooperation with environment in the field of music education, therefore, for the theoretical part there have been used literature from primary and secondary education.

One of the limitations of the study was represented by the qualitative case study itself, because the individual stages of research necessarily lead to bias due to the subjectivity of the researcher who collects and analyzes data and develops findings and conclusions of a particular study (Merriam, 2009., 42). Therefore, in order to reduce the bias, a researcher described the phases of data collecting and analysis as precisely as possible.

The limitation was also represented by noncoincident sampling, because purposive sample was used by deliberately choosing informants who in researcher's opinion had the most valuable information to give regarding the research theme. Precisely because of the use of noncoincident sampling it was not possible to generalize the research findings from the sample data.

The paper presents researcher's views on cooperation between the music school and its environment, with selected types of external stakeholders, and does not reveal the overall complexity of the presented topic of cooperation.

Since the mode of operation of music schools is unique and because there are no similar studies in the field of music education, the conclusions of the research can not be compared. Nevertheless, the survey shall allow for a deeper insight into the field of cooperation of the selected music school with parents, the founding municipality and cultural institutions.

6 Data analysis

Regarding the purpose and objectives of the research and on the basis of research questions four categories were formed according to the described procedure. One of them was **»Importance of cooperation between the music school and its environment«**, which shall be presented later on in this article.

The analysis of interviews and documentary material showed that the participation of the selected musical school with its environment enables its survival, helps in the education and development of children and provides care for cultural life in the town and beyond. Content of the category »Importance of cooperation between the music school and its environment« is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Importance of cooperation between the music school and its environment

Starting topics	Organized topics	Category
— Amateur culture as the foundation for existence — Promotion — Meeting the expectations of learners — Meeting the needs of the environment	Survival of the music school	Importance of cooperation between the music school and its environment
— Performance of children at school and extracurricular events — Cooperation and performance of children in orchestras	Education and development of children	
— Development of amateur culture — Enrichment of cultural life — Cultural ambassador of the municipality	Caring for culture in the town and beyond	

7 Interpretation

In the interpretation phase the views and experiences of the research participants and data from documents were compared and linked with theoretical realizations.

7.1 Survival of the music school

The head teacher of the music school (hereinafter referred to as the 'head teacher') attached very great importance to the cooperation of the music school with its environment. He connected it with long-term existence of the school, when he said: "*[...] without the participation with the environment we can not really survive, as the existence of our school is also based on its relationship with the environment.*" In the Publication of the Music School X (Music school X, 2011.b, 81) and the Annual Work Plan of the Music School 2011-2012 (Music school X, 2011.a, 5) there were also found records that show the awareness of the links between the cooperation with the environment and the existence of the school: "*Every music school builds its existence and success on the success of the cooperation with the parents and the environment in which it operates.*" Trnavčevič (2006., 4) confirms that the cooperation of the school with the environment is necessary, because it contributes to its long-term existence. Since education in music schools is not legally required, the head teacher believes cooperation with the environment is all the more important, because the

music school needs to ensure a sufficient number of pupils by itself. Thus, he adds: "*We had to fight for enrolment, we are not an elementary school, which by force of law gets so many students because so many were born during this period. No, with us it is quite different.* "

7.1.1 Amateur culture as the foundation for the existence of music school

According to the principal the school is grounded in its environment and its foundations are provided by amateur culture, which is very developed in the municipality, while in his opinion the music school is the prime institution for developing amateur culture. The head teacher also noted that there are 256 societies operating in the municipality, of which 24 choirs, two brass bands, with 80- and 160-year-old musical tradition, respectively, three folklore groups, tamburitza orchestras for children and adults, and orchestras performing at the music school. Many of their members also originate from the music school. Thus, he said: »*It is an assurance that also in the future there will exist the need for enrolment, for example, for orchestral instruments which are needed by bands and orchestras [...]. [...] This is certainly a base that also provides the music school with a future, existence.*« According to the principal the school is well-developed precisely because of the environment, rich with amateur culture. He continues: »If this environment would not exist, the school would certainly be smaller, or perhaps it would not exist at all.«

