

Is there a place for therapeutic songwriting in the context of a refugee camp? Investigating musical multicultural competency in community music therapy with unaccompanied minor and adolescent refugees in Lesbos' Moria Camp and beyond

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The original focus of this empirical research thesis responded to the songwriting project 'Songs of Moria', delivered by music therapist, Digna Huinink, in Lesbos' Moria Camp in 2018. The project delivered songwriting sessions with 35 unaccompanied male minors and adolescent refugees. Drawing on musical analysis of the 10 recordings and a series of in-depth interviews with Huinink, the research questioned how 'external' creative therapy interventions such as therapeutic songwriting are effective within a refugee camp environment.

In questioning the therapeutic intention, positioning towards the therapeutic relationship and recorded outcomes, the findings acknowledged the need for further research into the role of cultural competency or awareness when working within this context. Hadley's assertion that 'musical cultural competence goes well beyond the idea of simply providing music from a client's culture,' became an important consideration when addressing the therapeutic relationship (2016).

This research explores the degree to which musical multicultural awareness and competence is acknowledged within refugee camp arts interventions, and to what extent this acknowledgement is significant in reaching clinical goals. The literature review will offer a picture of the current understanding of musical multicultural awareness when working with refugee and multicultural populations, complimented by a wider mapping of music therapy interventions in camps across Europe. This will lead to a series of in-depth interviews with arts therapists working in this environment to understand how (if at all) they navigate their own

personal and musical cultural biases within their practice. The outcome of this research might prove relevant to MT training programmes, CPD for MTs, as well as culturally sensitive programming within refugee camp environments across Europe and internationally.

References

- Hadley, S.** (2016). Musical multicultural competency in music therapy: the first step. *Music Therapy Perspectives*, 34, 2.
- Huinink, D.** (2018). Songs of Moria. Accessed online 11 August 2020 at <https://www.songsformoria.com/English>.

Biography

Abigail McQuater started her career at the *Financial Times* and has since worked with musicians, music researchers and music organisations to support the delivery of funded projects for Help Musicians, Goldsmiths College, and in her current role as Relationship Manager (Music incl. Music Education) for the Arts Council. A multi-instrumentalist with a First Class MA in Musicology from Edinburgh University (2020), she is currently training to qualify as an HCPC accredited music therapist at UWE, with a special research interest in advocating creative therapy and community music to support refugees and asylum seekers. She is also co-founder of the music research journal MUSIC.ODOGY.ECA.

Recent publications and conference presentations

Co-founder and founding co-editor of MUSIC.ODOGY.ECA, University of Edinburgh's first student-led music research journal. Issue One - MUSIC.ODOGY.ECA (ed.ac.uk)