7.1.2 Promotion

A very important element for the survival of the music school is its presentation or promotion within the environment. The head teacher elaborated further: »*We need [...] to offer something to this environment, so that it can actually recognize who we are, what we are, what we are like and what we can give them.*« The head teacher believes that great concerts are of utmost importance for the school, with more than 150 participating students, who make up almost half of the entire school. In connection with this, he claimed: »*[...] these 150 students are linked to many parents, many families and friends, thus gathering a large number of people who receive information about what the musical school is all about, what do we offer and, of course, if this is well done, it could help us to retain adequate enrolment also in the next years.*« Fiore (2010., 130) writes that school events such as music concerts and choir performances offer a school an excellent chance to present external actors and parents with the achievements and successes of its students.

Presentation of the music school in its environment takes place in cooperation with various institutions. The museum director considers »*cooperation in the field of*

culture [to be] *of the utmost importance.*« Cooperation with the music school is especially important for the promotion of both institutions. The museum director said: »*As all institutes have their own programs, the quality of the latter can be upgraded by combining them. Thus, the program could prove to be of higher quality and more diversified.* »A good presentation of the music schools' work in its environment can result in sufficient enrolment of students in the next school year.

The mayor considered promotion through publications as an important element of the music school's existence. This was also the opinion of one of the parents (P5). The director of JSKD stated that in addition to public events the music school also successfully presented their activities to a wider range of people by a publication: »*I think that the booklet reached every parent, student, attending the music school, as well as all public institutions in the municipality and beyond [. ..], because it is very likely that those parents who are not connected to the music school, otherwise probably would not receive that many information about what the music school actually means inside and outside, in the municipality and beyond.*« The museum director believed that the music school in this way further promotes its mission. The head teacher believed that beside the publications the recognizability of the music school was also improved by the CD and music school logo. The CD presents the results of work in the music school and contains music recordings of the best students' solos and music recordings of their orchestras from various concerts. While showing a double CD, which was placed on the table in front of the researcher, he continued: »*These CDs, which we make from time to time, are distributed to all of our business partners, all those who occasionally support us, also financially.*« The music school logo is present, as he said, »*on all of our posters, all of our letters, and all of our teachers have business cards with our logo, thereby achieving recognition of the school, and the same applies to these publications.*«

7.1.3 Meeting the expectations of learners

Cooperation between the school and parents or their children is guided by the expectations of both sides. As Mrvar (2008., 123) stated, the expectation can be mutually aligned, but they can also be very different. Since the music school curricula are prescribed, specifying that teachers should only teach classical music, this often leads to unpleasant situations, because this is a kind of music which the majority of students and parents are unfamiliar with, therefore, they do not want to play it. Thus, the head teacher said: *»We have our own programs, but certainly there are many of those who have come here because they wanted to play an electric guitar. Unfortunately, we do not provide this option, because we have our own program that says this and that. [...] Also accordion [...] students always enroled in the accordion*

program in order to learn to play Slak or Avsenik. But we offered them something quite different, and often they were unhappy because they got something they did not expect, did not want in the first place.«

Resman (1992., 225) claims that the success or failure of cooperation depends on the extent to which it is possible to reconcile different expectations. The head teacher was aware of this when he said: »*But teachers should not be too narrow-minded and should meet the needs and wishes of such students.*« For this purpose the music school each year organizes a concert entitled »*We can also do it in a different way,*« he said, and continued: »S*tudents play and sing music that means something to them at that particular moment, and which possibly enticed them to start attending music school, however, they were denied the opportunity to follow their interests.*« Troha (1992., 246) writes that a school opens up to its pupils by satisfying their interests. The music school strives for openness towards pupils and their wishes because, as the head teacher mentioned, during internal performances they first played »*the school's usual repertoire, then they came back on stage again and played what they really wanted to play, Slak, Avsenik and things like that.*«

7.1.4 Meeting the needs of the environment

School as a public institution should fulfill the wishes, needs and expectations of its environment and users (Resman, 1993., 459). The Publication of the Music School X (Music school X, 2011.b, 81) states that they collaborate with all organizations operating in the field of education or culture, by building relationships that bring satisfaction to all. The head teacher said: »*The environment has its own needs and the people are coming here and asking us if we can help them in the realization of various projects with a little music, and this is what we do.*« The music school is heavily involved with various institutions and associations, to which the head teacher pointed out: »*Yes, yes, of course, we also collaborate with them, as a couple of times every year they also have certain demands for cultural programs, and we meet their needs.*« In the booklet, it was written that the wishes and needs arise and reflect constantly throughout the school year and that precisely because the music school always meets the daily needs and desires of the environment for music programs it exceeded the planned number of internal and public appearances (Glasbena šola, X 2011.b, 80).

7.2 Education and development of children

7.2.1 Performance of children at school and extracurricular events

Quite a few research participants highlighted that collaboration between the music school and its environment by performing pupils could significantly contribute to the education and development of children. Museum director believed that it is good that students perform outside the music school, »*because this establishes contact with the audience, and they also receive experience, this is called mileage, and mileage is required.*« The mayor was of a similar opinion, saying that the music school should cooperate with its environment exactly for the purpose of the education of children. He emphasized that it was important that children as musicians performed as much as possible, thus being included in the projects and the environment, because in doing so they get accustomed to public speaking and have the opportunity to show their talents.

He further argued that with such a cooperation both citizens and students will gain: »*I think that by the existence of music school, getting involved in its domestic environment, we all benefit, as we can implement agreeable and high-quality programs, while the students obtain extensive experience by performing.*« The Publication of the Music School X (Music school X, 2011.b, 81) and the Annual Work Plan of the Music School (Glasbena šola, X 2011.a, 7) state that internal performances offer the opportunity of acquiring first experiences, consolidating materials, the opportunity of winning the first applause, of discovering the feeling of satisfaction and pride when performing, while at the same time enthusiastic response of visitors of concerts also represents a moral support of the performers and their mentors.

All of the interviewed parents attend performances of their children because they consider it an important means of cooperation. (P1) attends performances in order to accompany the child and says that it is essential for the child's development. (P3) agreed with that and further elucidated on the cooperation through events: »*I am very happy that I decided for it, that there is no lost time, that it is advantageous.*« Regarding integration through events (P4) claimed that there are numerous events of the music school, and she felt it was »*great*« that she can attend them, continuing: »*[..] sometimes there is also the possibility to explain the child other things, besides being a part of the show [...].*« On the other hand, (P4) pointed out that public performances of the music and primary school are poorly coordinated, as both school have events at the same time, which represents a burden for children and parents.

7.2.2 Participation and performing of children in the orchestra

Education and development of children, according to parents and the head teacher, is also enabled by the participation and performing of children in the orchestra. (P1) believes that attending the orchestra allows socializing and represents a time well spent for the children: »*They make new friends, find supporters, because that is not a bad company, it is not in vain, you know that when they are going to music lessons in the evening, for example to the orchestra [...] you know that they are going there to teach themselves something, to hang out with their peers, and it is a joy to watch them.*« The head teacher claimed that some parents enrol their children in the music school in order to prevent them from spending their free time on the street. He was very supportive of children playing in the orchestra, as he described: »*I insist on the fact that children are playing in these ensembles, bigger or smaller, because I believe that in this way they can socialize. First, they experience many beautiful moments, intense satisfaction when they play music together, and secondly, they learn first of all to listen to the person who sits on the left side, as well as the one that sits on the right side or behind them, and to adapt, this is what's important. To not insist on their opinion, but to adapt. This is what the society is actually missing, the adapting and listening to each other, understanding each other.*«

Furthermore, he believes that those effects are transferred to other areas of activity, not remaining limited only to the music field, as these children due to their participation and performance in orchestras are more communicative and adaptable. Even the Weimar statement (Okorn, 2003., 98) states that expression through music encourages creative and sensitive dialogue with other people and increases communication skills and social behavior. Head teacher added: »*If you want to play something together, you have to understand your partner to some extent, adapt to and comply with the conductor, or a boss who stands before you.*« According to the head teacher, the programs of teaching folk instruments, zither, diatonic accordion and tamburitza enable the young people to create an appropriate attitude toward national culture. He further stressed: »*And in the field of amateur culture the school needs to learn them to love their culture, not only to be able to say we are this and that, we are the best, we are such and such, but even more because if you learn to honor, love your own, then you will better understand the love of your neighbor to his own. Thus, the possibility for a normal communication with one's neighbors will be different, much bigger. This is what we need to teach them.*«

7.3 Caring for culture in the town and beyond

7.3.1 Development of amateur culture

According to the research participants, the cooperation of the music school with its environment contributes greatly to the development of culture in the municipality and beyond its borders. The mayor stated that »*many societies can exist precisely due to our music students.*« The head teacher said that music schools need to »*ensure a higher level of dealing with amateur culture*«. The higher level of activities in the field of amateur culture is therefore the result of teaching in the music school. The mayor stressed that the two brass bands and two internationally renowned choirs also include students from the music school who have during their schooling acquired musical education and experience in performing, and that »*these societies can live mainly on account of the fact that the music school represents a good basis for everything else.*«

7.3.2 Enrichment of cultural life

The director of the Public Fund for Cultural Activities (JSKD) was of the opinion that the music school plays a very important role in the town, because it enriches the numerous events organized by JSKD or amateur cultural societies with music. The current head teacher who will retire at the end of this school year, had this to say about his successor: »*Definitely, I hope this is going to be a person who will actually be able to strongly position the music school within the public cultural life of ((place name)) and elsewhere, of course.*« The mayor said that the music school in the municipality was of particular importance and was highly-valued mainly because it »*breathes life in the cultural pulse of the municipality. We are very proud indeed to have so many of these excellent musicians [...], which can then also participate in our events, as well as the events of our societies, and therefore we also believe that the music school is a special pearl of our municipality.*«

Performance of children at events encouraged many parents to begin attending cultural events in the town. Thus, (P3) describes: »*I think it's great, it really is, that my child is attending music school, so we can take the time to go out at least then, although otherwise we have never before participated in cultural events, at least not as much, as we do now. When you take your child to an event you are even more keen to attend it.*« The museum director believes that cooperation between cultural institutions, such as the music school and museum, helps to raise awareness of the cultural and musical heritage. He further stated: »*[...] of course, it is good when they unite, as it makes it easier to raise awareness of the people regarding the protection of movable heritage.*«

7.3.3 Cultural ambassador of the municipality

The music school studied does not only collaborate with the local environment, but is often the first to establish a contact with a broader environment, also in the international setting. The head teacher claimed that the role of the music school was that of an ambassador of culture: »*We are ambassadors who always establish first relationships with different environments. These relations are essentially painless and are probably the most human, only using the language of music. When such relationships are being established, also other elements can surface, for example political, economic, but I think that culture has a greater ability to communicate.*«

In 2012, the music school studied and the municipality are celebrating the 10th anniversary of cooperation with a music school and a town in the Czech Republic. The mayor said that international cooperation with that particular town was established precisely on the basis of the music school, which set up the first terms of cooperation, followed by cooperation of elementary schools, various societies, from fishermen to firemen, as well as the municipality, and he confirmed: »*[...] also in the economic field we are preparing for collaboration, therefore, these steps of music virtually represent the basis for a broader cooperation with international cities.*« The head teacher stressed the importance of the music school and amateur culture for collaboration with the wider world: »*Amateur culture often represents our municipality outside the municipal and national borders, which also represents the link to the music school. [...] Here, the music school finds its place.*« The mayor had a similar opinion, saying about the municipality that »*it is better recognizable in Slovenia and wider because of these musicians*«, that in this way the municipality is promoted, that it is »*gaining importance*«, and that many people know that »*the municipality ((name)) is one of those that are exceptionally well-developed in a cultural sense [...] and one of the bases is definitely represented by the music school*«.

Conclusion

In this article, the importance of cooperation of a music school with its environment was discussed. Analysis of interviews and documents showed that the importance of cooperation between the music school studied and its environment was threefold: it allows the survival of the music school; it affects the education and development of children; while in the town and wider the music school provides for cultural life.

Survival of the music school studied is influenced by: well-developed amateur culture in the town, which is due to the education of students in the music school; promotion within the environment, implemented through school and extracurricular

performances of pupils and through publications; at the same time, the school meets the expectations of learners, as well as the needs of its environment.

The cooperation of music school with its environment is of great importance for the education and development of children. Through school and extracurricular performances children gain a lot of experience with public speaking, while at the same time actively participating in cultural events through music; they spend their leisure time effectively, while in addition also acquiring musical skills. Due to their participation and performance in various orchestras, children become more communicative, adaptable, they learn mutual tolerance, respect and mutual cooperation. The program of learning folk instruments establishes the child's attitude towards national culture and folk music, which is one of the basic goals of education in the music school.

Cooperation between the music school studied and its environment is also reflected in the well-developed culture of the municipality. The music school contributes to a richer cultural life with performances of soloists and orchestras, thus enriching numerous events organized by various institutions and associations with music. Students who complete their studies at the music school, participate in various music societies, orchestras, choirs, and with their musical knowledge enable the amateur culture to rise to a higher level of performance.

Due to the cooperation of the music school with foreign organizations, it operates as a »cultural ambassador«, since it establishes cultural ties, based on which the collaboration in various other fields can develop, such as political and economic. Therefore, cooperation of the music school with its environment significantly contributes both to the success and recognition of the school as well as the environment in which the school operates.

We can conclude that the issue of cooperating or not is not applicable anymore. Managers and employees need to ask themselves, in what way they can collaborate with the environment in which they live and operate. On the basis of the research it can be concluded that the key to successful cooperation lies in the efforts, desire and openness of all stakeholders for bidirectional communication, and in the efforts of leaders to develop and maintain trust and good interpersonal relationships with their employees and other stakeholders in education.

Abbreviations
JSKD - The Public Fund for Cultural Activities
P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 – Parents

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Važnost suradnje glazbene škole i okruženja u kojem djeluje

Sažetak

Škole surađuju s raznim vanjskim dioničarima - roditeljima, s osnivačem škole, kulturnim institucijama, knjižnicama, drugim školama, lokalnom zajednicom, tvrtkama i mnogim drugima, od kojih svaki može imati niz pogodnosti. Članak u prvom dijelu na temelju literature i istraživanja ispituje svojstva i značenje suradnje između škole i okoline. U drugom dijelu članak predstavlja rezultate kvalitativnog istraživanja u kojem je na studiji slučaja, između ostalog, proučavano značenje suradnje glazbene škole s roditeljima, osnivačem škole i javnim kulturnim institucijama. Analiza intervjua i dokumenata pokazala je, da suradnja odabrane glazbene škole s okolinom omogućava opstanak glazbene škole, pomaže u obrazovanju i razvoju djece i pridonosi kulturnom životu u gradu. Suradnja između škole i okoline stoga je važan čimbenik u uspjehu škole i okoline, u kojoj škola djeluje.

Ključne riječi: glazbena škola, okolina, suradnja, ravnatelj, roditelji, osnivač, kulturne ustanove